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Academic Performance, Persistence, and Cultural Congruence of African American Males Attending Predominantly White Colleges and Universities

Darrell Johnson
Western Michigan University

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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, PERSISTENCE, AND CULTURAL CONGRUENCE
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES ATTENDING PREDOMINANTLY
WHITE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

by

Darrell Johnson, Ph.D.

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
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Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Western Michigan University
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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, PERSISTENCE, AND CULTURAL CONGRUENCE
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Darrell Johnson, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2004

The continued lack of success for African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities is alarming and unsettling. Other racial minority groups are making positive gains relative to their post-secondary educational experiences. However, the African American male lags behind in virtually every index of success in higher education. This trend could produce serious social, economic and cultural implications for the African American community and the entire country.

For African Americans, a strong sense of culture is important to their ability to achieve high levels of mental and psychological functioning, particularly in environments they perceive to be hostile or unwelcoming. In general, African Americans with a strong sense of culture exhibit higher levels of self-affirmation and are generally healthier individuals. The acquisition of a college education is an important element for achieving an economically viable form of employment, and consequently, a higher standard of life in America. For those fortunate enough to obtain a college degree, the benefits far outweigh the costs associated with completing the rigors of post-secondary education.

This study examined the relationship between African self-consciousness and cultural congruence, which was used to predict the academic performance and persistence

of African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest. Based on the results of the study, recommendations for student development programming, direction of future research, and curricula changes are provided.

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Unquestionably, the “VISION” has come to pass! Another chapter in my lifelong journey in the pursuit of education, knowledge, and wisdom has been thusly completed. I am honored to have been granted the necessary talents and skills required to bring this “VISION” to fruition. Completion of this Doctor of Philosophy degree serves as the culmination and fulfillment of one of my lifelong dreams and ambitions. I emphatically and humbly submit that all glory for this achievement is hereby conferred upon the Author and Finisher of my faith, hope, and life, Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

“The Dream” Continues to Be Deferred

When you control a man’s thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his “proper place” and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary (Woodson, 1933).

These words, spoken by Carter G. Woodson (1933) over 70 years ago, were recorded under the pretext of Woodson’s thesis that a process of “mis-education” victimized the vast majority of the “Negro” population of his era. Woodson’s thesis was born out of a concern that the “education” conferred upon many of his contemporaries was grounded in a racist, dominant cultural ideology. It was his fundamental belief that in many ways, the education of the Negro principally served the function of perpetuating a systematic process of mental and psychological subjugation of the descendants of African slaves. The Negroes of Woodson’s era effectively traded in their physical chains in exchange for shackles and restraints designed to keep their minds subject to a measure of bondage and servitude. This was further elucidated by Woodson (1933) when he stated, “for the Negro’s mind has been all but perfectly enslaved in that he has been trained to think what is desired of him” (ibid, p. 24).

Unfortunately, in many respects, the distant progenies of early 20th century Negroes find themselves in the same predicament of their predecessors. Quoting the

words of Dr. Martin Luther King, from what is commonly referred as his “I have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington in 1963; America had, and continues to remit checks to many African Americans which are summarily returned stamped “insufficient funds”! In the landscape of the American ethos, no place is this latter statement more accurate than in the arena of education.

America has historically been recognized as a land promising boundless opportunities for material and social prosperity. That promise of opportunity has fueled the fervor and zeal of thousands of people from around the world aspiring to become candidates for emigration into the United States of America over the past 100 years. The mass media evokes the imagery of a life enhanced by the spoils of success and material prosperity in America, aptly labeled “the land of opportunity”! However, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1903) asserted that access into the doors of opportunity are not necessarily availed to every member of the American society when he stated the following: “America is not a word for Opportunity for all her sons.” (ibid, p. 104).

In contrast to the boundless and unlimited opportunities purportedly available to every American citizen, an alternate, albeit less appealing historical and contemporary reality is strewn across the annals of American history. The historical and contemporary reality of the African American experience (and other persons who have been designated as “Black”) has often been one of overt and covert exclusion and/or marginalization from the spoils of capitalism. Stated more succinctly, the experience of African Americans has often been one of despair and hardship (Frazier, 1949, 1957; Guess, 1989).

Economic instability, social nullification, educational disparity (Tatum, 2000, Wilson, 1978), criminal and judicial castigation (Cureton, 1999, 2000), and the

expression of various forms of racially denigrating and biased behaviors such as discrimination, stereotyping, and profiling (Dyson, 2000) have been the elements of the African American experience in the United States. In many cases, due to the manifestation of these and other debilitating lifestyle forces, African Americans have experienced these forces as intractable barriers to their hopeful and zealous pursuit of success, espoused by those who extol the virtues of residing in America. In essence, many African Americans are unduly hindered by perceived, and in many cases, real obstacles in their pursuit of the “American dream.”

Higher Education in America

The acquisition of a college education is an important element for achieving an economically viable form of employment, and consequently, a higher standard of living in America. For those fortunate enough to obtain a college degree, the benefits far outweigh the costs associated with completing the rigors of post-secondary education. For example, the possibility of being unemployed or committing a crime are greatly reduced when a person possesses a college degree (Pascarella & Ternzini, 1991). In addition, there are clear economic advantages attached to acquiring a college degree. The person with a college degree typically earns one-third more in salary over the course of their working career (Leslie & Brinkman, 1986). From a personally intrinsic standpoint, a college degree can also provide a certain degree of occupational prestige and pride (Lin & Voight, 1996).

Given the clear benefits of a college degree, it is apparent that an ongoing need exists to identify obstacles that prevent many college students from completing the goal of obtaining a post-secondary degree. In spite of the wealth of research that has been

conducted relative to issues of academic success and persistence, these issues continue to be critical concerns for faculty, staff and administrators in higher educational institutions. According to Tinto (1987) and Porter (1990), an exhaustive amount of research has been dedicated to the issues of retention and persistence over the past several decades. However, attrition rates (approximately 40%) experienced in contemporary American higher education are comparable to those evidenced in the realm of education during the 19th century (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Schwartz & Washington, 2002).

Higher Education and the African American Experience

In contemporary times, it is still the case that inordinate numbers of African Americans, in comparison to their White counterparts, are the recipients of a substandard K-12 education, which ill equips them to successfully matriculate into the realm of higher education (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997, American Council on Education, 2001). Moreover, far too many African Americans who are fortunate enough to obtain a K-12 education of any substantive quality invariably discover that it is wrought with gaps and voids. Their academic preparation is deficient at best, or useless at worst, should they venture into the realm of many post-secondary educational institutions, particularly those that are highly competitive (Fleming, 1984; Cureton, 2003). If admitted into college, African American students are often confronted with a cadre of social, cultural, and/or environmental issues that conspire to derail their aspirations to compete at a high level, particularly at predominantly White colleges and universities (Fleming, 1984; Cureton, 2003).

The concern for success in college for all students is rivaled by the historical and

contemporary struggles in higher education experienced by many racial minority populations. This is particularly true for African Americans, who continue to be underrepresented in post-secondary education in relation to their numerical proportion in the society at large. While the enrollment of other racial minorities in the traditional college population (between the ages of 18-24) continued to show a steady increase from 1990 to 1999 (48.3%), the enrollment of African American students remains at a stagnant level (39.4%). Enrollment of African American students 18-24 is particularly unique given that in 2000, enrollment of African American females increased 4 percentage points to 43.9%, while enrollment for African American males decreased one percent to 33.8% (American Council on Education, 2001). Finally, the underrepresentation of African American students is exacerbated by the anemic rates of retention and persistence of those students who are fortunate enough to gain enrollment into college (Suen, 1983; Sherman, Tinto, 1993; Giles & Williams-Green, 1994; Furr & Elling, 2002).

The African American Male Experience in America

Within the context of the challenges African American students in general must negotiate while enrolled in college, it is important to note one segment of the population that exhibits a more pronounced experience of academic difficulty. That sub-population is the African American male. The academic difficulties of many African American males are closely correlated to their experiences in the society at large. Unfortunately, a significant portion of the African American male population continues to experience life at the lowest levels of virtually every “quality of life” index when compared to other Americans (Bastian & Taylor, 1994; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). For example, consider the following statistical data related to the experience of many African American

males in our country:

- 40% of young Black men in big cities don't graduate from high school.
- Homicide is the leading cause of death for Black males 15 to 24.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young Black males.
- In 2000 there was a greater numerical representation of African American men incarcerated in some aspect of the penal system (jail, prison, boot camps, etc.) (791,600) compared to those enrolled in colleges or universities (603,032).
- The homicide rate for Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is six times higher than the rate for the rest of the population in that age range.
- In Michigan there were 24,300 African American males in jail and only 21,454 enrolled in a college or university in 2000.
- At year-end of 2001, there were 3,535 sentenced Black male prisoners per 100,000 Black males in the country, compared to 1,177 sentenced Hispanic male inmates per 100,000 and 462 White male inmates per 100,000.
- By the end of 2000, African American males ages 25-29 represented 9.7% of the national prison population, compared to 2.9% Hispanic and only 1.1% White males in the same age group, and
- In 1992, while young Black males (ages 14-24) comprised about 3% of the United States population, they represented 28% of all homicide offenders and 17% of homicide victims (Bastian & Taylor, 1994; Beck & Harrison, 2001, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; U. S. Department of Justice, 2002; and Justice Policy Institute, 2002).

Examination of these quality of life indices provide vital evidence to suggest that the status and plight of African American males in America remains a matter of serious concern. Higher education can play an important role in ameliorating many of these less than favorable statistics (Hood, 1992; Cuyjet, 1997; Howard-Hamilton, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

It is a commonly known fact that when people possess a strong sense of worth, their level of performance in any arena is greatly enhanced. This is no less true in the academic environment, particularly as it pertains to post-secondary education. Educational and psychological research has consistently supported this hypothesis (Fleming, 1984; Astin, 1988; Carter, 2000). This is especially true for African Americans.

For example, in order for African American students to succeed academically, Tracey and Sedlacek (1985) determined that it is vital for them to possess positive self-concepts, realistic self-appraisals, and skills that empower them to overcome racism in their environments. Unfortunately, it is difficult to ascertain the aptitude of many African American students relative to these non-cognitive factors prior to their arrival on predominantly White college campuses. Therefore, other interventions must be considered to ameliorate their experiences after they have enrolled as students at those institutions.

Inarguably, African American men and women experience common deterrents and obstacles in the pursuit of a college education. However, the research clearly indicates differences in the participation and success rates of African American males and females. This study posits that African American males tend to encounter qualitatively different impediments to their success in higher education, particularly those enrolled at

predominantly White colleges and universities.

Post-Secondary Education and the African American Male

Concurrent with the previously delineated dismal general life indices for African American males is the statistically unfavorable status of this population in the arena of post-secondary education. It has been documented throughout much of the educational literature that the status of African American males in higher education is tenuous at best. For example, based on U.S. Bureau of Census data (1997), in 1996 African American males represented approximately 3.5% of the total enrollment (14,367,500) in post-secondary education. In 2000, according to government census data there was a continuation in the abyssal participation rates of African American males in post-secondary education, as they represented about 3.6% of the total enrollment (15,312,300) for that year.

The importance of these statistics to the status of African American males, and in a broader sense, to the African American community as a whole, should not be taken lightly. When African American males have adverse experiences in higher education, there are residual repercussions (principally economic) for the African American family as well. For example, in relation to the construct of "rites of passage" for African American men, Hill (1992) stated, "A man's worth in America has been based on his ability to provide" (p. 44). Factors such as self-esteem, confidence, and manhood are closely related to African American males' ability to earn a decent income and a reasonable standard of living for their families. In a similar vein, Cuyjet's (1997) study regarding African American men in college suggested the following:

Not only is African American men's social status diminished by their lesser ability "to provide" from positions of economic stability, but this status is further negatively affected by the disproportion of men obtaining higher education degrees, resulting in a reduced pool of potential marriage partners for the growing number of African American women who are completing college degrees and moving into occupational positions comparable to such academic levels (p. 5).

In general, African American males enrolled in higher educational institutions tend to be less successful in college than most of their peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Schwartz & Washington, 2002). Stated more succinctly, in addition to the fact that African American males are grossly underrepresented on most college campuses, there is the dilemma of the poor level of success for those who are fortunate enough to make it to college. Based on their numerical proportion in college, African American males typically under perform academically, have lower retention rates, and even lower graduation rates when compared to their peers in college (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; American Council on Education, 2001; Furr & Elling, 2002).

A significant amount of contemporary research associated with the experiences of African American students in higher education examined the comparison between their experiences at predominantly White colleges and universities versus their experiences at historically Black colleges and universities (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Furr & Elling, 2002; Schwartz & Washington, 2002). The research suggests that the experiences of African American students as a group who attend predominantly White colleges is typically more challenging than it is for majority students, often because of a cadre of

preparatory voids in the K-12 experiences of Black students (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Schwartz & Washington, 2002). However, the research also indicates that a gap exists between measures of success such as academic performance (i.e. grades and academic probation), retention (i.e. staying in school), and completion of the matriculation process (i.e. graduation) for African American males versus African American females (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Schwartz & Washington, 2002). In general, African American males enrolled at historically Black colleges and universities have more success than those who are enrolled at predominantly White colleges and universities (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

Thus, when the above mentioned measures of success are controlled for African American males who are enrolled in historically Black colleges and universities versus those enrolled at predominantly White colleges and universities, the issue of success mandates examination from another perspective. Inarguably, there are factors endemic to the climate of predominantly White colleges and universities which contribute to the paucity of success for African American males enrolled at those institutions (Fleming, 1984; Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991).

African American Gender Differences in the Higher Education Experience

African American students are undoubtedly affected in different ways by the Euro-American dominant culture mentality typically pervading the landscape of America's K-12 school systems (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991). Prior to entering college, most African American students are confronted with the dilemma of negotiating an educational system that discounts their value and invariably suggests that they are inferior

(Edelin, 1989). This, in addition to the normal transitional demands (academic rigor, socialization issues, etc.) associated with the post-secondary education experience.

It has been suggested that African American boys and young adult males in particular must deal with the prospect of overcoming negative stereotypes propagated by the media and society in general (Kunjufu, 1988). Therefore, many African American males tend to enter college with feelings of devaluation and low self-image, often harboring lingering questions about whether or not they actually belong at the predominantly White colleges and universities where they may be enrolled. Consequently, it is difficult to predict what kind of reaction African American males might have to the pronounced and pervasive dominant culture mentality that pervades the climate of many predominantly White college campuses.

The continued lack of success for many African American males enrolled in college is both alarming and unsettling, particularly when their experiences are compared to African American women. For example, while rates of participation for African American women improved marginally in the past decade, the status of African American men was in a trend of decline (Trent, 1991; Slater, 1994; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Unfortunately, statistics for the current decade do not bode well, with the gap between African American men and women actually widening (American Council on Education, 2001).

More recent studies conducted by the American Council on Education (2001) indicated that while the rate of graduation for African American women increased to approximately 43.9%, the rate of graduation for African American men was about 33.8%. These statistics are not surprising, considering that previous research consistently

supported the assertion that African American men have a tendency to experience more academic problems than African American women (Sailes, 1993; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Schwartz & Washington, 2002). Consequently, the retention and graduation rates of African American males are adversely impacted. Clearly, the evidence supports the thesis that the plight of African American males in higher education is profoundly serious and demands urgent attention from the academic community.

In close relation to the above stated thesis, particular concern should be directed at the poor levels of functioning experienced by many African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities in America. The literature suggests that African American women and men experience predominantly White colleges and universities in very different ways (Fleming, 1984; Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991). It appears that the dichotomous experiences of these gender groups may have an impact on their respective academic performances at predominantly White colleges and universities (Fleming, 1984; Schwartz & Washington, 2002).

In Fleming's (1984) seminal research concerning the experiences of African American students attending predominantly White colleges and universities, it was noted that African American women tend to have more success (higher grade point averages, higher graduation rates, etc.) at predominantly White colleges and universities than African American males. Fleming suggested that as students attending predominantly White colleges and universities, African American women demonstrate a higher level of social and intellectual adjustment than African American males.

Appropriately, it could be argued that there are distinct similarities in the struggles

African American women and men must endure and overcome as students at predominantly White colleges and universities. Conversely, there is evidence to support the hypothesis that African American males respond differently to certain common struggles than their female counterparts. Evidently unique obstacles exist that influence their experiences in these environments in differing ways. This contention can be supported via the consideration of sociological influences such as race, culture, and class (Anderson, 1990; Hubbard, 1999).

More specifically, Hubbard (1999) discussed the differences in the experiences of females and males via a study examining the college aspiration experiences of low-income African American students. This study outlined details associated with the phenomenon of increasingly wider variations in the participation of African American females compared to males with respect to educational attainment (McBay, 1992). In particular, Hubbard (*ibid*, p. 364) refers to Weiler's (1988) definition of reproduction theories of inequality, described as "processes through which existing social structures maintain and reproduce themselves". Hubbard takes this construct a step further by suggesting the following:

Studies of education informed by reproductive theories of inequality have proved useful in highlighting the role of culture in opening ever larger gaps in educational attainment between dominant and minority group members. These studies have been much less help, however, in explaining within-group variation academic achievement. This failure is attributable at least in part to the fact that most previous studies in the genre have ignored the impact of gender as an important factor (*ibid*, p. 364).

Concurrently, the differences in the motivational and ideological experiences of African American males and females have been examined as it pertains to their relationship to educational attainment (Fordman, 1996). Specifically, Fordham (p. 330) suggested that while both African American men and women may experience perceived, and/or actual acts of discrimination based on race, they respond to such acts in divergent ways. She posits that African American women may tend to ignore discrimination, which accordingly impacts their ability to actualize higher levels of academic success and persistence.

It has similarly been suggested that African American males who are able to matriculate into the sphere of higher education may continue to be burdened by some of the same maladies that sabotaged the educational pursuits of their secondary school peers (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Specifically, Howard-Hamilton states, "It is typically assumed that because an African American man has been admitted to the institution, he has overcome the odds and has the ability to successfully matriculate and graduate" (ibid, p. 17). Howard-Hamilton (ibid, 1997) intimates the likelihood that many African American males enrolled at a post-secondary institution have witnessed the physical, mental, and/or emotional demise of many their peers through the ravages of drug activity and ultimately incarceration. These young men tend to presume that a relationship exist between the experiences of African American men in our society and varying manifestations of racism experienced in the college and university setting (ibid, p. 17).

In summary, African American men and women have common deterrents that impact their efforts to realize the objective of obtaining a postsecondary education. The challenges can be distressing and seemingly insurmountable for both gender groups.

Nonetheless, while the struggles may be similar in nature, the evidence outlined above suggests the reasonableness of positing that in many ways, African American males have unique impediments to their experiences in the sphere of higher education.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural pride and consciousness are critical attributes for successful African American students attending predominantly White colleges and universities. They serve as types of psychological groundings for these students when they are confronted with racially imbued attitudes and conduct. Again, in Fleming's (1984) seminal work, she arrived at the conclusion that African American student success at predominantly White institutions is directly related to their sense of cultural self-consciousness and their ability to cope with racism.

Similarly, it has been suggested by Baldwin, Duncan, and Bell (1987) that the ability of African Americans to achieve a high level of psychological functioning is associated with their level of African self-consciousness. Baldwin et al. (1987) posited that when African Americans have a strong sense of their African identity, cultural awareness, and knowledge about their heritage, they tend to be psychologically viable and have an enhanced ability to more effectively deal with perceived acts of racism that may occur in their environment.

For African Americans, possession of a strong sense of culture is critically important to their ability to achieve high levels of mental and psychological functioning, especially in environments that are perceived to be less than welcoming and receptive of persons from a non-majority racial group (Baldwin, et al., 1987). Pollard, (1993) suggested that African Americans who demonstrate positive cultural awareness tend to

have better self-affirmation skills and consequently are healthier mental beings.

Additional research supports the importance of group and community for certain individuals in the process they use to countermand the effects of less than supportive environments. It has been suggested that Black and Latino students typically embrace a collectivistic ideology as a salient tool to facilitate their success in predominantly White colleges and/or universities (Constantine, Robinson, Wilton, & Caldwell, 2002). In taking this concept a step further, these researchers emphasize the value of examining perceptions of “fit” or cultural congruity for these students. In this context, the concept of cultural congruity entails initiating an assessment of “the fit between individuals’ personal values and the values of the environment in which they operate” (p. 309).

Some researchers have suggested that investigations involving the examination of issues germane to members of specific cultural backgrounds and experiences should utilize valid and reliable instruments wherein the ideological perspective of the participants is imbedded within the framework of the investigative tool (Azibo, 1983; Baldwin, et al., 1987). In consideration of that contention, this study will use ideologically oriented scales designed to measure the value of two cultural based constructs, African self-consciousness and cultural congruity. The measured values of the two constructs will serve as the theoretical framework for investigating the academic performance and persistence of African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the psychosocial adjustment process of African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest.

Specifically, this study will examine the strength and direction of the relationship between two measured constructs, African self-consciousness and cultural congruence. The aggregate scores of those two constructs (denoted by the variables ASCTOT and CCSTOT) will then be used as independent (predictor) variables to predict their influence on two dependent (outcome) variables, academic performance (cumulative grade point average [GPA]) and academic persistence (progress towards graduation [AP]) for African American males attending a predominantly White public university in the Midwest.

A deliberate and conscious effort will be exercised by the investigator during the procedure of explaining the parameters of the study and expectations of participants, to inform participants about the anonymous nature of the data to be collected during the study. Thus, there should be a minimal level of concern relative to the likelihood of participants providing less than accurate responses to any of the items on the questionnaires, particularly with respect to reporting their cumulative grade point average. The results of the study should provide recommendations for faculty, staff, and administrators employed at predominantly White colleges and universities to inform their campus-based initiatives designed to aid African American males in the post-secondary education process.

Research Questions

The primary research focus for this study was to examine factors that might impact the academic performance of African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities. Academic performance in this study is specifically concerned with participant success in the classroom, in this case measured by their

cumulative grade point average. The issues of retention and/or persistence are measured by assessing participant progress towards graduation.

There was an assumption that as African Americans, participants in the study would express some level of the African self-consciousness construct. However, this assumption is partially dependent upon the formative cultural experience of each participant. This study also attempts to determine if a relationship existed between participant's level of African self-consciousness and their sense of cultural congruence. Moreover, the strength and direction of that relationship will be used to predict academic performance (high cumulative grade point average [GPA]) and academic persistence (progress towards graduation [AP]) of African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest.

The following questions will be investigated as a part of the study:

1. Is there a relationship between African self-consciousness and cultural congruence for African American males attending a predominantly White university?
2. Is there a relationship between African self-consciousness (ASC), cultural congruence (CCS), and academic performance (HGPA) for African American males attending a predominantly White university?
3. Is there a relationship between African self-consciousness (ASC), cultural congruence (CCS) and academic persistence (AP) for African American males attending a predominantly White university?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be investigated as a part of this study:

1. There will be a positive relationship between participant aggregate scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASCTOT) and participant aggregate scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCSTOT) for African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities. This hypothesis is represented by the following formula: **H₀: $\wedge ASCTOT = \wedge CCSTOT$.**
2. There will be a positive relationship between participant aggregate scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASCTOT), participant aggregate scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCSTOT) and high cumulative grade point average (HGPA) of African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities. This hypothesis is represented by the following formula: **H₀: $ASCTOT+CCSTOT = \wedge HGPA$.**
3. There will be a positive relationship between participant aggregate scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASCTOT), participant aggregate scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCSTOT) and higher rates of academic persistence (AP) for African American males attending a predominantly White university. This hypothesis is represented by the following formula: **H₀: $ASCTOT+CCSTOT = \wedge AP$.**

Importance of the Study

This study is important because it augments the limited body of knowledge focusing on improving the probability of success for African American males as students attending predominantly White colleges and universities. Hopefully, the results and recommendations emerging from this study will generate further research exploring the unique differences in the experiences of African American males and females attending

predominantly White postsecondary institutions.

Finally, the results of the study should provide additional information for faculty, staff and administrators employed at predominantly White colleges and universities to inform their development of pedagogy, course curriculum, personal counseling, co-curricular and/or student programming designed to improve the status of African American males on their respective campuses.

Summary

In summary, clear evidence exists to suggest that outcomes of this research could have great potential. Given the paucity of treatment of this subject matter in educational, psychological, and student development literature, ideally this study will serve as a catalyst to increase the scholarly inquiry into the plight of African American males in the American milieu. This study also augments the limited amount of foundational research that currently exists associated with the academic and social success of African American males that attend predominantly White colleges and universities. Faculty, staff and administrators should be able to use the results of this study to inform the development of pedagogy, curriculum, counseling services, and other student development programming designed to improve the status of African American males on their respective campuses.

Definitions of Terms

1. Academic performance- cumulative college grade point average (GPA).
2. Academic persistence- progress towards graduation (AP).
3. African self-consciousness- the expression of attitudes and behaviors by African Americans, which reflect the norms, beliefs, values, and ethical standards associated with their culture (Baldwin, 1987).

4. Cultural congruence- the fit between individuals' personal values and the values of the environment in which they operate (Gloria & Robinson-Kurpius, 1996).
5. Dominant culture- the dominant culture refers to influence of the values and beliefs that have been defined by White European Americans, and more specifically those very few who have a great amount of power and wealth (Helms, 1990).
6. Persistence- the act of making academic progress towards graduation.
7. Predominantly White institutions- a college and/or university whose racial makeup consists of 20% or less of students from underrepresented (African American, Latino, Hispanic, Native American Indian, Asian American) groups.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Socio-Cultural Influences on the African American Experience

The 1960's served as pivotal decade in the impending transformation of America, particularly as it relates to dramatic changes in the cultural minutiae of African Americans (Wilson, 1987). African Americans of this period, who did not reside in otherwise rural communities, were primarily relegated to domiciles located within the confines of America's inner cities (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1965). Concurrently, the attitudes, ideologies, and motivations of many African Americans were shaped by what was often perceived to be a hopeless and futile situation. In particular, Gans (1967) noted that "urban analysts began to speak of a new dimension to the urban crisis in the form of a large sub-population of low-income families whose behavior contrasted sharply with the behavior of the general population." Given that African Americans comprised the largest group populating the nation's inner cities, concurrently, the debilitating effect was more appreciably exacted upon that sub-population of the country.

In the next decade, a flurry of commission reports warned about the prospects for increasing societal division based on the combination of race and poverty. These reports suggested that the coming decades would be evidenced by a more marked demarcation of the populations our cities and states based primarily on one's affiliation with a specific racial group. Nowhere was this more evident than the division of Black and White Americans (Wilson, 1987). In particular, the division of Blacks and Whites only served to exacerbate the influence of housing, employment, educational, and a myriad of other

forms of discrimination based on race. Wilson (ibid, p. 20) states, “the social problems of urban life in the United States are, in large measure, the problems of racial inequality”. In the general absence of regional strategies that would spread resources more evenly, the "chocolate-city--vanilla-suburbs" pattern that the Kerner Commission foresaw also presages the development of "garrison cities . . . where order is achieved by force rather than by consent" (Skolnick, 1995, p. 1; Jimenez, 1998).

Census data indicates that most of America continues to be segregated along lines of race (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Most White Americans reside in rural or suburban communities, while most people of color reside in urban or inner city communities. It is also true that in spite of the expansion of the “Black middle-class” over the past three decades, the vast majority of African Americans (in particular, those who are poor or members of the working class) reside in urban or inner city communities. Predictably, this racial divide in America essentially serves to operationalize and perpetuate misperceptions and stereotypes that many White Americans harbor about African Americans in general, and in the context of this study, the African American male in particular (Davis & Gandy, 1999; Hoberman, 2000).

In the 30 years since the Watts riots, many believe American society has moved closer to that apocalyptic scenario forecasted by the Kerner Commission report (Jimenez, 1998). One of the byproducts of “White flight” to the suburbs of America has been a corresponding “flight” of jobs and employment opportunities from the city to suburbs and rural communities. Thus, in many cases, the only truly viable means of employment for those who were unable to escape from the destituteness of urban America is the “underground economy” of crime, and in particular, the sale of illegal drugs. This has

resulted in one of the more profound symptoms of the racial divide in America; the continued expansion of the African American male population in our nations prisons (Justice Policy Institute, 2002; U. S. Department of Justice, 2001).

A more cogent illustration of the disturbingly disproportionate participation of African American males in our nation's prisons can be acquired from the following:

- While African American males only represent approximately 6% of our nations population, unfortunately they represent approximately 50% of the U.S. prison population (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001; and Justice Policy Institute, 2002),
- African American males are arrested, arraigned, convicted, at higher rates, and receive longer and harsher sentences than any other racial group in the country (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001; Justice Policy Institute, 2002), and
- There is a greater preponderance of African American males housed in our nation's prisons than there are attending a college or university (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001; Justice Policy Institute, 2002).

An ominous validation of this contention can be found through an examination of the California state budget. Essentially, prison building and maintenance translates into a reduction in the expenditures for health, welfare, and educational services (Skolnick, 1995). The *New York Times* cites figures on shifting expenditures in California: in 1986, 12.6% of the budget was allocated for higher education and 2% for prisons. In 1994, both were 9%. By 2002, the projected allocations were 1% for higher education and 18% for the prisons. This kind of shift in a state's priorities has profound implications in terms of its impact on all students. However, there is a far greater significance for the population that is the focus of this study.

Basically, one could surmise that leaders of our government, at the federal and state level, appear to be quite content with allocating our precious financial resources to the imprisonment of African American males versus trying to educate them. This contention is supported by the unrequited dearth of effort and interest that focuses on the amelioration of this issue. The preponderance of this phenomenon is clearly an unnecessary misuse and waste of valuable monetary and human capital for our country.

Effect of Elevated Incarceration Rates of African American Males

The racial and class makeup of most inner cities in America greatly influences the preponderance of the disproportionate representation of African American males in the prisons of America (Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1990). White flight, melded with the concurrent exodus of the African American middle class from our central cities has caused these areas to become replete of a sufficient tax base to support all but the most essential municipal services for the operation of these cities (ibid, 1987; ibid, 1990).

The result of these phenomena was the emergence of a new class of people in America, the underclass. "In the mid-1960's, urban analysts began to speak of a new dimension to the urban crisis in the form of a large subpopulation of low-income families and individuals whose behavior contrasted sharply with the behavior of the general population" (Wilson, 1987, p. 3). Very few thriving businesses save for the requisite liquor store to perpetuate anti-social and self-deprecating behaviors, exist in these areas. It would be an oxymoron to call these environments "communities" in most cases. These communities are generally composed of three types of people; poor, black or brown (Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1990). As critical to this exodus is the void of positive role models for those who have no means of escape.

The relationship between 'old heads' and young boys represents an important institution of the traditional black community (Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1990). The old head's acknowledged role was to teach, support, encourage, and in effect socialize young men to meet their responsibilities with regard to the work ethic, family life, the law, and decency. But as meaningful employment has become increasingly scarce, drugs more accessible, and crime a way of life for many young black men, this institution has undergone stress and significant change (Anderson, 1990).

Young adolescent men (irrespective of race) have a greater tendency to commit, and/or be convicted of crimes than other age groups in our society (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). Generally speaking, the dearth of positive role models, particularly in areas with high rates of poverty, greatly contributes to inability of adolescents to emulate more constructive behavior patterns. This is particular true for African American males. Thus, it is a valid assumption that young African American males that reside in the inner city will have a proclivity to become involved in activities they perceive to be their best, and in many cases "only" chance for survival (Anderson, 1990). The ancillary effect of this scenario is the negative image that permeates the minds of many Americans due largely to their lack of connection and affiliation with young African American males. This phenomenon has principally evolved due to the isolationism that exists between the vast majorities of the American public from the occupants of the nations inner cities (ibid, 1990).

All too often the only image that most Americans have of young African American males is the one conveyed through the eyes of a primarily White, Anglo-Saxon, male dominated media (Drummond, 1991; Davis & Gandy, 1999; Hoberman, 2000). "News

media have taken the lead in equating young African American males with aggressiveness, lawlessness, and violence. Entertainment media have eagerly taken their cue from the journalists. The false image not only affects race relations, but creates a self-fulfilling prophecy for African-American youngsters, whose limits of achievement can be predetermined for them by suggestions in the media” (Drummond, 1991). Racial barriers and stereotypes are the byproducts of these types of activities. To fully appreciate the gravity of this situation, it is imperative that we consider another result of the conveyance of these images.

In the large majority of our cities and urban areas of America, the racial composition of most police forces is skewed toward White males. Many of these White male police officers are the most recent of several generations of law enforcement members from their respective families. However, the manner in which they differ from their predecessors is often their place of residence in relative proximity to many of the citizens that they are commissioned to, protect and serve. They are often mandated by the rules of the municipality to reside within the city limits. Many of them satisfy that mandate, but often do so by choosing to live at the far reaches and limitations of the boundary of the city. Granted, everyone has the right to live wherever they choose.

Unfortunately, the tendency for this scenario to occur has implications and ramifications that directly impact the issue being addressed in this paper. The lack of connectivity or communal relationships between police officers and African American males (especially during the adolescent years) adversely affects the negative perceptions that both groups have about one another. Fear, distrust, and apprehension will prevail. This will usually precipitate in the likelihood of racial profiling, harassment, arrests, and

eventually incarcerations.

Statistical evidence tends to offer some credence to this conclusion. In 1993, of the total arrests made in cities in the U.S., Whites were arrested 5,776,804 times or 64.2% of the total (9,000,265). Blacks were arrested 3,039,675 times or 33.8% of the total. However, in rural counties Whites were arrested 703,726 times or 79.2% of the total (888,339) and Blacks were arrested 145,909 times or 16.4% of the total (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1993). Rates of arrests are important considering the fact that criminologists have found that there is a direct correlation between the types and numbers of arrests, rates of incarceration, and the length of sentences (Mauer, 1995). In 2001, there was a continuation in that trend of disproportionate rates of arrest and incarceration based on race, particularly when comparing African American males with White American males (U. S. Department of Justice, 2001; FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2001).

Of particular interest is the difference in arrest rates for African American males who reside in rural communities versus urban communities. One hypothesis that might explain this difference is the personal connection that might exist between law enforcement officials in rural “communities”, as opposed to the absence of this connectivity that is so pervasive in the city (Wilson, 1987). Inasmuch as it is probable that other factors contribute to arrest rates and incarceration, it might be useful to consider the unique relational dynamic of the rural community as a potential remedy to the disproportionate and disturbing arrest rates evidenced in Americas urban communities.

The Predetermined Role of African Males by America’s Founding Fathers

The initial introduction of males of African descent has primarily been attributed to their exportation from Africa in the form of slaves. They were bought and sold to

provide for the requisite “cheap labor” needed for America’s economic growth and expansion (Woodson, 1933). This idea is in direct correlation with the fundamental principles of capitalism. Capitalism is an economic concept that derives its success by combining the resources of cheap labor and cheap natural resources (usually in the form of land or real estate) to generate large sums of capital. The colonists, most having come to America to escape the limitations of religious freedom and/or the royal hierarchy of Europe, saw a golden opportunity in this newly “discovered” land (even though it was already occupied by an indigenous people).

After the colonists plundered America’s land and natural resources from the Native Indians, (by whatever means necessary, particularly by force) the capitalists soon determined that the free labor of the indentured servant was essential in order to effectively achieve their capitalistic pursuits. It should be noted that those that originally served in this capacity were white for the most part (Coombs, 1972). Slavery is a phenomenon that has existed throughout the history of mankind. The following excerpt outlines the distinction between the American system of slavery and other forms of slavery that have existed in the world.

The slave system in America was unique in human history. Sometimes slaves were treated cruelly, at other times with kindness. They were more often used as a sign of affluence, a way of displaying one’s wealth and enjoying luxury, rather than the means for the systematic accumulation of wealth. Previously, slavery had existed in hierarchical societies in which the slave was at the bottom of a social ladder, the most inferior in a society of unequals. While each society normally preferred to choose its slaves from alien people, it did not limit its selection

exclusively to the members of any one race. Slave inferiority did not lead necessarily to racial inferiority. In contrast to this, slavery in America was set apart by three characteristics: capitalism, individualism, and racism (Coombs, 1972).

Eventually, Africans were used exclusively as slaves in America (DuBois, 1903, Franklin, 1949). The system of indentured servitude was eliminated in about 1660 after complaints of the deplorable working conditions of slaves reached England, which in turn discouraged the flow of free white labor. But the colonists were undeterred in their pursuit of the fruits of wealth and prosperity. African slaves had no rights, nor anyone to advocate for their cause. Thus the free labor of the African slave (primarily the males) became the fuel that drove the economic engine of capitalism. It should be noted that African females played a vital role as well, primarily as domestic help and to serve as the progenitors of future generations of “human chattel” for their masters. Life on the plantations was hard, and no consideration was given to the cultural traditions of blacks. In the slave market, men were separated from their wives, and frequently children were taken from their mothers. Family and tribal links were thus almost immediately cut off. This signaled the beginning of an ideology that emphasized human degradation, with particular focus placed on the emasculation of the African male slave. The debilitating effects of this process would transcend and impact the future generations of these African slaves (DuBois, 1903; Woodson, 1933).

Consideration of the concept of individualism in greater depth might be beneficial at this juncture. It is somewhat ironic that the colonists were able to justify the exclusive slavery of the African race of people in the context of this purported experiment of

freedom and democracy, which eventually became known as America, “the land of the free, and the home of the brave.” Consider the following:

While this democratic spirit attracted many European immigrants, it only served to increase the burden of slavery for the African. Instead of being at the bottom of the social ladder, the slave in America was an inferior among equals. A society, which represented itself as recognizing individual worth and providing room for the development of talent, rigidly organized the entire life of the slave and gave him little opportunity to develop his skills. In America, a person’s worth became identified with economic achievement. The existence of slavery in a society which maintained its belief in equality was a contradiction which men strove diligently to ignore (Coombs (1972).

There is a surreal irony intimated by Coombs in the latter portion of the quote delineated above, particularly in terms of the contemporary context of our nation. Specifically, it is often the case that individuals who raise questions about the plight of African Americans males are invariably accused of propagating a misguided philosophical thesis of racial conspiracy. Unfortunately, it is quite paradoxical and curiously coincidental that such a significant portion of the African American male population in America remains in much the same dilemma that many of their forefathers faced over 300 years ago. In spite of the obvious reality of the deplorable experience of many African American men, there continue to be proponents of a fallacious and defective doctrine that “equality” of opportunity is available to every citizen in 21st century America. Nonetheless, racism and xenophobia are alive and well in contemporary America (West, 1994). However, the difficulty of proving the veracity of this contention

lies within the difficulty of quantifying subjective attitudes and ideologies such as bigotry, discrimination and racial prejudice. However, there is certainly a significant amount of circumstantial and anecdotal evidence to support the premises posited regarding this belief within the body of this study.

Another aspect of the institution of slavery that elucidates its influence on the development of racism is delineated in the following statement:

In America, with only a few early and insignificant exceptions, all slaves were Africans, and almost all Africans were slaves. This placed the label of inferiority on black skin and on African culture. In other societies, it had been possible for a slave who obtained his freedom to take his place in his society with relative ease.

In America, however, when a slave became free, he was still obviously an African. The taint of inferiority clung to him (Coombs, 1972).

Racism in America is fundamentally the byproduct and extension of the colonists' conscious efforts to perpetuate their tenuous positions of economic class and status in a capitalistic society. Ultimately, the construct of race and its itinerant cousin of racism have been used to consistently relegate persons of African descent to the lowest position of human value in the perception of many Americans (regardless of race or creed). No other group of people that voluntarily immigrated into this country has faced a similar degree of castigation or oppression as the African slave (Allen, 1994). The enslavement of Africans was initially a tool for ensuring economic sovereignty for White, European capitalists in America. In contemporary times, the byproducts of African slavery, racism and xenophobia, have emerged as insidious enigma for which America cannot resolutely absolve itself of. For many African American males, the debilitating effects of racism

have taken on a life of their own in America.

African American Males and Their Experience in the American Workforce

Throughout the 18th, 19th and over half of the 20th century, the value of African American males was directly associated with their ability to provide free and/or cheap unskilled labor (Cox, 1970). Not only were they effectively locked out of positions of opportunity within the entrepreneurial and white-collar ranks of employment, they also constantly faced the dilemma of being perceived as competitors for working class Whites. As new immigrants (Irish, Italian, Polish, and Asian for example) sought to gain entry into the workforce to glean their fruits of democracy, in most cases, they were forced to compete for the same blue-collar, unskilled labor positions that the vast majority of African Americans saw as their “only” option for financial survival. Thus the phenomenon of “labor competition” evolved, which only served to perpetuate racist attitudes in America (Cox, 1970).

As the demand for unskilled labor in the industrial and manufacturing sector began to diminish in the '70's and '80's, the African American male seemed to diminish in relative value in the American society. In many cases, his counterparts were better able to facilitate the transition (by virtue of their ability to assimilate and take on the concomitant air of “whiteness” necessary for acceptance) into various sectors of the workforce. Consider the following:

The success of the Irish in being recognized as White resulted largely from the political power of Irish and immigrant voters. The imperative to define themselves as White came but from the particular public and psychological wages whiteness offered to a desperate rural and often pre-industrial population coming to labor in

industrializing American cities (Roediger, 1991).

The African American male often found himself struggling to cope with the demands of a legacy of racism, which in many cases is now being perpetuated by those who have no real knowledge of its roots or origin. But as long as these newcomers can be benefactors of this pernicious fallacy of racial superiority, they will most likely remain ardently supportive of its survival.

Workforce statistics generated during the 1990's bear witness to the fact that all too often the African-American male is fundamentally isolated from all but the lower echelons of the labor market. For example, in March 1992, Black men aged 16 and over were less likely than White men to be in the labor force (70 percent compared with 76 percent). However, the labor force participation rates for Black and White women (58 percent) did not differ. Moreover, the unemployment rate for Blacks (14 percent) was more than double that for Whites (6 percent). Proportionately fewer Black than White men worked in managerial and professional specialty jobs (14 percent versus 27 percent); relatively more Black men were operators, fabricators, and laborers (31 percent versus 19 percent) and held service jobs (19 percent compared with 9 percent) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1995).

Unfortunately, statistical data indicates that the situation for African Americans did not bode well as they entered the current millennium. For example, in the first half of 2003, the unemployment rate for persons identifying themselves as African American was 10.9%, or almost double the 6.0% rate for White Americans, according to the U. S. Census Bureau (2002). Concurrently, a clear disparity exists between the earnings of these two racial groups, particularly for persons who have been beneficiaries of a post-

secondary education. Again, according to U. S. Census data (2002), African Americans with a bachelor's degree earned \$40,916, while White Americans earned \$54,220. African Americans in possession of a master's degree earned \$52,135, compared to \$66,214 for White Americans. Lastly, African Americans who have a doctorate degree earned \$63,905 and their White counterparts earned \$88,902 (ibid, 2002).

How is it possible that such a divergent gap continues to pervade the experiences of Black and White people in this country? Clearly, the statistics above, and other critical quality of life indices, suggest that race must be considered as a compelling factor that contributes to the disparate workforce and consequently, the economic viability of differing racial groups in America. Inarguably, true equality and equity continues to elude a significant portion of our nation's citizenry.

The Information Age and the African American Experience

The decrease in the number of industrial based jobs has affected a large segment of the American population, regardless of race. Nonetheless, the deindustrialization of America has adversely impacted the African American male's ability to provide a decent standard of living for him and/or his family to a greater degree than any other group in our population. How? A large majority of African American males reside in the urban centers of our country where the effects of inadequate racially segregated and poorly funded P-12 school systems typically provide an unsatisfactory education for its recipients.

The less than adequate education received by many African Americans in contemporary times is disheartening when considered in the context of the early educational experiences of their predecessors. African slaves suffered the debilitating

effect of not only being discouraged from getting an education, but actually being subjected to the potential of being legally penalized if caught or suspected of committing such an act (Patton, 1981). In many respects, there yet exists a very low value placed on the idea of education for many African Americans. It has been noted that the affirmative action and civil rights efforts of the last three decades have materially benefited various groups in the United States population, notably the African American middle class, White women, Hispanics, Latinos and Asians. However, a large majority of people who constitute the unskilled labor force, specifically African American males who reside in the inner cities of America, have been virtually shut out of the benefit pool with respect to these initiatives (Wilson, 1987).

As America has made the transition from an “industrial” based economy to a “service” based economy initiated by the advent of the “Information Age” of computers and the Internet, the implications have been dramatic for unskilled and uneducated African American males. Those manufacturing based jobs, which had the potential of providing a solid middle-class income for previous generations of African American males, are in short supply today. Jobs that have been created in this category over the last decade are often located in rural and non-union environments, suggesting the likelihood that racial and discriminatory undertones may be associated with the strategic placement of those jobs in these primarily White populated locales. Even during those times when there were a significant number of manufacturing based jobs, and those tertiary related jobs generated by industry, African American males consistently experienced a higher rate of unemployment than their white counterparts (Braddock & McPartland, 1987). Consequently, it is easy to surmise that the imminent reduction of jobs in this sector of

the labor force would have a more demonstrable impact on the African American male than any other sub-population in our society.

Accordingly, the impact of this transformation on the American work force on the young African American male must be considered in relation to any discussion about the disproportionate representation of African-American men in our prisons. “A central problem with the incapacitation paradigm is the fact that crime is largely a youthful act, especially for male adolescents” (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). This is an important point given that large majorities of inner city youth have the least amount of education and have relatively few options for employment. If they wish to provide for the needs of themselves (and sometimes for their entire family), most see no other option but to resort to criminal activity. Consider the following:

Despite the difficulty in disentangling the link between crime and the economy, most ethnographic and sociological analyses over the years suggest that economic and neighborhood conditions strongly affect crime and incarceration. At a minimum, individuals’ perceptions of economic opportunities—whether or not they reflect real conditions—can influence the choice between crime and employment (Currie, 1985).

Special emphasis must be ascribed to the word “perceptions.” Essentially, many young African American males believe (factual or not) that they have very limited options relative to the opportunity of finding gainful “legal” employment. The reduction or elimination of those jobs that their fathers depended upon to provide for their families is a key factor for the persistence of this perception. Another vital factor that contributes to this misperception is the composition of the environments that exist in our nation’s

ghettos and inner cities.

Workforce Changes and Their Effect on the African American Community

The racial and class makeup of most inner cities in America greatly influences the preponderance of the disproportionate representation of African American males in the prisons of America. White flight, melded with the concurrent exodus of the African American middle class from our central cities, has caused these areas to become replete of a sufficient tax base to support all but the most essential municipal services for the operation of these cities. The result of these phenomena was the emergence of a new class of people in America, the underclass. "In the mid-1960's, urban analysts began to speak of a new dimension to the urban crisis in the form of a large subpopulation of low-income families and individuals whose behavior contrasted sharply with the behavior of the general population" (Wilson, 1987). Few thriving business establishments, save for the requisite liquor store to perpetuate anti-social and self-deprecating behaviors, exist in these areas. It would be an oxymoron to call these environments "communities" in most cases. These areas are generally composed of three types of people; poor, black or brown.

Critical to this exodus is the void of positive role models for those who have no means of escape. "The relationship between 'old heads' and young boys represents an important institution of the traditional black community. The old head's acknowledged role was to teach, support, encourage, and in effect socialize young men to meet their responsibilities with regard to the work ethic, family life, the law, and decency. But as meaningful employment has become increasingly scarce, drugs more accessible, and crime a way of life for many young black men, this institution has undergone stress and significant change" (Anderson, 1990). As has been stated, many young adolescent men

(irrespective of race) have a greater tendency to commit crimes. Similarly, if there is a dearth of examples of positive role models present for them to emulate more constructive behavior patterns, then it is a valid assumption that young African American males who reside in the inner city will have a proclivity to become involved in those activities that they perceive to be their best chance for survival. But there is an additional effect to this scenario. That is the negative image that permeates the minds of many Americans due largely to the lack of connection and affiliation with young African American males that has evolved as a result of the isolation of our inner cities.

All too often the only image that most Americans have of young African American males is the one conveyed through the eyes of a primarily White, Anglo-Saxon, male dominated media. "News media have taken the lead in equating young African American males with aggressiveness, lawlessness, and violence. Entertainment media have eagerly taken their cue from the journalists. The false image not only affects race relations, but creates a self-fulfilling prophecy for African-American youngsters, whose limits of achievement can be predetermined for them by suggestions in the media" (Drummond, 1991). Racial barriers and stereotypes are the byproducts of these types of activities. To fully appreciate the gravity of this situation, it is imperative that we consider another result of the conveyance of these images.

In the large majority of our cities and urban areas of America, the racial composition of most police forces is skewed toward White males. Many of these White male police officers are the most recent of several generations of law enforcement members from their respective families. However, the manner in which they differ from their predecessors is often their place of residence in relative proximity to many of the

citizens that they are commissioned to protect and serve. They are often mandated by the rules of the municipality to reside within the city limits. Many of them satisfy that mandate, but often do so by choosing to live at the far reaches and limitations of the boundary of the city. Granted, everyone has the right to live wherever they choose.

Unfortunately, the tendency for this scenario to occur has implications and ramifications that directly impact the issue addressed in this paper. The lack of connectivity or communal relationships between police officers and African American males (especially during the adolescent years) adversely affects the negative perceptions that both groups have about one another. Fear, distrust, and apprehension will prevail. This will usually precipitate in the likelihood of racial profiling, harassment, arrests, and eventually incarcerations. Statistical evidence tends to offer some credence to this conclusion. In 1993, of the total arrests made in cities in the U.S., Whites were arrested 5,776,804 times or 64.2% of the total (9,000,265). Blacks were arrested 3,039,675 times or 33.8% of the total. However, in rural counties Whites were arrested 703,726 times or 79.2% of the total (888,339) and Blacks were arrested 145,909 times or 16.4% of the total (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1993). This is important considering that it has been posited that a direct correlation exists between the types and numbers of arrests, rates of incarceration, and the length of sentences (Mauer, 1995).

An analysis of these numbers suggests other factors may contribute to the significant reduction in the arrest rates of African Americans in rural counties as opposed to cities. For example, it is reasonable to posit that a difference in the type and amount of personal connection that is likely to exist between the law enforcement official and African Americans in rural "communities" versus the "inner city" greatly contributes to

the arrest rates of these citizens. Certainly other attributing factors to the issues of arrests rates and incarceration of African Americans are likely to exist; however, it might be useful to consider the above stated premise as a potential remedy to the problem.

Implications of Disproportionate Incarceration Rates of African American

Males

The overrepresentation of African American males in the prisons of America is an enigma that in contemporary times would seem unconscionable and unacceptable in a country that history will assuredly extol as a monument to the concept of a civilized, democratic human society. Nonetheless, rectifying the problem will not be easy. The complexity and development of the problem spans a period of approximately 300 years. It stands to reason that the solution will have to be multi-dimensional and facilitated over an extended period of time, under the premise that change will most likely be incremental under the best of circumstances.

However, prior to any discussion regarding the methods for improving this phenomenon, a dialogue relative to our societal commitment may be necessary. Does anyone really care? Do we believe change is possible? Why is it in the best interest of every member of our society to address this issue? Are most Americans truly ready to face and discuss their preoccupation with racism and sincerely move toward a “color blind” society? Is there a real belief that African American males actually possess the capacity to function in the job market in positions that require intellectual skills versus physical ability alone?

Some have posited that America can never fully reach its potential in the global marketplace until every segment of the population is operating at an optimum level of

performance and efficiency (DuBois, 1903, Wilson, 1987). In essence, a deliberate effort should be made to empower citizens of our country with the ability to effectively contribute to our labor force if the economic machine of American capitalism is to be a viable competitor on a global scale. Accordingly, if a significant segment of the potential work force is incarcerated and therefore essentially non-productive with respect to the nation's economic machine, consequently the nation will operate below its productive potential. But this premise must be understood in the context of the hypothesis that there are persons in this country who benefit greatly from maintaining the status quo relative to the overrepresentation of African American males in our prisons. Thus, the incentive to pursue and formulate a solution to the problem remains minuscule at best.

Consider the following: "The impact of a prison sentence on a person's earning power has to be understood in terms of the way it situates the former prisoner in economic and social networks" (Hagan, 1993). What are the economic results of an individual being incarcerated? "The removal of the prisoner (from his/her community) may represent a moderate loss of economic value to the home community, but it is a boon to the prison community. Each prisoner represents as much as \$25,000 in income for the community in which the prison is located, not to mention the value of constructing the prison facility in the first place" (McDonald, 1989). Construction, maintenance and operation of a prison can be a very lucrative business. So where are most prison facilities located or constructed today? Generally in the rural communities of America, which are primarily populated by White, Anglo-Saxon families (U. S. Census Bureau, 2002). Ironically, this is almost an exact parallel to the previous contention relative to the location and placement of most manufacturing and industrial facilities over the last two

decades. Thus, it can be surmised that if one has a predisposition toward racism and can directly benefit financially in either of the aspects mentioned above, then the motive for continuing the status quo (incarceration of African American males) is dichotomous in nature. Additionally, if negative perceptions and stereotypes about African American males can be perpetuated via the media and other sources of public information, this lends itself to the emergence of a seemingly never-ending cash cow. Consequently, these phenomena are easily recognized as pervasive obstacles to any realistic remedy to the issue of the disproportionate incarceration of African American males in our prisons.

Clearly, a true commitment to the education of African American males must be considered as vital to any true resolution of this predicament. Education has served as the salvation of those who were disadvantaged in America from the earliest days of its existence. Those who occupy the upper echelons of American society understand and embrace the value of education, irrespective of their race, creed, or color. Programs that facilitate the building of relationships and/or networks between young African American males and law enforcement officials should be implemented as a standard practice in the urban centers of our country. Financial support should be budgeted for the design and development of mentoring programs between successful African American adults and youth that reside in these centers. Such programs have proven to be very effective in the past.

The implications are quite simple. Lack of redress associated with this issue will only serve as a catalyst for continued growth in the population of African American males in the prisons of America. In all likelihood, the disparate percentage of African American children being raised in female-headed households will likely continue to increase or

remain at current levels at best. There cannot be an expectation of significant positive outcomes from this type of occurrence, based on past history. Note the following:

It is well established that family dissolution can adversely affect the formative life experiences of children. Consequently, the incarceration of a parent is very likely to lead to a prediction of lifelong difficulties for the offspring of the incarcerated individual. The few studies of this phenomenon document the theoretical and practical significance of the problem and the fact that it differentially affects families of color (King, 1993).

Perceptions and images of African American males will continue to be of a negative nature for many of our nation's citizens. Many young African American males are likely to have a dismal outlook relative to their prospects of ever becoming full-fledged participants in the fruits of prosperity, purportedly attainable via America's free enterprise, capitalistic system. In summary, the chasm of racial divide in America will most likely continue to be filled with distrust and discord until a serious effort to ameliorate the problem is appropriately prioritized by both the African American community and our nation's leadership. Accordingly, is it reasonable to posit that a negative residual impact on the higher education experiences of African American males will continue if their disproportionate incarceration rates are ignored in our country.

Affirmative Action Admissions Policies and

African American Male College Participation

Our world has proceeded into the throes of a new millennium. The close of the 20th century was undoubtedly vastly different from what history tells us the end of the 19th century resembled. Nonetheless, one of the parallel issues of that century that

continues to threaten the status of human relations in America is the belief in racial superiority, and the concomitant behavior of racial discrimination. The glorious history of America is tainted by the racially biased laws that legally denied people of African descent the right to participate in the basic aspects of life in this country (Woodson, 1933; Frazier, 1949; Wilson, 1987). The pursuit of an education was but one of those rights that was denied. Only when wholesale changes in the country's laws and legislation were adopted after the Civil War were people of African descent allowed access to a basic K-12 education (Woodson, 1933; Frazier, 1949).

Access to the nation's colleges and universities remained off limits to persons of African descent well into the 20th century (Woodson, 1933; Frazier, 1949). Thus, people of African descent were forced to create their own system for acquiring a post-secondary education. This denial of access to predominantly White colleges and universities served as the genesis of historically Black colleges and universities in America (Allen, 1992; Anderson, 1998; Brown & Davis, 2001). Brown & Davis (2001) state, "Black colleges are distinctly unique from other American post-secondary institutions because they were founded and developed in an environment marked by legal hostile segregation." Essentially, these institutions evolved out of necessity and as a consequence of America's unwillingness to support the post-secondary academic interests of its citizens whose only transgression was their birth in a country that vilified and traduced their ancestry from an African lineage.

The advent of laws establishing the unconstitutionality of the "separate but equal" educational structure made it illegal for White colleges and universities to deny racial minorities entrance into their institutions (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). However,

the paucity in enrollment of racial minorities at these institutions continued well into the early '70's (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Swartz & Washington, 2002). Soon admissions officers at predominantly White colleges and universities succumbed to growing criticism and the threat of litigation due to the lack of participation of racial minorities. The result was the development of various affirmative action policies in the admissions review process (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Fosu, 2000).

Unfortunately, the achievements realized over the past several decades, partially as a consequence of affirmative action policies used in post-secondary admissions, have been threatened by some who posit that such practices are outdated, unfair, and allegedly illegal (Cross, 1999). In particular, during the decade of the '90's a significant movement emerged to eliminate affirmative action policies, and in particular, the use of race in the admission process (*Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996; *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003). Affirmative action opponents suggested post-secondary institutions that utilized such policies in their admissions process should review, modify and/or completely dismantle them. By doing so, they posited that such action would curtail the likelihood of injuries to parties who were not impacted by past racial discrimination practices. Many of these same individuals suggested that while racial diversity is a noble ideal, it was not and neither should it, presently be utilized for admissions officers when selecting an incoming class of students at their institutions (*Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996).

However, one of the foremost deficiencies in the argument presented by anti-affirmative action proponents is the omission of alternative measures that would address several important dilemmas. For example, seldom are other forms of redress proffered for previous shortcomings of the student selection system, when "one" of the key qualifiers

for non-admittance was often race. Similarly, there is little assurance for racial minorities that they will not be unjustly penalized if purely academic factors (test scores, course curricula and grade point averages) are skewed against them because they resided in communities or attended schools with limited financial resources, which may adversely impact their competitiveness. A review of recent legislation and/or litigation associated with affirmative action in higher education might be useful at this juncture.

Hopwood v. University of Texas

In a ruling on damages, a federal district court ruled in 1996 that the University of Texas School of Law could not use race as factor in its admissions program for the purpose of diversity. That ruling paved the way for a new appeal in the case, in which the Fifth Circuit had previously struck down a particular two-track admissions process in which minority and non-minority applicants were considered separately. In that ruling, the Fifth Circuit also stated that diversity could not serve as the basis to justify the consideration of race in student admissions, and asserted that Justice Powell's opinion to the contrary, the Supreme Court's 1978 *Bakke* decision was not binding precedent. In 1996, the Supreme Court declined to review that ruling, but two of the justices indicated at the time that the case was considered moot because the law school had already modified the two-track admissions system. A number of Fifth Circuit judges who had not served on the original panel in this case criticized the Fifth Circuit panel decision and urged *en banc* review by the entire Fifth Circuit.

LeSage v. University of Texas

In one of the first applications of the 1996 Hopwood decision discussed above, in October 1998 the Fifth Circuit revived a lawsuit charging that the University of Texas at

Austin discriminated against white applicants to a doctoral program in counseling psychology. Francois LeSage charged that the University's entrance criteria discriminated in favor of black and Hispanic applicants, but in 1997 a federal district court judge ruled that his denial of admission had nothing to do with the University's affirmative-action policies at the time and dismissed the case. The Fifth Circuit ruled that his application "may have been affected by the use of racial preferences," and sent his case back to the lower court for reconsideration.

University of California/Proposition 209

In October 1997, an alumnus of the University of California at Berkeley's Boalt Law School sued the university, claiming that the law school and the University purposely circumvented Proposition 209 (the state constitutional amendment prohibiting public institutions from using preferences based on race and gender). In November 1997, the Supreme Court declined to review a challenge to the constitutionality of Proposition 209, leaving intact an appeals court decision upholding this state constitutional amendment. The lawsuit specifically claimed that University officials violated Proposition 209 by encouraging the alumni association to raise private funds to sponsor scholarships for minority and female students. Further, the suit claimed that the alumni association was partly financed with state funds used to create minority scholarships that the University couldn't legally establish under Proposition 209.

Farmer v. University of Maryland

A complaint filed in May 1998 in a federal district court in Baltimore alleged that the University of Maryland School of Medicine discriminated against white applicants "by maintaining drastically lower standards for the admission of members of certain

favoring minority groups, especially blacks.” Plaintiff Rob Farmer, a student at a medical school in the Netherlands Antilles, alleged that his grades, test scores, and other criteria used by the University in selecting entering students were far above the average of black students who were accepted for the class entering in September 1996 for which he applied. Farmer had previously participated in an Advanced Premedical Development Program offered by the University during the summer for students from a minority or disadvantaged background.

Podberesky v. Kirwan

The plaintiff in this case accused the University of Maryland of reverse discrimination by virtue of its awarding of a scholarship whose only eligible recipients were African American students. The Fourth Circuit ruled that it is not permissible for a college to rely on a poor reputation in the minority community to show that the effects of prior discrimination are continuing. Similarly, a racially hostile environment was held not to be a present effect of a college’s actions and is not the result of general societal discrimination. The Fourth Circuit also ruled that the University’s scholarship was not “narrowly tailored” to cure the present effects of the University’s previous discrimination. It found that the University had not convincingly established the composition of its applicant pool and, therefore, the court could not determine whether there was an underrepresentation of African American students or any need for remedial action. The court also concluded that even if there existed a need for remedial action, the scholarship program was not narrowly tailored because its eligibility criteria included students who, in the court’s view, were not the type of students subjected to the University’s past discrimination (Winston, 1994).

Gratz v. Bollinger

In the fall of 1997, two class action lawsuits were filed by the Center for Individual Rights on behalf of white students (Elizabeth Gratz was the original plaintiff) denied admission to the University of Michigan's undergraduate and law school programs. The suits alleged that the university utilizes different standardized test score/grade-point average standards for white and minority students, based on admissions grids obtained by a professor that allegedly demonstrate that higher combinations of test scores and grades are required of white applicants.

The University of Michigan countered that race is only one among a number of factors taken into account in its admissions processes. It ultimately adopted new admissions guidelines that assign points to applicants for academic and non-academic factors. Those factors include such things as being the child of a legacy, high school attended, being from the Upper Peninsula, test scores, a student's grade point average, and race. High school students who are members of racial minority groups are awarded 20 points. Students with a total of 100 (out of a possible 150) points are admitted.

The University asserts that the system maintains its commitment to affirmative action and was under development before the lawsuit. The Center for Individual Rights has faulted the new system for also making race too large a factor in admissions. There was a prevailing belief that anti-affirmation action proponents hoped to use a decision in favor of the plaintiffs as a springboard to overturn the decision of the 1978 *Bakke* case.

Diversity as an Educational Tool

One of the key arguments in the *Gratz, et al. v. Bollinger, et al.* case, as reviewed by the United States Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit and ultimately heard by the U. S.

Supreme Court; was the contention that “diversity” is an important value to the various constituents of institutions of higher learning. Correspondingly, several important issues were considered in this litigation, which are as follows:

1. “Whether a public institution of higher education has a compelling state interest in obtaining the educational benefits of diversity that justifies the competitive consideration of an applicant’s race in admissions”,
2. “Whether the admissions programs employed by the University of Michigan’s College of Literature, Science and the Arts from 1995-2000 are narrowly tailored to achieve that interest”,
3. “Whether the individual defendants are entitled to qualified immunity from Plaintiffs’ damage claims” (ibid, p. 8)

Specifically, the University of Michigan’s case was built upon the following premise:

Whether, consistent with the Fourteenth Amendment, a university may consider race and ethnicity as one of the many factors in admissions to obtain the educational benefits that flow from a racially and ethnically diverse student body (ibid, p. 9).

Throughout this case, the University of Michigan has submitted reports from nationally recognized experts in history, sociology, education, and psychology, confirming the long-standing consensus among educators that there is a clear relationship between the diversity of a university’s student body and the quality of the educational experience it offers.

When considered in the aggregate, all of these cases provide a clear picture of the climate relative to affirmative action admissions policies in America’s colleges and

universities. Opponents of race-factored admissions policies variously concede that diversity is a laudable goal. However, there yet remains an obviously resolute effort to dismantle these initiatives without concern for the impending consequences and ramifications of such action.

Admission Policy Changes in Reaction to Race Related Litigation

The response to these egregiously misguided retrenchment efforts against affirmative action in general has been varied and often convoluted. College administrators have generally undertaken positions that range from fear and despair, to apathy, to outrage in reaction to the antagonism toward institutional affirmation action initiatives. Likewise, the strategies to counteract this assault have been inconsistent at best.

For example, at the University of Michigan, a re-evaluated process for admissions was implemented in 1998. A statement from the Office of University Relations details the changes in the process:

Applications for fall 1998 admission to LS&A (College of Literature, Science and Arts) are being considered with the aid of a point system that has simplified the process of evaluating various factors. Academic factors and any of the other traditional adjustments for residency, alumnae relationships and race, which had been accounted for by the use of different grids, are now allocated point values. The total number of points each applicant receives is that applicant's 'selection index score'. This point system was designed to achieve the same emphasis that the previous system placed on all the various factors relevant to an admissions decision—grades, test scores, residency, race, alumnae relationships, etc. The two

grids that OUA had used for consideration of the applications for fall 1997, now now have been collapsed into one, with cells that each contain recommended options for various selection index scores. Counselors still retain discretion to vary from the grid (University of Michigan, 1997).

Admissions staff at the University of Michigan stated that the changes in the process were already being discussed before the litigation was initiated by Gratz in 1997 (University of Michigan, 1997).

At the University of Pittsburgh, the dean of the law school, Peter Shane, expressed the opinion that “what happened in California and Texas has no direct bearing on Pitt.” He followed by saying,

As far as affirmative action is concerned, Pitt is still bound to follow the *Bakke* decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1978. In that decision, the court said race can be taken into account in decision-making by universities in a variety of ways, including admission and hiring, to remedy past discrimination. Race can only be used, however, so long as it is not the decisive factor or rigidified into set aside quotas (Shane, 1997).

One of the sub-issues emerging from this discussion has been the argument over what most universities state is the “motive” for instituting these policies, i.e. achieving a “diverse” student body. The premise has, and continues to be, that diversity on our college campuses is an imperative if the academy is to achieve its mission of broadening and enhancing the perspectives of students. That imperative necessitates that where possible, an exchange of ideas and attitudes from persons of every race, creed, color, gender, ethnic origin, and geographic location should be pursued. Such was the case at

the University of Michigan as the following statement intimates:

Institutions of higher education have pursued a conception of education that emphasizes the joys of variety and the benefits of engaging those with different experiences and perspectives. This means we ask of every applicant: What will you contribute to the whole, not where do you stand in splendid, isolated comparison with everyone else? A first-class education is one that creates the opportunity for students, expecting differences, to learn instead of similarities. Likewise, encountering differences rather than one's mirror image, is an essential part of a good education. Race is educationally important for all students, because understanding race in America is a powerful metaphor for crossing sensibilities of all kinds (Bollinger & Cantor, 1998).

In contrast, many anti-affirmative action supporters have opted to take a position that the pursuit of a diverse student body is unnecessary and wrong minded, while others have posited that as nobly intended as it might be, diversity is not a "compelling interest" that would justify substituting race in the place of merit as a criteria for admissibility (Hopwood v. Texas, 1996). The justices in the Fifth Circuit opinion of Hopwood declared the following with respect to the diversity question:

We agree with the plaintiffs that any consideration of race or ethnicity by the law school for the purpose of achieving a diverse student body is not a compelling interest under the Fourteenth Amendment. Justice Powell's argument in *Bakke* garnered only his own vote and has never represented the view of a majority of the Court in *Bakke* or any other case. Moreover, subsequent Supreme Court decisions regarding education state that non-remedial state interests will never justify racial

classifications. Finally, the classification of persons on the basis of race for the purpose of diversity frustrates, rather than facilitates, the goals of equal protection (Hopwood v. Texas, 1996).

One of the principal objectives of affirmative action policies in college admissions is to improve participation rates of specific underrepresented student populations. A retrenchment of those rates of participation appear to be the primary impetus for those who seek to dismantle the achievements realized over the past several decades by affirmative action policies used in post-secondary admissions. The ability of our country to compete in the global marketplace is contingent upon our success in effectively optimizing the intellectual capital of a high percentage of our citizenry.

The intent of those individuals who were responsible for the authorship of the various laws and statutes was to address the past failings of the educational system in America to properly educate every member of the society. Thus, the use of race as “one” of the factors to determine admissibility into the institutions of higher learning was deemed an effective tool in the pursuit of this goal, sometimes identified as diversity. A more subtle form of racism can be hypothesized as a logical rationale for those desirous of debilitating a system that has been marginally successful in the participation of some groups, i.e. African American males.

An examination of racism in the context of its birth in America is important. Some contend that racism was, and continues to be; a system whereby the material and capitalistic desires of one race of people are deemed as more valuable than the “rights and privileges” of another race of people (Cox, 1970). In essence, in a large measure, racism is as much a concern about the economic benefits of perpetuating the societal influence of

the construct of race as it is about the level of melanin in a person's skin.

It is vitally important that the use of race as a factor (note that it is only "one" of the factors used in affirmative action programs, not the "only" factor) was a part of the college and university admissions process from the inception of post-secondary education in America. The rules were quite succinct. If you were of African descent, you were not admitted to a majority white institution. As a matter of fact, for the first century of America's existence, it was illegal to teach a person of African descent to read (Jaynes and Williams, 1989). Thus, it is with disdain and acrimony that many people heed the cry of "reverse discrimination" from those who portend injury as a result of a program whose intent was to "affirmatively" redress the injuries of the past. Some scholars have attempted to elucidate the present and future implications associated with the current wave of "reexamination" of policies using race as a factor to remedy past and present discriminatory practices in college/university admissions (Bowen & Bok, 1998).

However, one of the foremost deficiencies in the argument expressed by anti-affirmative action proponents is the paucity of alternative measures proposed that might serve to ameliorate several important issues. For example, few have offered suggestions to institutions to redress previous shortcomings of the student selection system, which use race as "one" of the key qualifiers for non-admittance to predominantly White colleges and universities. Moreover, little assurance has been proffered to insure that racial minorities will not be unjustly penalized when supposed, purely objective, academic-based factors (test scores, course curricula and grade point averages) are skewed against them. It should be noted here that many scholars have questioned the use of purely "cognitive" based factors such as test scores in the admissions process because of the

racially biased nature of many of these instruments (Sowa, Thomson, & Bennett, 1989) and the dearth of valid evidence that such instruments accurately predict success for racial minorities (Kanoy et al., 1989; Arbona & Novy, 1990; Young & Rogers, 1991).

The Need for An Affirmative Effort

The ability of our country to compete in the global marketplace is contingent upon our success in effectively optimizing the human and intellectual capital of a high percentage of our citizenry (Bowen & Bok, 1998). The primary intent of those who authored the laws and statutes designed to address the past failings of our education system in America, was to properly ensure access to education for every member of our society (Steele, 1982). Unfortunately, equal access yet remains a problem in America.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a Civil Rights Act that was more strident in scope and commitment relative to America's past racial injustices. In June 1965, at Howard University, President Johnson delivered what is now considered to be the infamous justification for moving beyond nondiscrimination to a more vigorous, affirmative effort to provide opportunities for Black Americans. He suggested the following, "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line in a race and then say, 'you free to compete with all the others', and still justly believe that you have been completely fair" (Rainwater and Yancy, 1967). The later signings of Executive Orders 11246 and 11375 were tantamount to the birth of "affirmative action" programs and policies all across America.

In the years to come, most colleges and universities in the country eventually adopted and implemented some form of an affirmative action plan with regards to admissions to their institution. Thus, the use of race as "one" of the factors to determine

admissibility into institutions of higher learning was deemed an effective tool in the pursuit of this goal. Over the past three decades these policies have been instrumental in contributing to a dramatic transformation of the racial landscape of post-secondary education in America. A complete dismantling of the policies that consider race in admissions decisions could have devastating consequences for underrepresented racial minorities in general, but particularly for African American males (Bowen & Bok, 1998).

Initiatives adopted in California, Texas and Washington served as a clarion call that a viable anti-affirmative action movement had emerged, which ultimately began to move across the country (Sagna, 1997; Simmons, 2002; Shea, 2003). However, in June 2003 the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that an applicant's race could indeed be used as a factor in the college admissions process. More specifically, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote the majority opinion in the University of Michigan Law School case. She stated that the Constitution "does not prohibit the law school's narrowly tailored use of race in admissions decisions to further a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body" (Gratz v. Bollinger, 2003).

Clearly, the U. S. Supreme Court's ruling regarding the use of race as a factor in admissions decisions suggests that colleges and universities should be emboldened to initiate a new affirmative and proactive effort in the pursuit of the benefits of a diverse student body. This effort will ensure the future of equal access for racial minorities and should be a critical agenda item for those who value a diverse student body on college campuses, particularly at highly selective institutions.

The historical context of affirmative action policies in post-secondary admissions must be considered with the following issues in mind:

1. The status of litigation related to the issue,
2. Strategies that institutions have adopted in response to the aforementioned litigation, and
3. A philosophical perspective on the future use of race in college and university admissions in our country.

All of these issues are critically important to the context of this study. If a total dismantling or disinterest in the continuation of affirmative action admissions policies at predominantly White colleges and universities should occur, it could bode serious repercussions for the already disparate participation rates of African American male college students. Consequently, it is reasonable to posit that retention and persistence rates of African American males are likely to be adversely effected.

Race and Racism in College Admissions

One compelling aspect of the debate concerning the use of race when making college admissions decisions is the manner in which affirmative action reformists and litigants generally tend to focus on admissions to highly selective colleges and universities. They argue that these policies are discriminatory and have the effect of awarding slots to highly selective institutions to students (racial minorities) who are ill equipped for the academic rigors of these schools and who tend not to graduate. However, the research generally refutes this argument. Consider the following statement:

Opponents of affirmative action in college admissions contend that many blacks who go to Ivy League and other highly selective institutions tend to drop out of college because of competitive pressures. For these reasons, it is argued that these black students would be better served if they enrolled in less competitive state

universities. This theory has no support in practice since the black dropout rate at less competitive state universities is not only very high but also much higher than those prevailing at the most selective institutions (Cross, 1997).

However, an altruistic concern for the pursuit of a color-blind society and specifically the college admission process does not appear to be their priority. Research would suggest that their focus would most likely be based on the correlation between attendance at highly selective universities and improved socioeconomic status in America (Bowen & Bok, 1998). It has been suggested that the primary motive for rescinding affirmative action policies, which have in a large measure improved the economic standing of many racial minorities, is a concern for the perceived lost opportunities for their own interest groups, principally White Americans (ibid, 1998). This is similarly inferred by the following statement:

As the labor market bestows larger rewards for educational attainment and the competition for admission at elite universities becomes keener, racial and ethnic preferences in college admissions have become increasingly controversial—particularly at public institutions (Kane & Dickens, 1996).

In essence, this concern is closely tied to the basic economic principle of supply and demand. Access to those elite institutions of higher learning, which have historically demonstrated a proclivity for greatly enhancing graduates to improve her/his class status in America, is the primary concern for those purporting an interest in creating “color-blind” admissions process (Cross, 1997). More stridently stated, there is a perception that whatever educational and socioeconomic gains racial minorities have realized in recent years have principally been at the expense of White American citizens (Kane & Dickens,

1996; Hoberman, 2000).

Census projections associated with the advent of the 21st century suggested that students enrolling in our nation's K-12 school systems would take on a greater hue of color and complexion (Camarillo, 1999). As a result, it would not be unreasonable to assume that if affirmative action policies remain intact, there would be a flood of racial minority enrollees entering college. Concurrently, competition for seats at highly selective schools will grow even more intense. This potential for new competition at elite, highly selective institutions would appear to be the primary rationale for the position of anti-affirmative action proponents. In essence, the perception that racial minorities may accrue some measure of advantage in the pursuit of economic success in America appears to be unpalatable when juxtaposed with the goal of equitable access and redress for America's past racial injustices.

However, this issue must be considered in the context and reality that equal access to higher education is not restricted solely to the highly selective institutions. In fact, the vast majority of students, non-minority and minority, are enrolled in schools that are less selective than the elite institutions (Cross, 1997; Bowen & Bok, 1998). So-called "racial preferences" are typically used to a minimal degree at non-elite institutions (Kane & Dickens, 1996; Bowen & Bok, 1998). Conspicuously, the use or misuse of race in admissions decisions at less competitive colleges and universities appears to be of much less significance to anti-affirmative action proponents. Equal access and opportunity is purported to be a priority for every citizen in America. Thus, it is apparent that the country's resources should be focused on the elimination of barriers and obstacles that might impede the ability of any student to attain higher education. This is particularly true

for African American males.

One of the more pervasive barriers to higher education for many students is the lack of preparation they often receive at the grammar and secondary school levels. There is unanimous agreement by proponents on both sides of the race factoring debate, that academic preparedness is the single most important ingredient which influences successful matriculation, retention, and graduation on the post-secondary education level (Cross, 1997; Steele, 1999). Academic preparedness has been suggested as having an impact on the academic experiences of African American male college students attending predominantly White institutions (Davis, 1994). Therefore, logic suggests that until adequate preparation for all students has been fully addressed, the current system of insuring some measure of racial parity in higher education should remain intact in its current form.

Admittedly, some anti-affirmative action proponents have suggested that America should improve the quality of education at the grammar and secondary school levels for children, minority and non-minority, as a possible alternative to the use of race in admissions decisions. In theory, this type of initiative would “level the playing field” and have the effect of making all students equally competitive when applying for admission to college. Ironically, this was also the anticipated effect of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in which the Supreme Court ordered desegregation of public schools “with all deliberate speed” (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954).

However, 45 years later a major chasm remains between schools that educate most minority and non-minority children. During the Clinton administration, a number of initiatives were proposed, purportedly in an attempt to rectify the disparities between rich

and poor school districts in the country. Then Secretary of Education Riley stated:

The Clinton administration will propose that school districts receiving federal funds for “poor” students must ensure all their schools have the same class-size ratios, qualified teaching staff, course offerings and facilities. The proposals would impact the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; a 34-year-old comprehensive law that governs most federal education programs for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade (McQueen, 1999).

In recent times, President George W. Bush has proposed similar initiatives based on one of the major elements of his presidential campaign. The moniker of “No Child Left Behind” has been used to articulate the President’s commitment to the receipt of an equitable education for all children in America. However, while the intentions of our nation’s leaders are laudable, history suggests that additional government funding probably will not remedy the problem completely.

While funding and resources are an integral part of quality schools, other factors can impact the probability that a child will receive a quality education. For example, high expectations from teachers and parents, a general appreciation for learning, motivation, parental involvement, and an optimistic attitude relative to the benefits of higher education, are intangible factors that greatly impact educational achievement (Miller, 1998). Research has proven that these qualities must be instilled in children very early in the education process. In fact, most anti-affirmative action proponents do not deny the continued pervasiveness of racism and its effect on the academic experiences of racial minorities. Many anti-affirmative action proponents espouse a substitute for using “racial preferences.” It consists of more stringent and severe penalties against those who are

found guilty of committing racially discriminatory acts (Steele, 1994; Sowell, 1972). However, these proponents have failed to produce a comprehensive model based on valid, empirical evidence that such a system would be as effective in achieving the results of current affirmative action models.

Opponents of affirmative action portend that if a system of self-policing were instituted, in place of what they portend to be excessive and discriminatory mandates of affirmative-action policies, it would be equally effective in achieving diversity objectives. However, once again, past history relative to racial inequality in America suggests this rationale to be flawed as well. In fact, it is safe to surmise that educational and economic gains enjoyed by many racial minorities today very likely would not have been realized if the federal government had not intervened in the form of these social policies. Likewise, it is important that we revisit a very crucial point that is often lost in this debate. With respect to African-Americans in particular, there is still a concern for the injurious effects of over 400 years of subjugation. Essentially, the questions begs, have all of the effects of the explicit and/or implicit subjugation of African Americans been totally extinguished and remedied in just over three decades since the advent of the Civil Rights movement?

In relation to that question, it is important to consider one of the more compelling elements of President Lyndon B. Johnson's speech in 1963 regarding a new "affirmative effort" that is often ignored and/or overlooked. President Johnson offered the analogy of a "race" to illustrate the concept that if one person has been unjustly disadvantaged, it is only fair that some redress be accorded to them in consideration of the injustice he or she has experienced. Accordingly, there is much evidence that suggests that many racial minorities, particularly African Americans, have yet to be afforded the benefits of a "level

playing field” in many facets of life in this country, education being one of them (Cross, 1999).

Another aspect of this issue concerns what appears to be selective ignorance relative to the use of other factors of admissibility that could also be construed as “discriminatory.” For example, affirmative action opponents conveniently ignore the use of “legacy” as a factor in admissions decisions at highly selective institutions. Some have questioned the merits of using an individual’s familial lineage as one of the criteria for considering a candidate for enrollment at a college or university (Lederman, Crissey, & Mealer, 1997).

Clearly, it could be asserted that legacy is based upon a racially biased logic. The fact that African Americans in particular were legally denied the right to attend college in the early days of this country’s history support this assertion. Thus, the possibility of attaining legacy status for African Americans was greatly constricted until the middle to latter parts of the 20th century. Nonetheless, there has been no resolute effort by anti-affirmative action proponents to eliminate this system of “affirmative action,” for which White Americans principally accrued the majority of the benefits because of the advantages they gained during the first 100 plus years of this country’s existence.

Another issue that emerges in this discussion on affirmative action is the wholesale use of “preferential consideration” which pervades the athletic admission process in higher education. Very little opposition is expressed pertaining to the “special consideration” admissions decisions made annually prior to National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) signing dates for athletes. Granted, a large percentage of these favorable admissions decisions substantively benefit African-American students,

especially males. However, it is important to consider the economic motives of colleges and universities for perpetuating this seemingly incongruous practice, particularly Division IA institutions. How so? Consider the following.

Millions of dollars are generated annually by the major revenue sports, football and basketball, at predominantly White, Division IA institutions. A large majority of the athletes participating in those revenue-generating sports are African-American male student-athletes. The high levels of exposure realized by these sports ultimately translate into such residual benefits as increased enrollment (via the national television visibility and publicity), improved alumni participation, and increased monetary contributions to the university's endowment. Benefits accrued by these sports for many of these predominantly White colleges and universities far supersede the pretentious concerns that affirmative action opponents have about academic merit.

Given the critical value of athletics to predominantly White colleges and universities, it is not surprising that there is generally no interest in eliminating "special admits" for athletes who supposedly fall outside the range of qualification for "regular" admission, based upon the academic criteria set by some colleges and universities. In this context, the academic integrity of these institutions and the issue of a "level playing field" appear to be of little concern to affirmative action opponents. Neither is much concern expressed about the academic well-being and ultimately the ability of these athletes to acquire skills that will prepare them to enter the workplace at the conclusion of their athletic careers. The duplicitous convictions of affirmative action opponents relative to academic equity and fairness are especially disconcerting when you consider the atrocious graduation rates of athletes (Ogden, 2002).

As previously suggested, the debate concerning the use of race in college admissions decisions is fundamentally fueled by racist and socioeconomic ambitions, as opposed to a sincere desire to create a “color-blind” society. Colleges and universities must have a comprehensive and structured plan for the recruitment of racial minorities if there is to be a diverse representation in their student bodies of every race in our country. The use of race in the admissions process is a viable means for accomplishing that goal, where it is feasible, and until such time that disparities in the primary and secondary educational systems are eradicated.

It has been proposed that every child in America has a right to a quality education. Unquestionably, a well-educated citizenry is vital to the effective and proficient optimization of the available human and intellectual capital in our nation. Such action will secure our competitive future in the global marketplace well into the future. Accordingly, these assumptions also illustrate the critical importance of increasing the rates of participation and ultimately the academic success of African American males enrolled in our nation’s college and universities.

African American Students and College Student Development Theory

As the enrollments of racial and ethnic minorities attending predominantly white colleges and universities increased in the 1970’s and 1980’s, a body of literature that explored the experiences of these students began to emerge. As the largest group within the domain of the racial minority sub-populations in America, and, historically, the principal target of racist and discriminatory laws adopted by the architects of our country’s Constitution, African Americans were a primary focus of this literature. In particular, important seminal studies by Willie & McCord (1972) and Fleming (1984)

sought to create a body of knowledge that addressed barriers to success for African Americans attending predominantly White colleges and universities.

Success for all students enrolled in pos-secondary institutions is generally based on some level of application of constructs posited in the vast body of college student development theory. Theorists such as Perry (1968), Chickering (1969), and Kohlberg (1969) have developed models designed to address issues associated with academic development for college students. However, there is a general consensus that gaps in these models exist. Few of them adequately speak to certain socio-cultural and racial dynamics that influence success in college. This is particularly true for African American students.

The majority of mainstream college student development theoretical orientations are grounded in constructs from a White-American, male perspective. Very little consideration has been directed toward the social, academic and other factors contributing to the college experiences of other college students in the developmental models of Perry (1968), Chickering (1969), and Kohlberg (1969). Granted, some effort has been made by these mainstream theoreticians to consider and accommodate the value of cultural influences in the developmental process (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kohlberg, 1981b); it was evident that student development from a non-White, middle-class, and male perspective was necessary. This has been evidenced in the research to some degree over the past 20 years. For example, research has been done to examine the relationship between identity development and success in college for women (Josselson, 1996), for racial and ethnic minorities (Cross, 1971, 1991; Helms, 1992, 1993b, 1995) and gay, lesbians, and bisexuals (Cass, 1979).

Vandiver (2001) suggests the necessity of an examination of the “cultural limitations” of certain student development theoretical models. Other theorists have indicated possible differences in the development of various student populations. For example, Schlossberg (1989a) pointed to the importance of considering the concepts of marginality and mattering when examining the impact of the college experience on student development. It has been suggested that “for members of minority groups, marginality is often a permanent condition; others, such as new college students from dominant populations, may temporarily experience these feelings” (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992) suggest that, “African American student development is arguably distinct from student development in general and hence development of this cohort is not adequately accommodated in existing theories and models of student development” (p. 173). Nonetheless, a gap persists in the discussion of African American male success in college, given the ongoing preponderance of poor retention and graduation rates for this population (Slater, 1994; Sailes, 1993).

Relative to the above stated void in the research, McEwen, Roper, Bryant, and Langa (1990) created the following nine-dimensional model, which integrates certain critical elements impacting the college development of African American students:

1. Developing ethnic and racial identity: inculcating ethnic identity and information and facts on African self-consciousness development,
2. Interacting with the dominant culture: discussing acculturation, assimilation, and association with white students on campus,
3. Developing cultural aesthetics and awareness: understanding and appreciating other cultures as well as one's own,

4. Developing identity: enhancing one's own unique and diverse characteristics, societal interaction, and group identification,
5. Developing interdependence: establishing personal relationships amid some separation from immediate family but with development of extended campus family,
6. Fulfilling affiliation needs: satisfying African American students' social needs outside the campus community,
7. Surviving intellectually: challenging African American students to compete with those who had educational privileges preparing them for the academic rigors of college,
8. Developing spirituality: understanding the role and importance of religion and spirituality in the growth and development of African Americans, and
9. Developing social responsibility: coming face-to-face with real and perceived social inequities, thus becoming social advocates on campus (p. 430).

The significance of this model emerges when programming is developed by college administrators to improve the academic experience of their student body. In general, when the tenets of college student development theory are integrated into campus programming, they are typically grounded in the cultural dynamics of White students. However, according to McEwen, et. al., it is equally important to attend to and integrate the above stated dimensions into campus programming to foster the success of African American students.

Experiences of African American Males Attending Predominantly White
College and Universities

In the mid-1990's, researchers began to earnestly consider the difference between the experiences of African American students. There appeared to be glaring disparities with respect to the level of success experienced by African Americans, both male and female, enrolled at predominantly White colleges and universities (Cuyjet, 1997). This area of research was a key impetus for this study. The moderate gains in enrollment for all African Americans at predominantly White college campuses over the past several decades (American Council on Education, 2001) are diminished when we consider the anemic numbers of African American males enrolled in college when proportionately compared to the enrollment of African American females.

For example, African American males constituted approximately 3.8% of the total college attending population in 1997. In the 1999-2000 school year, the number of African American females attending college under the age of 25 (the primary age group which was considered in this study) increased 4% to 44%. During that same period, attendance for African American males in the same age group actually declined about 5% to a meager 34% of the total from that age group (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). This dearth of representation is hypothesized to be the result of two interrelated factors: (1) barriers which prevent African American males from entering college, and (2) the negatively perceived influences that exist on many of the campuses that contribute to the attrition of African American males before they can graduate (Cuyjet, 1997).

A review of literature associated with the experiences of African American males in college indicates that a myriad of factors should be considered in relation to the

academic success of these students. One of the more prominent factors investigated by researchers involves the role of African American males' perception (primarily negative) of the climate at predominantly White colleges and universities. While research suggests that perceptions are an integral part of the higher education experience of African American males, at times the ability to measure how these contributions contribute to their experiences has been somewhat illusive and inconclusive.

In earlier studies, researchers suggested that African American males often harbor perceptions of racial hostility relative to the climates of predominantly White college and university campuses. In addition, it was posited that staff members at these institutions tend to be either ambivalent and/or disinterested in ameliorating environmental conditions of their campuses (Allen & Haniff, 1991; Fleming, 1994). Researchers have suggested that it is common for African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities to perceive a sense of unimportance and/or alienation (Sedlacek, 1987; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). The perpetuation of this sense of alienation ultimately breeds an academically debilitating disposition for many African American males in these seemingly unwelcoming environments (Simms, 1993; Cuyjet, 1997; Cureton, 2003).

The literature suggests that the impact of less than welcoming climates on academic success for African American males should not be discounted. This is particularly true in consideration of research that highlights the adaptation and adjustment difficulties that virtually all students, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or cultural background, experience when negotiating a foreign environment such as college (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985). It is still the case that most African American college students will

enter college having spent most of their lives in communities that were racially homogeneous and/or segregated (Brown, 2001; Carter, 2000). Thus, for the African American student (male or female) coming from an urban community, for instance, issues of adaptation and adjustment are magnified exponentially, given the probability that their pre-college experience found them in the numerical and cultural “majority” and unenlightened about White American culture.

The formative life experience of African American students from urban settings in particular have been shaped and fashioned by a set of rules and mores reflective of the climate of their respective community. Invariably, those rules and mores are very likely divergent from those that pervade the predominantly White college and/or university campus community. Cureton (2003) elucidates the gravity of this predicament for African American students in the following statement:

In this new situation Black students on predominantly White campuses are asked to assimilate into an unfamiliar environment composed of bureaucratic organizations and policies, entertainment organizations, sports programs, diverse populations with differences in cultural values, and a judicial system with legal agents working to maintain campus social order (p. 296).

The challenge of making the normal adjustments associated with college student development for all students is exacerbated for African American students given the likelihood that they will also bear the additional burden of racial and cultural assimilation. Consequently, it is only logical and reasonable to expect that there will be some residual impact on the ability of these students to excel academically. Cureton (ibid, 296) continues in the vein of this assertion by stating, “These real or imagined problems may

adversely affect the academic performance and social interaction of African Americans.” Clearly there is evidence to support the hypothesis that a relationship exists between climate and academic success for African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities.

Gender Differences Between African American Students

The differences in the representation of African American females and males attending college are particularly significant when one considers distinct differences in the way that these two groups adjust to the collegiate experience. It has been noted by many researchers (Gilligan, 1993; Chodorow, 1974; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986) that in general, men and women go about the process of making certain moral and ethical decisions, socialization, and processing information in distinctly different ways. Moreover, Davis (1994) pointed out the paucity of research examining the “within-race analysis of gender” associated with the different experiences of African American male and female college students.

These differences tend to be even more pervasive among African American women and men (Cuyjet, 1997). The sociological influences of a White dominant culture cannot be ignored when trying to understand the divergent perspectives of African American women and men. Historically, African American males have been cast as virtual pariahs within the ethos of American society and culture, whose predominant attributes consist of being violent, unstable, unintelligent, and uneducable. This characterization has resulted in the formation of what Majors and Billison (1992) call the “subjective culture reality for Black males” (p. 109).

Incessant exposure to messages propagated by the mass media (principally

controlled by individuals who are products of the White dominant culture) ultimately results in a “self-fulfilling prophecy” of failure for many African American males. These messages also have the effect of grossly misinforming and negatively influencing the perceptions of the American population in general regarding the character of African American males (Davis & Gandy, 1999).

Unlike the image conveyed by the media, the opportunity to acquire a set of culturally respected set of skills that lead to gainful employment and, ergo, the ability to provide for their families, is of paramount concern for most African American males. African American men also tend to have an entirely different set of rules related to their perception of such important attributes as a sense of masculinity and/or personal development. These rules have been historically shaped by African American cultural mores, African American gender role definitions, and to some extent, as a reaction to the socio-cultural pressures of a White dominant culture/society. Cuyjet (1997) indicates,

The result of an encumbered ability to achieve personal development tasks is that African American men’s roles, behaviors, values, and economic outlooks are often unlike those of their White male counterparts and can even be quite dissimilar to those of African American women (p. 3).

Consequently, it is imperative that college administrators charged with student development programming on their respective campuses earnestly consider the perceived reality for many of the African American males who are enrolled students at their respective educational institutions. The degree to which the university staff chooses to address this issue is likely to be reflected in the level of success realized by African American males on their college campuses.

African American Males and White American Culture

Most of the initial research associated with the poor performance of African American males on predominantly White campuses generally attended to the potential deficits that these men bring with them from their past academic and/or personal experiences (i.e., socioeconomic status, family structure, home environment, and etc). For example, Hopkins (1997) intimates that “Black male culture is almost always interpreted to mean dire trouble and social unrest, and seemingly most Americans are comfortable with this perception” (p. 78). In essence, many people in America (and of principal concern to this study, college faculty, staff, and administrators); tend to operate by the dictates of a model that infers that most African American males are inherently deficient or in a state of “disrepair.” Stated another way, the prevailing perception embraced by many university personnel is one that presumes that all African American males are “broken” and it is our task to “fix” them (Hood, 1992; Malveaux, 2002).

It was not until the early 1990’s that some researchers (Lee, 1991; Wasson, 1990) began to consider the less than hospitable and uninviting nature of the predominantly White college campus as a critical variable in the post-secondary educational process for African American males. These and other researchers suggested a need to examine the deficiencies in the educational models of predominantly White college campuses. Thus, a moderate paradigm shift occurred with regards to the manner in which college administrators approached college student development for African American males. There was soon a call by some researchers for modifications in the cultural norms and sociological structures of these campuses. Accordingly, Cuyjet (1997) stated the following:

One very critical adjustment is in the campus environment itself: to make that campus environment less hostile than is the prevalent American community to Black men in general and those from inner-city backgrounds in particular (p. 7).

In this study it was assumed that African American males coming from inner city or urban community backgrounds would be a significant part of the sample group. Based on a review of the relevant literature, the following assumptions informed the investigation of this population:

1. There are specific qualities and attributes associated with the White dominant culture in America that are distinctly different from the African American urban/inner city culture,
2. The process of succeeding in this culture, which permeates every aspect of our society but particularly predominantly White colleges and universities, demand that persons acquire a thorough knowledge of the intricacies of the White dominant culture,
3. Few African American males, particularly those whose formative life experiences were based in an urban or inner city community, are likely to have been exposed to the nuances of the White dominant culture, and
4. Seldom are there any opportunities to develop an acumen for negotiating the White dominant culture in the predominantly racially-minority based populations of most urban community.

Like their White counterparts who reside in majority-White rural or suburban communities, the perceptions of African American males from urban communities are shaped by images projected by the mass media, which is primarily controlled by

middle/upper-class White males. Although the perspective of middle/upper-class White males does not truly represent the totality of our American society (U. S. Bureau of Census, 2001), typically they wield most of the power and influence in our country, particularly in the mass media (Davis & Gandy, 1999).

In general, much of what is conveyed to the American public by the mass media is a grossly skewed and faulty image of all Americans, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or cultural experience (ibid, 1999). Moreover, the misappropriation of attributes tied to misperceptions of African American males has dire repercussions for the improvement of their status in America in general, but particular as it pertains to their experiences in the arena of post-secondary education.

Racial Identity Model

One of the more prominent identity models attempting to explain experiences of African Americans in America is the Cross Nigrescence Model (Cross, 1971). Nigrescence is a word derived from the French language that is translated to mean, “to become Black” (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). Cross’ model sought to explain the process whereby many Black people confront instances of racism and formulate strategies in their attempt to mitigate their reactions to these experiences. Cross (1971) outlined five stages in the transformation or conversion process from Negro-to-Black: (1) Pre-encounter, (2) Encounter, (3) Immersion-emersion, (4) Internalization, and (5) Internalization-commitment.

In Stage One (Pre-encounter) a person engages in a wholesale embracing of the Euro-American perspective, and fundamentally functions as an assimilationist who regards being Black as a liability. Thus, this individual is generally consumed with the

notion of achieving acceptance by members of the Euro-American persuasion. In Stage Two (Encounter) an individual may have one or more experiences that cause a dissonance or disruption in their previous attitude about the plight of Black people. This dissonance compels them to engage in the process of discovering and inculcating a Black identity.

In Stage Three (Immersion-emersion) the person conducts a highly deliberate effort to adopt and inculcate everything associated with being Black. He or she exhibits a distorted belief in the strength and power of “Blackness,” which is diametrically opposite to the “pre-encounter” mentality of the past. The onset of Stage Four (Internalization) is marked by a more balanced or tempered perspective relative to the person’s identification with being “Black.” He or she tends to possess the ability to critically examine issues associated with Black identity and possess an ability to internalize a pluralistic perspective and worldview. Finally, in Stage Five (Internalization-commitment) the person has fully integrated all of the constructs associated with Black identity and possesses a viable acumen as a social activist.

The research conducted by Cross was taken a step further by Parham (1989), who posited a cyclical versus linear movement through the process of racial identity development. Based on this premise, it is possible for a person to progress forward, backwards, and/or remain stagnate in their movement through the various stages of racial identity development. Therefore, it is possible that at different stages of an individual’s life, and as a result of “identity challenging” events that might occur, she/he may find themselves revisiting elements of their racial identity development.

The stage development modeling of the construct of Black consciousness by Milliones (1980) is more descriptive and in some scenarios, can be easier to

operationalize. Milliones (ibid) outlines the following stages in this model:

1. Preconsciousness stage: No involvement can be identified with respect to development in the Black consciousness model; the individual does not have any belief in the concept of Black consciousness, and actually agrees with the White racist stereotypes about Black people.
2. Confrontation stage: The individual embraces and overtly expresses an “anti-White” disposition, espousing the belief that Black culture is good and White culture is malevolent.
3. Internalization stage: There is a clear appreciation, pride, and comfort level demonstrated by the person as it pertains to his/her Blackness. There is a tempering of the extreme anti-White sentiment of the previous stage, even though the individual still has a modest level of mistrust of White people.
4. Integration stage: Individuals in this stage have a notable level of reasonableness about themselves and others as it pertains to Blackness and attitudes about the value of both African American and White American culture. They adhere to a practice of fair and equitable treatment of all people, while maintaining that racists can be both Black and White.

A thorough knowledge and understanding of the various modes of expression and manifestation of certain key elements of these models is crucial to the study of the experience of the African American male, both in a general sense and within the context of the college environment.

African Self-Consciousness

African Americans are categorized as such based on their skin color and/or their

identification with various aspects of the culture associated with persons descended from Africans brought to America, principally for the purpose of enslavement and unpaid labor. Principally, African American culture consists of a merging of the values, mores, traditions and beliefs that African slaves brought from their homelands with constructs developed in response to their experiences in an otherwise foreign and non-affirming world (DuBois, 1903; Frazier, 1949). Essentially, African American culture was, and continues to be in many ways, a reaction to the systematic dehumanization and devaluation that has been directed toward anything associated with the indigenous peoples of the continent of Africa.

Persons of African descent have been impacted in divergent ways by this dehumanization and devaluation. The ability to cope, survive and thrive under the providence of the egregiously debilitating circumstances that have and continue to prevail in this country is nothing short of remarkable. Accordingly, many African American scholars have provided extensive treatises relative to the indefatigable resilience of persons of African descent in this country (DuBois; 1903; Woodson, 1933; Frazier, 1949). A significant body of research has been generated over the last several decades suggesting that African or Black identity is inextricably connected to the resiliency and ability of African Americans to achieve high levels of functionality in an often racially hostile society (Cross, 1971; Akbar, 1979; Milliones, 1980). Other scholars have highlighted the need for African Americans to possess a strong sense of identity with their culture if they are to be viable, healthy, and well-functioning beings, particularly when confronted with the stressors associated with their minority status (Smedley, Myers & Harrell, 1993).

The African self-consciousness model emerged out of a concern for the difficulties that many African Americans confront as they attempt to function in a society that invariably conveys the message that they are devalued, undervalued, and/or devoid of value (Azibo, 1983). The African self-consciousness scale (ASC) was designed as a tool to measure the construct of African centered personality. The ASC was initially administered to 250 African American students at two racially divergent college settings: Florida State University, a predominantly White institution, and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, a predominantly Black institution. The higher ASC scores achieved by the students at Florida A&M led Baldwin et. al. to conclude that students with have a strong sense of African identity tend to function better and typically come from positive African American backgrounds that are nurturing and supportive.

The 42-item ASC scale calculates a subject's scores in four key indices which consist of the following: (1) awareness of one's African identity and heritage, (2) a focus on the survival, liberation, and proactive/affirmative development of African/Black culture, (3) active engagement in activities that promote self-knowledge associated with African/Black culture, and (4) demonstration of an attitude of intolerance for "anti-African/Black" behavior or conduct (Baldwin, 1996). It also includes six different manifests or expressive dimensions, which include: education, family, religion, cultural activities, interpersonal relations, and political orientation (ibid, p. 208). The instrument has been determined to be a useful assessment tool and a diagnostic instrument (Baldwin, 1996).

Cultural Congruity

The perception of a positive and supportive environment is vital to the success of

students when they enter college for the first time (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985). The college environment (Munoz, 1986) and cultural congruity (Fields, 1988; Fiske, 1988) have been found to be closely related to the process of academic persistence for students as well. Moreover, the perception of students as it relates to whether or not university administrators exercise an attentiveness to the concern and well being of students has been recognized as vital to student persistence (Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985).

Additional research indicates the importance of group and community for certain individuals as they pertain to the manner in which the individuals attempt to countermand the forces present in less than supportive environments. It has been suggested that Black and Latino students typically embrace a collectivistic ideology as a salient tool to facilitate their success at predominantly White universities (Constantine, Robinson, Wilton, & Caldwell, 2002). Taking this concept a step further, these researchers emphasize the value of examining perceptions of “fit” or cultural congruity for these students (Constantine, et al., p. 309). In this study, the concept of cultural congruity is associated with initiating an assessment of “the fit between individuals’ personal values and the values of the environment in which they operate” (ibid, p. 309).

Researchers have posited that in many cases, racial minority students experience implicit pressure to “conform” to the norms and mores that pervade most predominantly White college campuses. Oftentimes these students will experience a sense of being conflicted. This assertion is based on the notion that many racial minority students perceive a relative importance to remain loyal to their cultural roots. Concurrently, these students also perceive that it is vital for them to “fit in” as a means of succeeding in an academic environment that is culturally divergent from their own (Gloria & Kurpius,

1996). The degree to which these students are capable of reconciling this conflict has been posited as being directly related to their level of academic success and ultimately, persistence in college.

The cultural congruity model was initially designed to examine academic persistence factors related to the experiences of Latino and Chicano students. However, the basic premises are comparable to, and closely parallel the experiences of African American students attending predominantly White colleges and universities. In addition, at least one of the researchers involved with the initial design of the instrument has conducted complementary research applying the tenets of the model to the experiences of African American students. Thus, it was determined that the principles of the model and the accompanying scale might have utility for the target population of this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study examined the level of expression of two constructs, African self-consciousness (ASC) and cultural congruence (CCS) in a sample of African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest. A correlation analysis was conducted to measure the strength and direction of the aggregate scores of the two constructs (ASCTOT & CCSTOT). Finally, the aggregate scores, ASCTOT & CCSTOT, were used as independent (predictor) variables to predict two dependent (criterion) variables: academic performance (high cumulative grade point average [HGPA]) and academic persistence (academic progress towards graduation [AP]) based on the first year of college attendance for the sample of African American males.

This study was grounded in an assumption that success in college (matriculation, retention, and graduation) for African American males will take place when they possess a strong sense of and appreciation for the African culture. Based on that assumption, it was hypothesized that a participant's cultural grounding would enhance his ability to understand and effectively negotiate the invariably unsupportive environs of the White dominant cultural ideology that permeates many predominantly White colleges and universities in America.

Additionally, there was an assumption that African American males typically develop and employ strategies that permit them to translate attributes that contributed to their pre-college life experiences. Those attributes may have valuable utility for African American males enrolled in the predominantly White college setting. This study was

conducted to obtain a more thorough understanding for how participants demonstrating positive academic experiences at a predominantly White university (measured by high cumulative grade point average and progress towards graduation) translate a positive self-perception and sense of cultural identity into a successful collegiate experience.

Demographic Information Form

Participants in the study were asked to provide information about their cumulative college grade point average (GPA), current academic standing (CLSTAND), and the first year in which they were enrolled in college (FYEAR). Participants selected a cumulative grade point average (0.0-4.0 scale) by producing a check next to the appropriate option from the following range of choices: <2.0, 2.1-2.5, 2.6-3.0, 3.1-3.5, and 3.6-4.0. First year of college attendance was measured based on participants producing a check next to the appropriate choice from the following range of choices: 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, and <1997.

African Self-Consciousness Scale

The African self-consciousness scale (ASC) was designed as a tool to measure the construct of African centered personality. The traits of African centered personality are typically expressed in various forms and levels, contingent upon the socio-environment situation and/or the specific life experiences of African Americans. It uses the core concepts of the Black personality theory as its basis (Baldwin & Bell, 1982).

More specifically, the 42-item scale calculates a subject's scores in four key indices which include the following: (1) awareness of one's African identity and heritage; (2) a focus on the survival, liberation, and proactive/affirmative development of African/Black culture; (3) active engagement in activities that promote self-knowledge

associated with African/Black culture; and (4) demonstration of an attitude of intolerance for “anti-African/Black” behavior or conduct (Baldwin, 1996). It also includes six different manifests or expressive dimensions, which include: education, family, religion, cultural activities, interpersonal relations, and political orientation (Baldwin, 1996).

The African self-consciousness scale consists of an eight-point Likert-type scale with the following range of responses: Strongly Disagree, 1-2; Disagree, 3-4; Agree, 5-6; Strongly Agree, 7-8. The 42 items have an alternating skewing toward the construct of ASC. The Odd-numbered items are negatively skewed (low scores index the ASC construct) and even-numbered items are positively skewed (high scores index the ASC construct). Scores for ASC may be tabulated by obtaining an aggregate total or a mean of a participant’s responses to the 42 items. For this particular study, an aggregate score was computed and designated by the variable ASCTOT for the purpose of data analysis.

High scores indicate a high level of ASC. The scale has been found to have a test-retest reliability coefficient of $r=.89$, with Cronbach Alpha coefficients ranging from .78 to .82 and validity coefficients ranging in the .70s ($n=109$) (Baldwin, 1996).

Cultural Congruity Scale

Gloria & Robinson-Kurpui (1996) designed the cultural congruity scale (CCS) to measure the perceptions of students relative to the fit between their personal values and the values of the environment associated with their college/university of attendance. It consists of a 13-item, seven-point Likert scale instrument with possible responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Using the CCS, perceptions of racial minority students attending predominantly White universities have been assessed in relation to the concept of the fit of their values to those of their college campus

environment (Gloria & Robinson-Kurpius, 2001; Gloria et al. 1999).

Total scores for the CCS are calculated by summing the responses to the 13 items; therefore, scores can range from 13 to 91. In this study, an aggregate score was calculated for each participant for data analysis, and denoted as the variable CCSTOT. A high cultural congruity score (>46) indicates that the student perceives that there is a good fit between the values of the college or university culture and his own cultural values.

Gloria & Robinson-Kurpius (1996) reported Cronbach's alphas ranged from .81 to .89 with the validation samples they used and determined that the CCS accounted for 11% of the variance in persistence decisions for the validation sample. Internal validity for the CCS was determined to be .81 ($n=454$).

Selection of Subjects

Approval to conduct this study and collect the data was granted by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at Western Michigan University. Participants for the study were selected from the population of currently enrolled undergraduate African American males at Western Michigan University. The goal of this study was to obtain a sample of 100 members of the African American male student population at Western Michigan University, ideally with an equal distribution of subjects from each of the four undergraduate class groups (freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior). Census data for the fall 2002 semester indicated that approximately 525 undergraduate African American males were enrolled at Western Michigan University. Volunteers for the study were solicited through a multifaceted recruitment approach. Participants were recruited from the following sources:

- Members of the African American Male Mentoring Network,

- Members of two African American fraternities and the Western Michigan University National Pan Hellenic Association,
- Members of the Western Michigan University Black Caucus,
- Students enrolled in several Africana Studies courses at Western Michigan University, and
- Students visiting the offices of various staff members for the Division of Multicultural Affairs at Western Michigan University.

Administration of the Study

Prior to administering the instruments for the study, the investigator explained the purpose of the study to prospective participants, their rights to be informed of the results, and their rights to discontinue participation in the study at any time. Prospective participants were then asked if they understood the instructions. Questions were addressed and clarification was provided where necessary. Upon completion of this process a signed consent form was obtained from individuals who agreed to serve as participants in the study.

Upon receipt of a signed consent form from each volunteer, all three instruments; (demographic information form, African self-consciousness scale, and cultural congruity scale) were distributed for completion by the participants. When participants completed the instruments, acknowledgment and appreciation for their participation was expressed by the administrator. Lastly, contact information for the investigator, the WMU Graduate College, and the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board was made available to them.

Statistical Analysis

Using participant responses (n=101) on the respective scales designed to measure the constructs of African self-consciousness and cultural congruity, the data was inputted into the SPSS statistical analysis software at Western Michigan University. Two variables, ASC total (ASCTOT) and CCS total (CCSTOT) were computed from the data inputted into the SPSS program. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation test was then conducted to test the strength and direction of the two constructs, African self-consciousness (ASC) and cultural congruence (CCS), based on the value of the two variables, ASCTOT and CCSTOT.

Next, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using ASCTOT and CCSTOT as independent (predictor) variables to predict the outcomes of two dependent (criterion) variables; academic performance (HGPA) and academic persistence (AP). Newton & Rudestam (1999) suggest that simultaneous entry multiple regression analysis is best suited when the objective is to “describe the relationships between the independent and dependent variables” (p. 253). A significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ was used in the statistical analysis of the collected data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine expression of two constructs, African self-consciousness and cultural congruence. A correlation analysis was conducted to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the aggregated scores of two constructs, African self-consciousness (ASCTOT) and cultural congruence (CCSTOT). The aggregate scores for the constructs (ASCTOT & CCSTOT) were then employed as independent (predictor) variables in two separate multiple regression analyses to measure their ability to predict two dependent variables; academic performance (high cumulative grade point average [HGPA]) and academic persistence (academic progress toward graduation [AP]). Academic persistence was based on the first year of college attendance for African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest.

A sample (n=101) of African American male undergraduate students enrolled at Western Michigan University agreed to participate in this study. The distribution of the sample based on participants' class standing included: Freshmen=25 (24.8%), Sophomore=19 (18.8%), Junior=24 (23.8%), and Senior=33 (32.7%).

The following hypotheses were established at the outset of the study:

1. There will be a positive relationship between scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASC) and scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCS) for African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest. This hypothesis is represented by the following statistical formula:

$$H_0: ^{ASC} = ^{CCS}$$

2. There will be a positive relationship between scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASC), scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCS) and high cumulative grade point average (HGPA) of African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest. This hypothesis is represented by the following statistical formula:

$$H_0: ^{ASCTOT+CCSTOT} = ^{HGPA}$$

3. There will be a positive relationship between scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASC), scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCS) and higher rates of academic persistence (AP) for African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest. This hypothesis is represented by the following statistical formula:

$$H_0: ^{ASCTOT+CCSTOT} = ^{AP}$$

Using participant responses from the demographic information form and aggregate scores from two separate scales designed to measure the constructs of African self-consciousness (ASC) and cultural congruity (CCS), all collected data was inputted into the SPSS statistical analysis software at Western Michigan University.

As noted in Chapter 3, a coding system was created to provide uniformity (all continuous measures) in the statistical analysis of the collected data. For example, as previously noted, the options for participants to report their current academic standing included, freshman, sophomore, junior or senior. A numerical code was assigned to each option: freshman=1, sophomore=2, junior=3 and senior=4 and the variable CLSTAND was created.

Cumulative grade point average (0.0-4.0 scale) was measured by participants producing a check next to the appropriate choice based on the following range of options: <2.0, 2.1-2.5, 2.6-3.0, 3.1-3.5, and 3.6-4.0. A numerical code was then assigned to each option; <2.0=1, 2.1-2.5=2, 2.6-3.0=3, 3.1-3.5=4, and 3.6-4.0=5 and the variable GPA was then created for each participant.

High cumulative grade point average (HGPA) was measured by partitioning all participants that reported their GPA as 2.6 and above. This was computed by creating a “dummy code.” Thus, if respondents were assigned the numerical code of “0” or “no,” this was an indication of an absence of the measured attribute (HGPA), and “1” or “yes,” was an indication of the presence of the measured attribute (HGPA). An analysis of the data determined the assigned value of the dummy code, “0” or “,” based on the following tests for the HGPA variable:

- If participant’s GPA=3, then HGPA=1;
- If participant’s GPA=4, then HGPA=1; and
- If participant’s GPA=5, then HGPA=1.

All other responses to the above test would result in the default assignment of “0” or “no” for the attribute of HGPA for that participant.

First year of college attendance was measured by participants producing a check next to the appropriate choice based on the following range of choices: 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, and <1997. Similarly, a numerical code was assigned to each option; 2002=1, 2001=2, 2000=3, 1999=4, 1998=5, 1997=6, <1997=7 and the variable FYEAR was created.

Academic persistence was computed using a procedure that matched a participant's first year of college attendance (FYEAR) with the participant's class standing (CLSTAND). Specifically, if a participant selected 2002 as FYEAR, he was determined to be persisting if he selected freshmen as his CLSTAND; if a participant selected 2001 as FYEAR, he was determined to be persisting if he selected sophomore as his CLSTAND; if a participant selected 2000 as FYEAR, he was determined to be persisting if he selected junior as his CLSTAND; and if a participant selected 1999, 1998, 1997, or <1997 as FYEAR, he was determined to be persisting if he selected senior as his CLSTAND.

The variable AP (academic persistence) was also computed by creating a “dummy code.” In this scenario, the numerical code of “0” or “no” was assigned to participants if an absence of the measured attribute (AP) was computed, and “1” or “yes” if the presence of the measured attribute (AP) was computed. The method for computing the numerical code was based on the following tests:

- If participant's FYEAR=1 and CLSTAND=1, then AP=1;
- If participant's FYEAR=2 and CLSTAND=2, then AP=1;
- If participant's FYEAR=3 and CLSTAND=3, then AP=1;
- If participant's FYEAR=4 and CLSTAND=4, then AP=1;
- If participant's FYEAR=5 and CLSTAND=4, then AP=1;
- If participant's FYEAR=6 and CLSTAND=4, then AP=1; and
- If participant's FYEAR=7 and CLSTAND=4, then AP=1.

All other outcomes to the above test would result in a default assignment of “0” or “no” for the attribute of AP for that participant.

Statisticians state that the use of a dummy code is beneficial and appropriate when performing certain statistical techniques. This method of coding allows the researcher to convert nominal data into variables that are continuous in nature (Newton & Rudestam, 1999).

Descriptive statistics and correlations of the measured variables were generated from data entered into the SPSS statistical analysis program. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are noted in Table 1. Histograms detailing the frequencies of variables FYEAR, CLSTAND, GPA, ASCTOT, and CCSTOT are found in Figures 1-5 respectively.

Table 1:

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Measured Variables

Variables							
	FYEAR	CLSTAND	GPA	ASCTOT	CCSTOT	AP	HGPA
1. FYEAR	1.00						
2. CLSTAND	.80	1.00					
3. GPA	.14	.28	1.00				
4. ASCTOT	.07	-.01	-.01	1.00			
5. CCSTOT	.09	.06	-.01	.22	1.00		
6. AP	.64	.78	.18	.03	.04	1.00	
7. HGPA	-.07	-.11	-.07	.02	.02	-.20	1.00
<u>M</u>	3.68	2.64	2.92	230.3	50.7	.76	.53
<u>SD</u>	2.0	1.2	1.0	19.8	9.4	.43	.50

FYEAR = First year of college attendance

CLSTAND = Class standing

GPA = Cumulative grade point average

ASCTOT = African self-consciousness aggregate score

CCSTOT = Cultural congruence aggregate score

AP = Academic persistence

HGPA = High cumulative grade point average

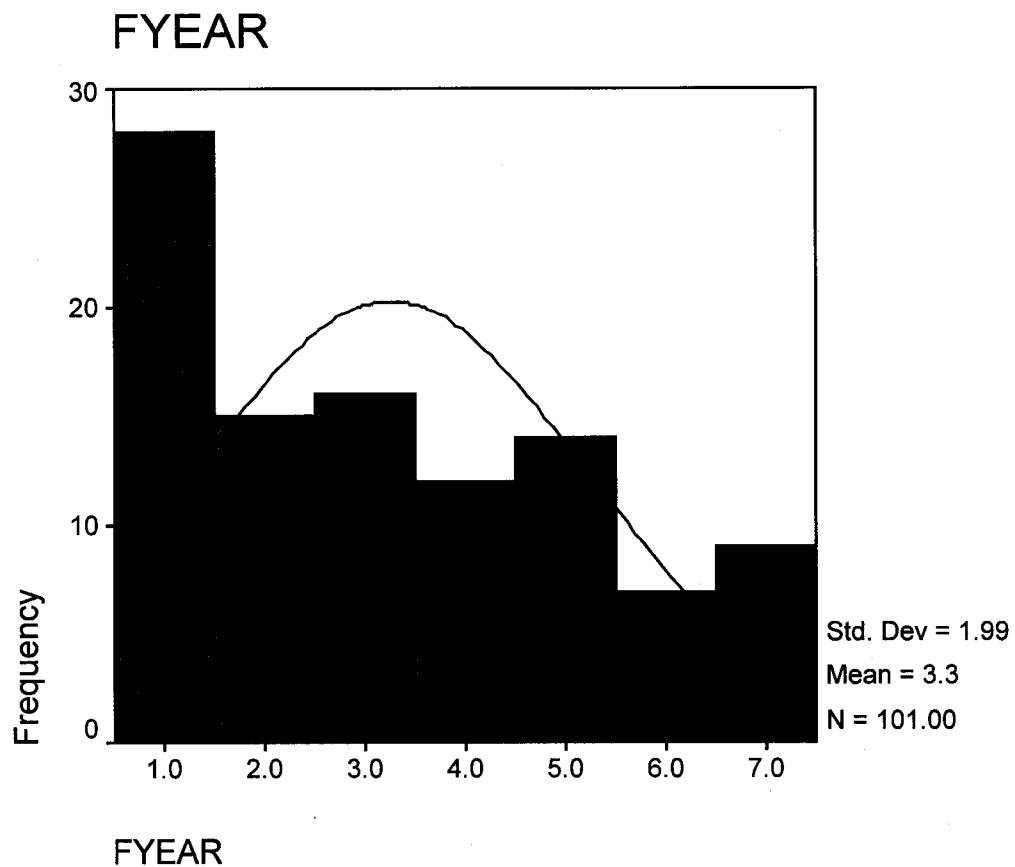


Figure 1. Histogram of First Year of College Attendance

Note. First year of college attendance is based on the following coding system:
2002=1, 2001=2, 2000=3, 1999=4, 1998=5, 1997=6, and ,1997=7.

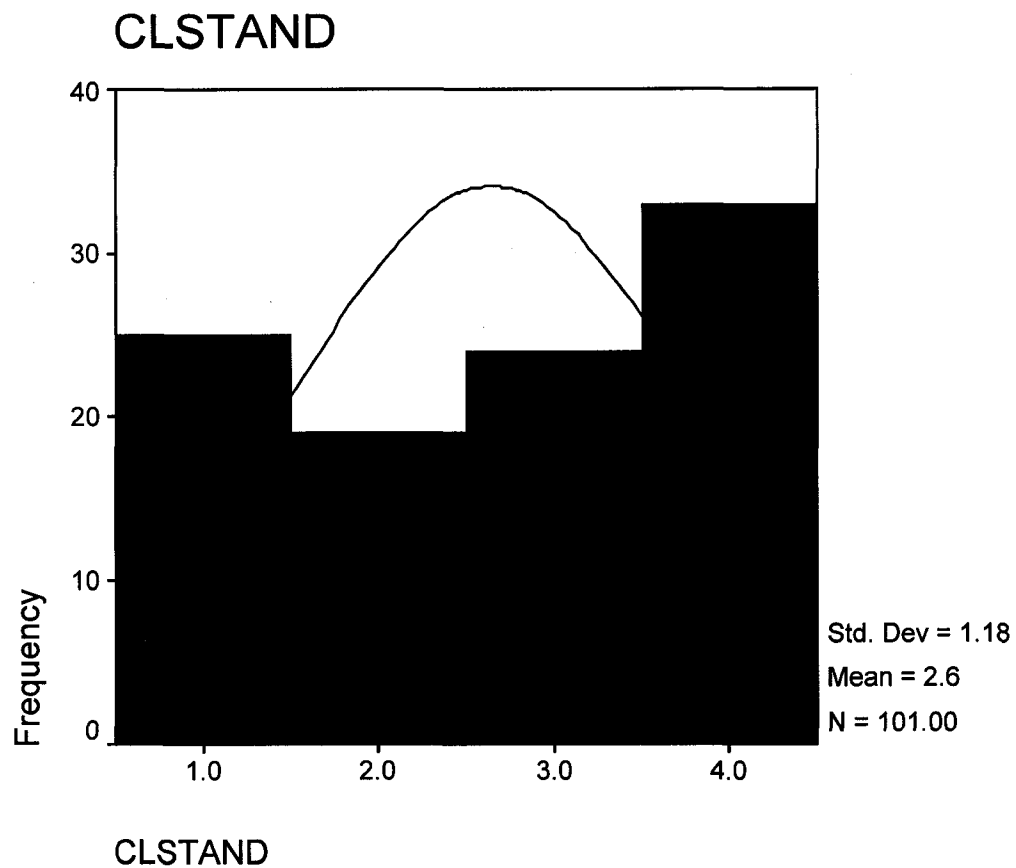


Figure 2. Histogram of Class Standing

Note. Class standing is based on the following coding system: Freshman=1, Sophomore=2, Junior=3, and Senior=4

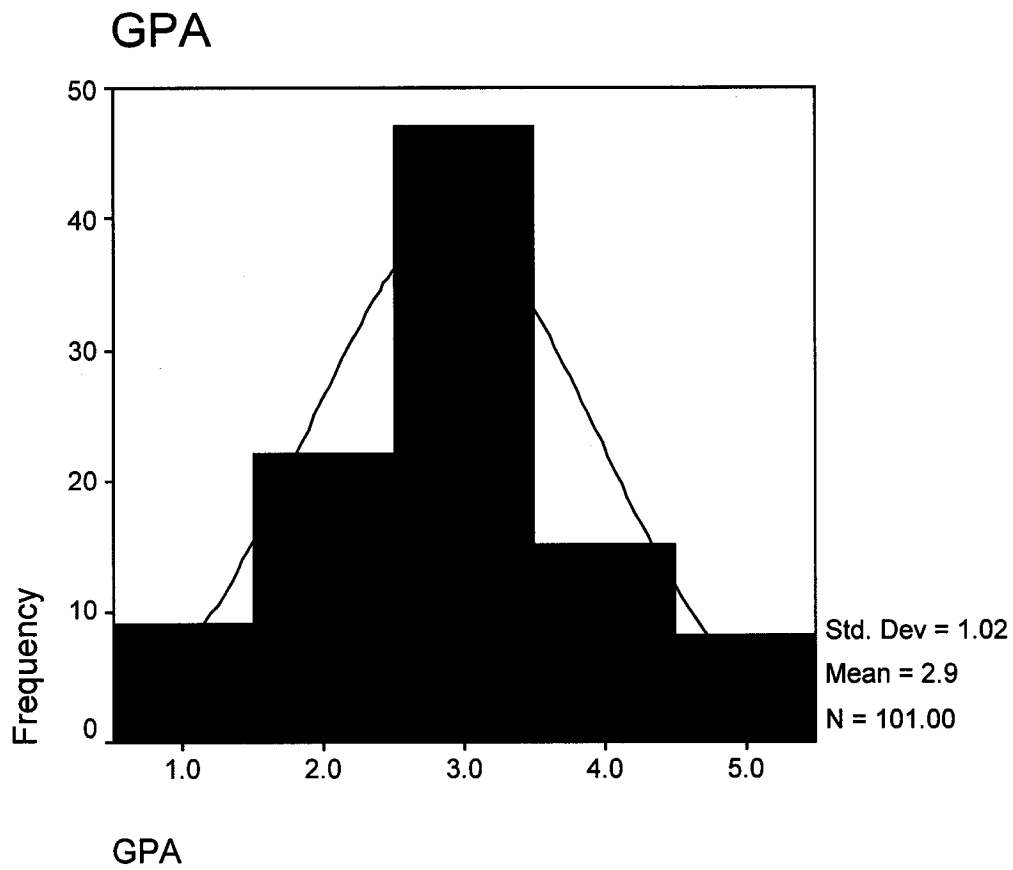


Figure 3. Histogram of Cumulative Grade Point Average

Note. Cumulative Grade Point Average is based on the following coding system:
 <2.0=1, 2.1-2.5=2, 2.6-3.0=3, 3.1-3.5=4, and 3.6-4.0=5.

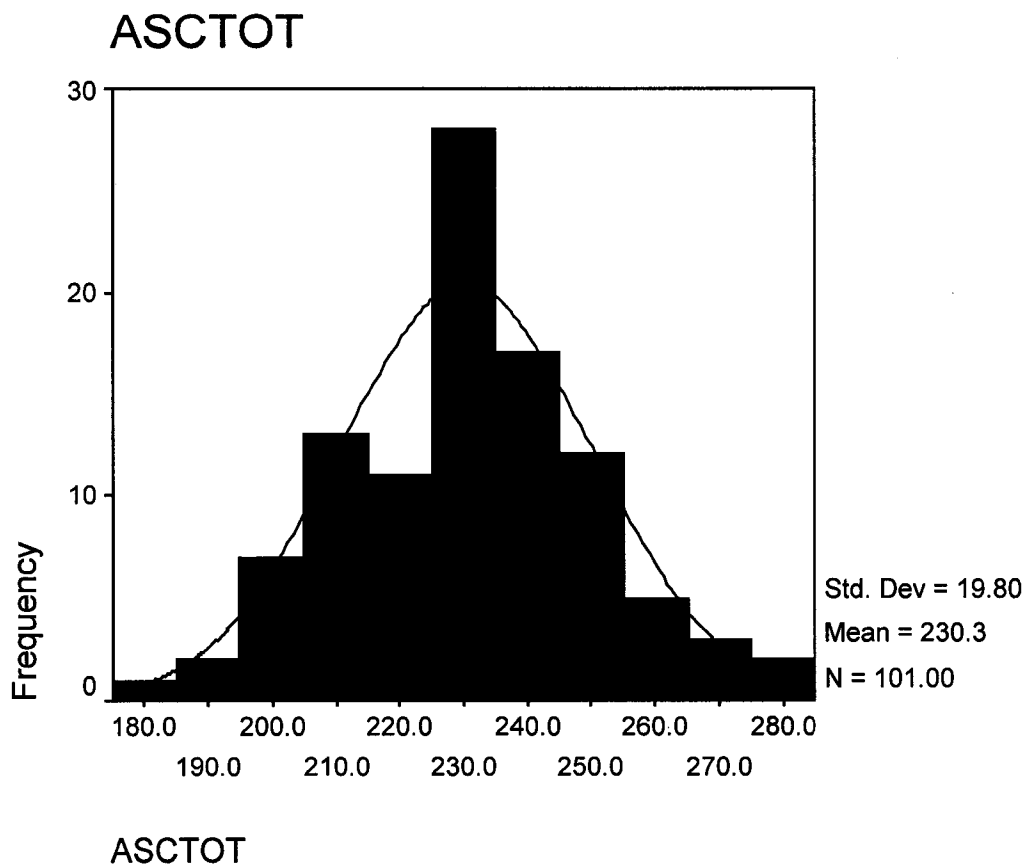


Figure 4. Histogram of African Self-Consciousness Total Score

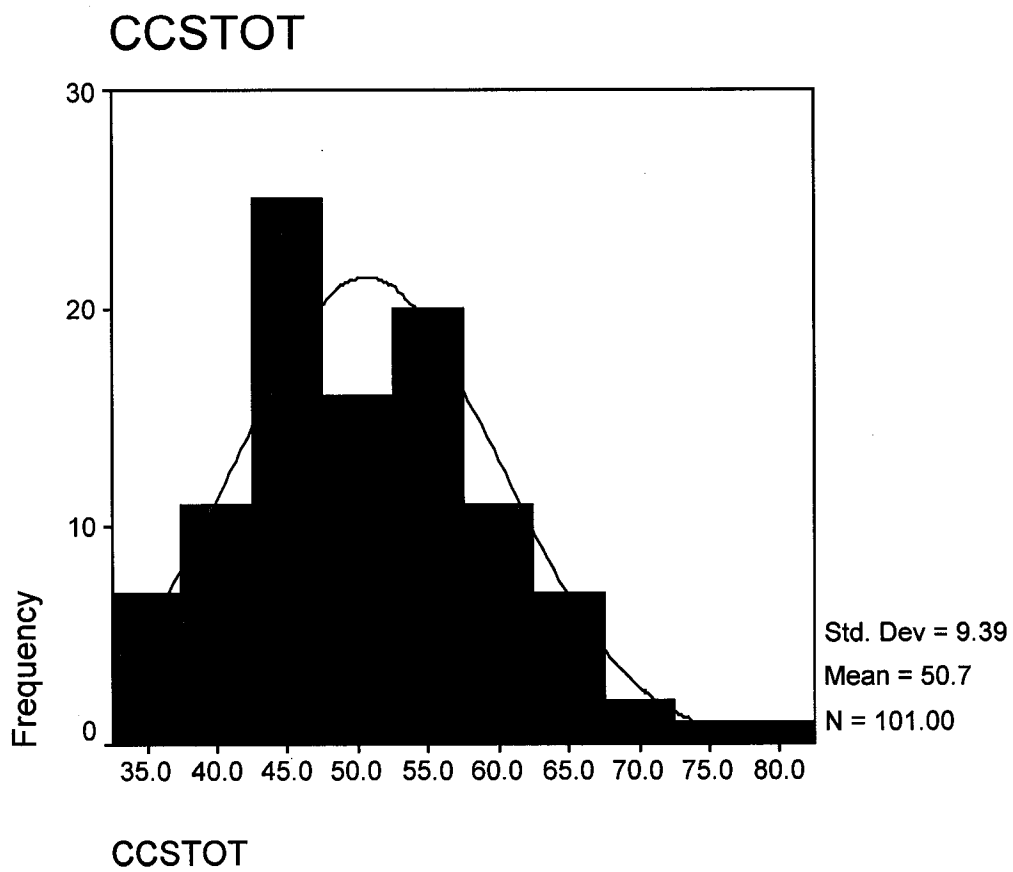


Figure 5. Histogram of Cultural Congruity Total Score

Analysis of Data

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASC) and scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCS).

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation test generated data regarding the strength and direction of the two measured constructs, African self-consciousness (ASC) and cultural congruence (CCS). Participant aggregate scores for ASC and CCS are expressed by the variables, ASCTOT and CCSTOT respectively. The data indicated a positive yet low correlation, $r=0.22$, between African self-consciousness and cultural congruence based on the responses of participants ($n=101$) in the data set.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASC), scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCS) and higher cumulative grade point average (HGPA).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted using ASCTOT and CCSTOT as independent (predictor) variables to predict the outcome of the dependent (criterion) variable, higher cumulative grade point average (HGPA). An alpha level of $p \leq .05$ was selected a priori as the test of significance between the independent and dependent variables. The analysis indicated African self-consciousness and cultural congruence were not statistically significant predictors of academic performance. These two variables produced a significant r of .03, $F(2, 100) = .04$, $p \leq .05$ as noted in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis with Academic Performance as the Criterion

Variables	R	Rsq	AdjRsq	F	Rsqch	Fch	SgCH
ASCTOT/CCSTOT	.03	.00	-.02	.04	.00	.04	.96

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between scores on the African self-consciousness scale (ASC), scores on the cultural congruity scale (CCS) and higher rates of academic persistence (AP).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted using ASCTOT and CCSTOT as independent (predictor) variables to predict the outcome of the dependent (criterion) variable, higher rates of academic persistence (AP). An alpha level of $p \leq .05$ was selected a priori as the test of significance between the independent and dependent variables. The analysis indicated African self-consciousness and cultural congruence were not statistically significant predictors of academic persistence. These two variables produced a significant r of .04, $F(2, 100) = .09$, $p \leq .05$ as noted in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis with Academic Persistence as the Criterion

Variables	R	Rsq	AdjRsq	F	Rsqch	Fch	SgCH
ASCTOT/CCSTOT	.04	.00	-.02	.09	.00	.09	.92

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a large measure, success in America is determined by a person's level of economic viability. Basically, financial and material prosperity translate into personal success. For some individuals, particularly males in American society, this measure of personal success can be inextricably tied to their sense of self-worth, humanity, and/or masculinity. Scholars have suggested that for African American males, there is a critical link between their economic viability and sense of manhood (Cuyjet, 1997). Research has also shown that possession of a post-secondary education is an important antecedent for acquiring the kind of financial resources associated with economic viability and a reasonably comfortable lifestyle in America (Leslie & Brinkman, 1986).

A review of many quality of life statistics reveals that generally speaking, African American males continue to experience serious challenges and obstacles in their pursuit of the "American Dream." As stated above, education is "one" of the most optimal means for ameliorating the less than desirable condition of many African American males in our society. Unfortunately, recent census data indicate that college participation and/or graduation for African American males has remained stagnant and/or diminished in recent years (American Council on Education, 2001).

The dearth of representation and/or success in college has been hypothesized by Cuyjet (1997) to be the result of two interrelated factors: (1) barriers which prevent African American males from entering college, and (2) the negatively perceived influences that exist on many predominantly White college campuses that contribute to

high levels of attrition of African American males, nullifying their ability to graduate. The latter of these two factors is closely related to the focus of this study.

Research examining the experiences of African American students in college, particularly those attending predominantly White colleges and universities, suggests a relationship between a strong sense and appreciation for African culture, healthy mental functioning, and academic success (Baldwin, 1987; Durgans, 1992; and Duncan, 2003). The research also suggests the importance of utilizing instruments imbedded with the ideological and cultural values of persons from non-European or non-White backgrounds when conducting research focusing on members of racial and ethnic minority groups.

This study hypothesized that a strong positive relationship between expression of African self-consciousness in African American males attending a predominantly White university in the Midwest and their perceptions of the fit or “cultural congruence” of the campus could be used to predict two factors related to academic success: academic performance (a measure based on high cumulative grade point average) and persistence (progress toward graduation).

A sample of 101 African American male undergraduate students enrolled at Western Michigan University agreed to participate in this study. The distribution of the sample based on participant’s class standing was as follows: Freshmen=25 (24.8%), Sophomore=19 (18.8%), Junior=24 (23.8%), and Senior=33 (32.7%). This suggests that the sample reflected a fairly equal representation and cross-section of the African American male undergraduate population enrolled at Western Michigan University. Upon receiving a thorough explanation regarding the purpose of the study and their rights should they agree to participate, each participant was administered the three data

collection instruments, which included a demographic information form, the African self-consciousness scale (ASC), and the cultural congruity scale (CCS). After the sample was obtained (n=101), the data collected were inputted into the SPSS statistical software program at Western Michigan University for analysis.

Aggregate totals for the constructs African self-consciousness and cultural congruity were computed and denoted by the variables ASCTOT and CCSTOT respectively. The variable AP was created to measure the effect of African self-consciousness and cultural congruence on academic persistence or progress toward graduation for the study's participants. The variable HGPA or high grade cumulative point average (participants with self-reported cumulative grade point averages of 2.6 and above) was created to measure the effect of African self-consciousness and cultural congruence on the participants' academic performance.

A Pearson Correlation test was conducted to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between ASCTOT and CCSTOT, based on Hypothesis 1 of this study. These two variables were then used to conduct two separate regression analyses designed to predict the outcomes AP and HGPA, thus testing Hypotheses 2 & 3 of this study.

Discussion of Results

Hypothesis 1: The Pearson Correlation test conducted revealed a positive, yet low-moderate correlation ($r=0.22$) between the constructs of African self-consciousness and cultural congruity for participants in this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This suggests that for participants in this study, there is a low-moderate relationship between their sense of African self-consciousness and their perception of the congruence or fit of the values that permeate the culture of Western Michigan University.

Further analysis of the data revealed that participants in this study reported a relatively high level of African self-consciousness with mean scores for ASCTOT of $\bar{M}=230.3$ (maximum score=336). Aggregate scores on the ASCS of 210 and above indicate high levels of African self-consciousness (Baldwin, 1996). Additionally, participants reported a relatively high level of cultural congruence with mean scores for CCSTOT of $\bar{M}=50.7$ (maximum=91). Aggregate scores on the CCS of 46 and above indicate high levels of cultural congruence (Gloria & Robinson-Kurpius, 1996). The correlation test suggested that for participants in this study, a low-moderate level of correspondence existed between their sense of African self-consciousness and their sense of cultural congruence.

Hypothesis 2: The regression analysis conducted to test Hypothesis 2 revealed no statistical significance between the independent variables ASCTOT and CCSTOT and the dependent variable H GPA, with R of .03 and the confidence level for the analysis set at $p \leq .05$. Thus, the data revealed no statistical significance between the independent and dependent variables, and the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis determined that the aggregate scores of the constructs African self-consciousness and cultural congruity were not significant predictors of academic performance (high cumulative grade point average) for the participants in this study.

Hypothesis 3: The regression analysis conducted to test Hypothesis 3 revealed no statistical significance between the independent variables ASCTOT and CCSTOT and the dependent variable AP, with R of .04 and the confidence level for the analysis set at $p \leq .05$. Thus, the data revealed no statistical significance between the independent and dependent variables, and the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis determined that

the aggregate scores of the constructs African self-consciousness and cultural congruity were not significant predictors of academic persistence (progress toward graduation) for the participants in this study.

Prior literature has suggested a significant relationship among such factors as African self-consciousness, academic performance, and persistence. Similarly, earlier research revealed the importance of cultural congruence for racial minorities attending predominantly White colleges and universities. However, those earlier studies only examined the aforementioned constructs as singular predictors of the academic experiences of their respective samples. This study was important because it examined the strength of the relationship between the two constructs, which was then used to ascertain if and how that relationship might be used to predict performance and persistence for its participants.

Implications of Findings

An important goal of most research is the potential for generalizing the findings of a study to a particular population. A critical element in assessing the viability of generalization is size of sample. In this study, 101 African American males enrolled at Western Michigan University agreed to serve as participants. Fall 2002 census data indicated 525 students reported their racial/ethnic affiliation as African American. Therefore, the sample for this study represented approximately 20% of the total population available, thus providing a reasonable amount of evidence to support generalizing the findings of the study to the total African American male population enrolled at the institution.

Another factor to be considered in generalization is randomization. The sample

group providing the data examined in this study was obtained through a process of convenience. Clearly, a concern for the motivation of individuals who participate in any research is warranted. Therefore, some caution must be exercised. However, the findings of this study suggest that based on the high levels of African self-consciousness and cultural congruence reported by the participants, these constructs are important factors to be considered in the development of programming, curricula, and support services for members of the student population at Western Michigan University.

A review of recent higher education statistics reveals that rates of participation, performance, and persistence for African American males in post-secondary education have remained stagnant at best, but in general, have seen a continual decline in the past decade. This decline has occurred in spite of the purported priority and/or focus that faculty, staff, and administrators of predominantly White colleges and universities have exercised to improve the experiences of this particular student population.

The aim of this study was to expand upon earlier research findings associated with the academic experiences of African American males. In particular, an interest in the differential experiences of African American male and female college students was a primary consideration and motivation for the study. Poor levels of participation and graduation suggest a clear need to improve the status of the African American male college student. Therefore, while this study was initiated to investigate the degree to which the combined expression of African self-consciousness and cultural congruence in African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities might be used to predict their academic performance and persistence, its findings suggest a clear need for future related research.

Given the positive yet low-moderate level of correlation measured between the variables ASCTOT and CCSTOT, it was only reasonable to expect the lack of significance revealed in the data analysis with respect to Hypotheses 2 & 3 of this study. Contrary to the assumptions that informed the impetus for this study, the evidence clearly indicated a negligible relationship between the combined effect of African self-consciousness and cultural congruence on academic performance and persistence for the participants in the sample. Nevertheless, the information gleaned from this study has important value in the continued effort to better understand the academic experiences of African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities.

The literature suggests the existence of any number of confounds that could effect the measurement of factors influencing the academic performance of African American males. For example, some research has suggested the difficulty of isolating specific factors influencing the grade differences between African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities versus historically Black colleges and universities (Cheatham, Slaney, & Coleman, 1990). Unquestionably, the grade that any student receives in a given course can be influenced by a litany of objective and/or subjective factors. However, in the case of the African American male, typical college student development issues such as a sense of alienation, isolation, poor coping and time management skills, may be exacerbated by other issues of perceived racism, gender bias, or a combination of these issues. The outcomes of this study suggest a degree of validity with respect to this hypothesis.

Other research has explored the value and importance of academic integration relative to the experiences of African American male college students. Academic

integration is concerned with the degree to which students become immersed, or actively strive to be an integral part of the academic environment of their respective college or university. It may be the case that African American males tend to be less integrated into the academic environment of their college campus. This might be due to the lack of familiarity with the mores of the system, frustration with the bureaucracy of the system, a lack of role models and mentors, etc. (Cureton, 2003). It is likely that a lack of academic integration is yet another factor contributing to the adverse academic experiences of the African American male college student.

Another implication of this study is the evidence it offers suggesting the need to more thoroughly examine within-group gender differences based on race. Specifically, the outcomes of this study suggest the possibility that gender differences were an influence on the validity and reliability outcomes of the two primary scales used in this study, African self-consciousness and cultural congruity. For example, a cursory examination of the results from the tests of validity and reliability for the cultural congruity scale indicates that the sample used was heavily skewed toward females ($n=342$) versus males ($n=112$). Unfortunately, specific details regarding the representation of males versus females were not available relative to tests for validity and reliability for the African self-consciousness scale. However, it is not unreasonable to presume a similar skewing of the sample, given the typically higher ratio of college participation of African American females versus males. It may be the case that issues of masculinity and manhood have not been sufficiently accounted for in the design, development, and testing of some culturally based measurement tools.

Findings provided by previous research, which to some extent emerged via the

outcomes of the current study, suggest a multiplicity of non-cognitive factors may impact or influence the experiences of African American males in college. In summary, findings generated from this study suggest a need to conduct additional research examining the contribution of and/or impact of a range of cognitive and non-cognitive factors on the experience of African American male college students.

Limitations of the Study

Several important issues are likely to have impacted the outcomes of this study. For example, while the outcomes of this study are based on a relatively representative sample (20%) of the available target population, the total number of participants responding to the solicitation efforts could have been better. A higher rate of participants agreeing to participate in the study could have contributed to an increase in statistical power associated with respect to analysis of the collected data.

The use of a sample of convenience may have contributed to the outcomes as well. It is possible that by using a sample of convenience, the pool of participants tended to consist of individuals who are highly motivated and/or well adjusted to their environs. Thus, while they may possess high levels of the measured attribute of African self-consciousness, they may have developed coping strategies to countermand perceived acts of racism and/or discrimination that occur on the Western Michigan University campus. The sample of convenience may be more informative if other measurement tools were integrated in the design in order to determine the contribution of other factors to the academic viability of those who volunteered to participate in the study.

Concurrently, the motivations of those who volunteered to participate in the study must be considered with respect to the viability of generalizing the outcomes to the total

Western Michigan University African American male student population. In general, motivations of participants are difficult to ascertain. Consequentially, this could also affect the feasibility of generalizing the outcomes of this study to comparable groups of students attending other predominantly White colleges and universities.

In a similar vein, in order to improve the possibility of generalizing the outcomes of the study to the larger population of African American males attending predominantly White colleges or universities, it may have been beneficial to expand the scope of the pool to include other predominantly White colleges and universities in the region. Should this have occurred, it could have created certain delimiting issues such as:

- Obtaining Human Subjects Institutional Review Board approval from other post-secondary institutions,
- Managing and controlling instrument administration by persons other than the student investigator, and
- Unexpected costs for travel, phone communication, etc.

One byproduct of authorizing outside parties to administer the surveys could be the advent of other unanticipated confounds, such as uniformity of instrument administration, physical location, and time of day. Similarly, time and resource constraints (finances, schedules, and etc.) could have a negative impact on the parameters and scope of the dissertation research.

It should also be noted that self-reported data was an integral part of the design and implementation of this study. Some researchers have expressed caution regarding the reliability of self-reported data in empirical investigation. However, self-reported data, including a student's cumulative grade point average, has previously been and remains a

common practice in quantitative research. The self-reported cumulative grade point average (GPA) has been found to be a reliable dependent variable in a wide range of higher education and college student development studies including, but not limited to: Fleming (1984); Pace (1985); Allen, Epps, & Haniff (1991); Allen (1992); Mackay & Kuh (1994).

Finally, additional background information such as socioeconomic status (SES), family structure, place of birth, location of the participants' formative life experience, first generation college attendee, high school attended, and/or involvement in co-curricular activities were not obtained. This may have limited the ability of the researcher to partition participants into subgroups. Consequentially, the ability to control specific confounds in the data may have been hampered. However, it is expected that the effect on the outcomes of the study were negligible.

Recommendations

Analysis of the data collected for this study revealed mean aggregate scores of ASCTOT ($M=230$) and CCSTOT ($M=51$) for participants. This suggests reasonably high levels of African self-consciousness and cultural congruence. However, the lack of significance determined with respect to Hypotheses 2 & 3 as revealed in the two separate regression analyses, suggests the possible existence of other unmeasured non-cognitive factors that might influence academic performance and persistence for the participants.

Based on an assumption that other non-cognitive factors are influencing the experiences of African American males at predominantly White colleges and universities, it might be useful to conduct additional research to determine if they work in collusion with, or exclusive of, the constructs measured in this study. In particular, a cluster

analysis of multiple factors associated with academic performance could be useful. In doing so, it may be possible to more precisely partition the variance and level of contribution of various factors to the academic success, or lack thereof, for African American males attending predominantly White colleges and universities.

The results of this study suggest the continued need to examine the within racial group gender differences of African American students. There is little evidence to suggest that the dearth of participation and concurrently, the paltry levels of academic success for African American males in college will subside in the near future. In fact, statistics indicate a strong likelihood that the incarceration rate of African American males in the primary college attending age group of 18-24 will only continue to increase. Ultimately, this translates into a continuation in the decline of postsecondary education matriculation for African American males in the future. Therefore, it is imperative that funding and other resources be allocated to support intervention programs designed to emphasize the value and possibility of obtaining a college education to African American males at an early age, i.e. 9-16 years of age.

There are also strong indicators to suggest that many P-12 public school districts across the country will continue to be underfunded and poorly equipped. This trend makes it difficult for these schools to provide a quality, college preparatory based education for their students when compared to more affluent school districts. Unfortunately, the trend in the country for most racial minorities to reside in impoverished areas is likely to continue, and thus, be enrolled in the poorer schools that pervade these communities. Therefore, it is very likely that the level of academic preparedness of these students, particularly African American males, will be substandard

or marginal at best. A clear plan that fosters a more equitable distribution of resources and innovative programming (extended class times/academic year, parental involvement incentives, smaller class sizes, etc.) should be implemented, particularly in public school districts around the country.

Ideally, the outcomes of this research will spur the development of instruments that measure factors of academic performance based on within-racial group gender differences, particularly with respect to issues of masculinity, manhood, and male ego-identity development. These tools could be very useful in future research focusing on the experiences of African American males in college. Tools of this nature could provide invaluable information for university faculty, staff and administrators in the development of programming and curricula to support African American male college students.

Finally, the outcomes of this study are based on a sample obtained over a relatively brief period of time, one academic year semester. It might be useful to conduct a longitudinal study that accumulates data over the course of several academic years. A comparison of outcomes from one academic year to the next and between multiyear cohort groups might provide useful information regarding possible changes in identity and coping strategy development over an extended period of time.

Grant funding to support research of this nature is imperative given the continued paucity of investigations that focus on the experiences of African American male college and university students. Financial inducements and incentives might help to rectify the disinterest evinced among educational researchers relative to a population that has demonstrated struggles and difficulties in higher education for decades. Without these incentives, it is very likely that matriculation, participation, performance, and persistence

problems for African American males will continue to be an ignominious abscess on the visage of higher education in America well into the distant future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator: Dr. Joseph R. Morris
Student Investigator: Darrell Johnson

Title of Study: *Academic Performance, Persistence, and Cultural Congruence of African American Males Attending Predominantly White Colleges and Universities*

My name is Darrell Johnson and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology at Western Michigan University. I am conducting a study of African American male, undergraduate college students attending predominantly White colleges and universities that will be used for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this study is to assess your level of expression of two different constructs, African Self-Consciousness and Cultural Congruence. The level of each of those constructs together will then be used to predict your academic performance (based on your cumulative grade point average [GPA]) and your academic persistence (progress toward graduation [AP]). The data obtained from this study may provide insight that could be used to develop programs or new instructional curricula that would enhance and/or improve the experience of African American males attending predominantly White colleges and/or universities.

As a participant you will be asked to complete three questionnaires: a Demographic Information form (first year of college attendance, current academic standing, and cumulative grade point average), the African Self-Consciousness Scale (ASC) which contains 42-items, and the Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS) which contains 13-items. Upon completion of the three questionnaires, please place them in an envelope and return this consent form to the facilitator. Completing these three questionnaires will take approximately 50 minutes.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decline to continue participating at any time. You are free to choose not to respond to any question included in any of the questionnaires. Lack of participation in this study does not endanger any current or future services which you are eligible for at Western Michigan University.

Your completed questionnaires will be treated with strict confidentiality, and your name will not be associated with your responses, which will be reported only in aggregate. The data obtained during this study will be received anonymously. Upon receipt of the completed instruments, they will be numerically coded for the purpose of maintaining an organized inputting of the data into a statistical analysis program.

Data received during the study will be stored in a secured file cabinet located in the office of the Principal Investigator, Dr. Joseph R. Morris, for a minimum of three years after the study is completed. Informed consent forms will be kept entirely separate from any other materials. You will be given a copy of this form.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 349-6480, or the Office of the Vice President for Research and Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Committee (HSIRB), located in 251W. Walwood Hall (East Campus), or by phone at 387-8293. This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner.

Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old. Your signature below indicates that you have read the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

Subject's signature

Date

Darrell Johnson
Student Investigator's signature

Date



Date: March 21, 2003

To: Joseph Morris, Principal Investigator
Darell Johnson, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Lagerwey".

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 03-02-31

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Academic Performance, Persistence, and Cultural Congruence of African American Males Attending Predominantly White Colleges and Universities" has been **approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: March 21, 2004

Appendix B

Demographic Information Form

What was your first year of college attendance?

_____ 2002 _____ 2001 _____ 2000 _____ 1999 _____ 1998 _____ 1997

_____ prior to 1997

What is your current academic standing at Western Michigan University?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Choose one of the following which best reflects your cumulative WMU grade point average?

_____ <2.0 _____ 2.1 – 2.5 _____ 2.6 – 3.0 _____ 3.1 – 3.5 _____ 3.6 – 4.0

Appendix C

African Self-Consciousness Scale

Instructions: The following statements reflect some beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of Black people. Read each statement carefully and give your honest feeling about the beliefs and attitudes expressed. Indicate the extent to which you agree by using the following scale:

1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Circle the number closest to your feelings. Note that the higher the number you choose for the statement, the more you agree with that statement. Conversely, the lower the number you choose, the more you disagree with that statement. Also, there is no right or wrong answer, only the answer that best expresses your present feelings about the statement. Please respond to all the statements (do not omit any).

1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I don't necessarily feel like I am also being mistreated in a situation where I see another Black person being mistreated.

1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
---------	---------	---------	---------

2. Black people should have their own independent schools which consider their African heritage and values an important part of the curriculum.

1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
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3. Blacks who trust Whites in general are basically very intelligent people.

1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
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African Self-Consciousness (cont.)	1-----2 Strongly Disagree	3-----4 Disagree	5-----6 Agree	7-----8 Strongly Agree
4. Blacks who are committed and prepared to uplift the Black race by any means necessary (including violence) are more intelligent than Blacks who are not this committed and prepared.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
5. Blacks in America should try harder to be American rather than practicing activities that lift them up with their African cultural heritage.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
6. Regardless of their interests, educational background and social achievements, I would prefer to associate with Black people than with non-Blacks.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
7. It is not such a good idea for Black students to be required to learn an African language.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
8. It is not within the best interest of Blacks to depend on Whites for anything, no matter how religious and decent they (the Whites) purport to be.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
9. Blacks who place the highest value on Black life (over that of other people) are reverse racists and generally evil people.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
10. Black children should be taught that they are African people at an early age.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
11. White people, generally speaking are not opposed to self-determination for Black people.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8

African Self-Consciousness (cont.)	1-----2 Strongly Disagree	3-----4 Disagree	5-----6 Agree	7-----8 Strongly Agree
12. As a good index of self-respect Blacks in America should consider adopting traditional African names for themselves.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
13. A White/European or Caucasian image of God and the "holy family" (among others considered to be close to God) are not such bad things for Blacks to worship.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
14. Blacks born in the United States are Black or African first, rather than American or just plain people.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
15. Black people who talk in a relatively loud manner, show a lot of emotions and feelings, and express themselves with a lot of movement and body motions are less intelligent than Blacks who do not behave this way.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
16. Racial consciousness and cultural awareness based on traditional African values are necessary to the development of Black marriages and families that can contribute to the liberation and enhancement of Black people in America.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
17. In dealing with other Blacks, I consider myself quite different and unique from most of them.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
18. Blacks should form loving relationships with and marry only other Blacks.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8

African Self-Consciousness (cont.)	1-----2 Strongly Disagree	3-----4 Disagree	5-----6 Agree	7-----8 Strongly Agree
19. I have difficulty identifying with the culture of African people.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
20. It is intelligent for Blacks in America to organize to educate and liberate themselves from White-American domination.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
21. There is no such thing as Black culture among Blacks in America.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
22. It is good for Black husbands and wives to help each other develop racial consciousness and cultural awareness in themselves and their children.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
23. Africa is not the ancestral homeland of all Black people throughout the world.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
24. It is good for Blacks in America to wear traditional African-type clothing and hair styles if they desire to do so.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
25. I feel little sense of commitment to Black people who are not close friends or relatives.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
26. All Black students in Africa and America should be expected to study African culture and history as it occurs throughout the world.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
27. Black children should be taught to love all races of people, even those races who do harm to them.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8

African Self-Consciousness (cont.)	1-----2 Strongly Disagree	3-----4 Disagree	5-----6 Agree	7-----8 Strongly Agree
28. Blacks in America who view Africa as their homeland are more intelligent than those who view America as their homeland.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
29. If I saw Black children fighting, I would leave them to settle it alone.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
30. White people, generally speaking, do not respect Black life.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
31. Blacks in America should view Blacks from other countries (e.g. Ghana, Nigeria, and other countries in Africa) as foreigners rather than as their brothers and sisters.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
32. When a Black person uses the terms "Self, me, and," his/her reference should encompass all Black people rather than simply him/herself.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
33. Religion is dangerous for Black people when it directs and inspires them to become self-determining and independent of the White community.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8
34. Black parents should encourage their children to respect all Black people, good, bad, and punish them when they don't show respect.	1-----2	3-----4	5-----6	7-----8

African Self-Consciousness

(cont.)

1-----2 3-----4 5-----6 7-----8
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

35. Blacks who celebrate Kwanzaa and practice "Nguzo Saba" (the Black Value System), both symbolizing African traditions, don't necessarily have better sense than Blacks who celebrate Easter, Christmas, and the Fourth of July.

36. African culture is better for humanity than European culture.

37. Black people's concern for self-knowledge (knowledge of one's history, philosophy, culture, etc.) and self (collective determination) makes them treat White people badly.

38. The success of an individual Black person is not as important as the survival of all Black people.

39. If a good/worthwhile education could be obtained at all schools (both Black and White), I would prefer for my child to attend a racially integrated school.

40. It is good for Black people to refer to each other as brother and sister because such a practice is consistent with our African heritage.

41. It is not necessary to require Black/African Studies in predominantly Black schools.

42. Being involved in wholesome group activities with other Blacks lifts my spirits more so than being involved in individual oriented activities.

Appendix D

Cultural Congruity Scale

For each of the following items, indicate the extent to which you have experienced the feeling or situation at school. Use the following ratings:

Not at all							A Great Deal
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

- ____ 1. I feel that I have to change myself to fit in at school.
- ____ 2. I try not to show the parts of me that are “ethnically” based.
- ____ 3. I often feel like a chameleon, having to change myself depending
on the ethnicity of the person I am with at school.
- ____ 4. I feel that my ethnicity is incompatible with other students.
- ____ 5. I can talk to my friends at school about my family and culture.
- ____ 6. I feel I am leaving family values behind by going to college.
- ____ 7. My ethnic values are in conflict with what is expected at school.
- ____ 8. I can talk to my family about my friends from school.
- ____ 9. I feel that my language and/or appearance make it hard for me to fit in with other
students.
- ____ 10. My family and school values often conflict.
- ____ 11. I feel accepted at school as an ethnic minority.
- ____ 12. As an ethnic minority, I feel as if I belong on this campus.
- ____ 13. I can talk to my family about my struggles and concerns at school.