

LONGITUDINAL EXAMINATION OF RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT AND ENJOYMENT AMONG
AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH

By

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ABSTRACT

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Several researchers have proposed a link between perceptions of future racial/ethnic discrimination and school motivation. Ogbu (1981) found that for some African American adolescents the awareness of this discrimination might cause them to disengage from school and mainstream institutions, potentially undermining their chances at school success. One of the most common approaches for understanding how race/ethnicity influences development has been to compare racial/ethnic groups on outcomes like school achievement, mental health, and problem behaviors. This approach gave little consideration to possible underlying mechanisms and experiences. Recent studies have investigated potential mediators, such as income, neighborhood quality, and racial/ethnic identity within longitudinal designs (Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006). Few studies, have examined the relationship between racial/ethnic identity and school enjoyment or engagement. This study focuses on identity development among African American youth and its role as a possible influence on their school enjoyment and engagement.

Hypotheses. Racial/ethnic identity factor structures differ for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders. Racial/ethnic identity scores will increase over the three time points, with significant changes between time 1 and 3. Parental, peer, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition, and racial/ethnic identity are moderating factors for the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement.

Participants. The year 2 through year 6 cohort of 7th – 9th African American students (N=347) that completed the Coordinated Community Student Survey (C2S2) survey. As well as, a subset that completed three consecutive surveys (N=63), in order to assess racial/ethnic identity over time.

Procedure. C2S2 was administered yearly during the school day. De-identified individual data and scales scores from the original study were used for this project. Cleaning of data consisted of aggregating and merging data before conducting analyses. For all analyses conducted in this study, participants that did not answer a question were excluded from that particular analysis.

Measures. The items used in the racial/ethnic identity portion of the C2S2 were developed from two scales: 1) Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-Evaluation of One's Social Identity (CSES) and 2) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). From the C2S2 survey, the Parental Involvement, Teacher Support, Peer Hostility, School Enjoyment and School Engagement scales were used. Participants respond to a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*).

Findings. The study found no significant differences in racial/ethnic identity score changes overtime between 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. Overall parents, peers, teachers, and schools racial/ethnic composition were significant moderators of school engagement. The total racial/ethnic identity score was not a significant. An additional analysis using racial/ethnic knowledge and beliefs subscales (Herron, Barnes, & Almerigi, 2008), found both subscales to be significant moderators for school engagement. Contrary to expectations, no longitudinal racial/ethnic identity differences were found. These findings did show the importance of having a multifaceted approach when assessing school outcomes among African American students.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Robert and Gloria Herron, who have sacrificed so much so that I could have the best.

To my adopted parents, Jerry P. and Zetha Jones Roundtree, who have treated and loved me like a daughter and have never been absent when I was in need.

To my siblings (Ed, Beonica, Monica, Anthony, & Kelly), nieces (Geania, Talia, & Aaniyah), nephew Ellis, friends (Derrick, Duke, Kim, Dena, Nana, Adonnis), and family who always love me no matter what. I love you all more than words can say!

It really does take a village.

“And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer!” Ecclesiastes 4:12

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction & Theoretical Perspectives

It has become clear that for African American youth the presence of good socialization practices in the home, support in school, and the development of a positive racial/ethnic identity is associated with success in school (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Awad, 2007; Bowman & Howard, 1985; D. Brown, 2008). Research on school success has also focused on aspects of performance characteristics, home preparation, and parent involvement (Cole, Matheson, & Anisman, 2007; Hedegaard, 2005; Lockett & Harrell, 2003; Marshall, 1995; Tatum, 2004). In light of the ongoing achievement gaps for minority youth, it is important to look at school engagement (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2007). Even though the school environment may be the source of the problems, it could also be utilized to facilitate intervention and inhibit exacerbating circumstances (Swanson et al., 2003). Very few studies, have examined the relationship between school enjoyment and/or engagement with racial/ethnic identity (D. Carter, 2008b). This study focuses on the racial/ethnic identity development among African American youth and its role as a possible influence on school enjoyment and engagement.

Social and behavioral scientists have been interested in African American identity development for many years. These interests stem from efforts to understand the unique circumstances that children of color face as they mature in American society (Harris, 1995; Jones, 1998). This developmental process is also associated with the culturally specific transmission of information on heritage, history, traditions, and customs which aide in the development of how children see themselves and others in their particular ethnic group (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006). These cultural essentials can be acquired through experiences within the environment; child-rearing practices, certain activities

on part of children; and particular cultural goals set by parents, teachers, and significant others (Sinha & Mishra, 1999). Although this study is not a socialization study, it is important to understand the dynamic process that helps in the formation of racial/ethnic identity development.

Through the process of socialization, individuals internalize the values of society, including those relating to personality and role behavior. Parents and other members of the society impart to children the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values nurtured respectively in the society or within the specific cultural context through their unconscious and their deliberate efforts (Gordon, 1989; Grusec & Davidov, 2007; Maccoby, 1984; Schaffer, 2007). The socialization process allows children to gain certain insight into the rules, preferences for appropriate societal behaviors (Ochs, 1986), that are utilized in various situations to interpret the dynamics of particular events and situations in the environment. For some children, there may be a need to develop multiple socialization practices. For example, there is accumulating evidence to show that African American children are socialized to be bi-culturally competent (Cross, 1991) in order to function well and be successful in American society. The importance of racial/ethnic identity to self-concept is documented in diverse groups, including African Americans (D. Carter, 2007; R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998; Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

Racial/ethnic identity does not develop as a singular and independent process in the life of an individual but evolves over time based on experiences and maturity level of that individual. It is a lifelong process that begins at an early age as children have encounters with people within and outside of their home environment. This process involves various experiences with family, neighborhood, community, schools, and various other environments over time. Researchers have also proposed a link between perceptions of future racial/ethnic discrimination and school motivation (Altschul, et al., 2006; D. Carter, 2008a; Ogbu, 1992; Spencer et al., 2012). Many

adolescents in minority groups are aware that they are likely to experience discrimination in their school and/or work environment at some point in their lives (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; C. Davis, Aronson, & Salinas, 2006; Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006).

School engagement in school is fundamental to educational accomplishment. Wang et. al (2013) found that engaged students are more equipped for a successful transition into higher education, and/or professions. Enjoying and remaining engaged in school is important for the completion and progression of a student's academic career. For some African-American and Hispanic adolescents, the awareness of the potential for discrimination may cause them to disengage from school and other mainstream institutions (D. Carter, 2008a; Ogbu, 1981; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009). It has been found that minority students who experience racism can develop doubt about their academic ability, low expectations and aspirations which can ultimately lead them to disqualify themselves from academia (Gandara & Bial, 2000). Racial/ethnic identity has been found to be a potential protective factor against racial/ethnic discrimination, and may also play a significant role in self-esteem and academic achievement for African Americans (Awad, 2007; T. Brown, Tanner-Smith, & Lesane-Brown, 2009; Spencer et al., 2006).

Definitions of Race and Ethnic Identity in Research

In this section, I will review the definitions and usage of the terms race and ethnicity across research and establish the specific terminology for this research. Holistically, identity is one's awareness of their individual uniqueness, knowing both who they are and are not. The development of identity occurs within a psychosocial ecosystem influenced by various natural and environmental dynamics including race and ethnicity (Blue, 1995). Racial and/or ethnic identity development is a process by which a person develops an association with their reference

group (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998; Greenwald, 1988). This developed association with the reference group influences attitudes, behaviors, and the adoption of group values and objectives (Greenwald, 1988). Even though theoretical representations are different, the terms racial identity and ethnic identity are frequently used interchangeably (Hughes et al., 2006; Worrell & Gardner-Kitt, 2006).

Racial and Ethnic Identity Terminology

The debate about scientific meaning, value and appropriate usage of the concepts of race and ethnicity has been ongoing in various areas for years (Bhopal, 2004). The terms race and ethnicity are used throughout social and behavioral science research, but their meanings are not often specific or clearly defined (Wilkinson & King, 1987; Worrell & Gardner-Kitt, 2006). Across racial and ethnic identity related research, the usage of the term racial is applied in research conducted with African Americans, while the ethnic term is in research with all ethnic groups, including African Americans, while dealing with the same conceptual areas of research (Hughes, et al., 2006). The integration of racial and ethnic literature presents challenges, because of the broad variation in terminology, conceptualization, and operationalization of the concepts (Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo, & Cota, 1990; Bhopal, 2004; Hughes, et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006).

One definition of the word *racial* is “of, relating to, or based on a race.” With the term *race* being a category applied to certain distinctive genetic and physical traits (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998; Merriam-Webster, 2013). “The history of the race debate can be summarized by considering the attitudes that theorists have taken towards three incompatible propositions: races are biologically real; races are social constructs; and biological realism and social constructivism are incompatible views about race” (Andreasen, 2000, p. S653). In its original use, the construct

of race is distinctive from culture and ethnicity because it is considered to be more permanent, while culture and ethnicity are considered to be more malleable paradigms (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998). As time has progressed, the term race has developed a social meaning that constitutes a different level of cultural meaning (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998).

Definitions of *ethnicity* focus on “a particular ethnic or group affiliation”, with *ethnic* referring to individuals classified according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background (Borrero & Yeh, 2011; Merriam-Webster, 2013; Phinney, 1992). Ethnicity is more than ancestry and race; it is also values, customs, perceptions, behavioral roles, and customs shared within a group (Borrero & Yeh, 2011; Phinney, 1992; Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1987). These beliefs and attitudes are multidimensional cultural traditions, which explain a person’s connection and feelings with their ethnic group (Borrero & Yeh, 2011; Phinney, 1989; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004).

In many areas of study, the terms race and ethnicity have become synonymous and interchangeable (Betancourt & López, 1995). The interchanging and various usages for both race and ethnicity are true within research as well (Bhopal, 2004; R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998; Hughes, et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006). “The use of different terminology for similar processes in different ethnic or racial groups means that the literature is fragmented and difficult to integrate. Technically, both terms are applicable across all groups, because people are members of racial categories, and ethnic groups” (Hughes, et al., 2006, p. 748). The interchangeable ways in which the terms race and ethnicity have been used has led to inconsistencies within the literature (Bernal, et al., 1990). It would be beneficial to the literature if there were a common terminology that was recognized (Hughes, et al., 2006); however, this study is not attempting to settle that particular issue. Consequently, for the purpose of continuity

and due to the variation of term usage throughout research, in this study the term racial/ethnic will be used. As cumbersome as this terminology maybe, it is the best alternative available, due to the inconsistent term usage throughout the literature.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study will look at racial/ethnic identity longitudinally with middle school youth. Understanding the complex nature of identity development and the role that it plays in various aspects of an individual's life requires a systematic approach. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) and Spencer's phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST) (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997) will be used as the foundational conceptual basis for understanding racial/ethnic identity and the role it plays in development of youth over time. With the ecological systems theory as its foundation, the PVEST model expands in the contextual application of racial/ethnic identity development, which is central to the focus of this study. Vygotsky's work introduces a social perspective to the idea that cultural values are passed to children who are actively involved with adults in the development of their understanding (Schaffer, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978).

Bronfenbrenner created his ecological theory because he thought too many child psychologists were exploring developmental issues from a very narrow lens and he wanted to explore development more broadly (Dixon, 2003). His theory allows for the exploration of the relationship with and between various systems across time in the life of an individual. The interplay between an individual and their surroundings over time influences the trajectory and nature of that developing child as they grow into adulthood. More specifically, among African American youth stressors in the environment may lead to the display of psychological vulnerabilities or resiliencies. The integration of Spencer's phenomenological variant of

ecological systems theory with Bronfenbrenner's perspective will allow for understanding the process and differences specific to African American youth that occurs in their lives and community contexts (Spencer, 1995). An additional aspect of this study will be the focus on the relationship between racial/ethnic identity and school enjoyment and engagement.

Understanding of culture and school contexts in relation to development is critical to the study.

The incorporation of Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1963) will provide that theoretical lens and fortify our understanding of the interplay between culture, development and the transfer of both to school contexts.

Ecological Systems Theory

Children are subject to frequent and continuously changing influences. Bronfenbrenner defined his ecological systems theory as a lifespan developmental study of the interrelationship between and within multiple changing settings. These changes can include direct, indirect, formal, and informal social contexts (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dixon, 2003). A majority of the developmental psychology field embraces the ecological approach, and agrees on the important role of multiple contexts in human development. This theory identifies five environmental systems with which an individual interacts: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

The period of adolescence can be a trying and stressful developmental period. Social context can enhance or hinder the navigation of this stage. Many micro-meso level interactions, in homes, schools, neighborhoods, and peer groups, play a role in individual changes within that context (Cook, Herman, Phillips, & Settersten, 2002). For African American youth, stressors in the environment may lead to the display of psychological vulnerabilities, while others instead exhibit resilience. The microsystem is the complex relations between the developing person and

environment in an immediate setting containing that person. In order to understand how an adolescent is influenced by his or her microsystem it is important to understand how each setting (i.e. home, school playground, etc.) directly influences development. Bronfenbrenner articulated nine “propositions” that are very important when examining development from an ecological perspective. The first four perspectives pertain to the microsystem: in contrast to the traditional unidirectional research model typically employed in the laboratory, an ecological experiment must allow for reciprocal or bidirectional; ecological research requires recognition of the social system actually operative in the research setting. This is the requirement of recognizing the totality of the functional social system in the setting. In contrast to the conventional dyadic research model, which is limited to assessing the direct effect of two agents on each other, the design of an ecological experiment must take into account the existence in the setting of systems that include more than two persons. Ecological research must take into account aspects of the physical environment as possible indirect influences on social processes taking place within the setting (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dixon, 2003).

The mesosystem is the interrelations among major settings in which the developing adolescent exists at a particular point in life. The mesosystem is contained in three propositions of the nine; traditionally behavior and development are investigated one setting at a time without regard to possible interdependencies between settings. An ecological approach invites consideration of the joint impact of two or more settings on their elements, analyzing interactions between settings. The design of ecological research involving the same person in more than one setting should take into account the possible subsystems that exist, or could exist, across settings; ecological transitions that periodically occur in a person’s life provide a fruitful context for development. These transitions include changes in role and setting as a function of the person’s

maturation or of events in the life cycle of others responsible for his or her care and development. These shifts are conceived and analyzed as changes within the ecological system, rather than solely within the individual (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dixon, 2003).

The exosystem involves other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on there. Bronfenbrenner had one proposition for the exosystem; the design of an ecological research involving the same person in more than one setting should take into account the possible subsystems that exist, or could exist, across settings (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dixon, 2003).

The macrosystem is the most remote and global influence on development. The macrosystem is the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and exosystems are the concrete manifestations. One proposition applies to the macrosystem; research on the ecology of human development should involve innovative restructuring of prevailing ecological systems in ways that depart from existing institutional ideologies and structures by redefining goals, roles, and activities and providing interconnections between systems previously isolated from each other (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dixon, 2003).

The interplay between an individual and their surroundings over time influences the trajectory and nature of that developing child as they grow into adulthood. Utilizing a longitudinal approach for understanding racial/ethnic identity development provides

understanding for the relationship within and between various systems across time in the life of an individual. In 1994, Bronfenbrenner presented modifications to his original model; the role of time in development was incorporated (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). This refined model includes the “bioecological perspective”, which adheres to a process-person-context-time (PPCT) model. The PPCT model has four components that interact with one another to affect development: the developmental process of the systemic interaction; the personal elements of temperament, resources, and demand distinctiveness that may have influence on interactions; the context of levels or systems are nested within each other; and time (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Although the central ideas of the original model remained intact, the revised model gives more attention to the role that time (chronosystem) plays in development (Bergen, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dixon, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner’s work provides the foundational understanding of the importance of contextually specific interactions for this study. The perspective however, does not specifically address the understanding of how racial/ethnic identity plays a role in an African American youth’s processing of the emotions and social cues they receive during their interactions with others. Spencer’s work combines Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory with an individual’s perception or phenomenological approach, of an experience (Spencer, 1995). The work done by Margaret Beale Spencer provides a detailed perspective of how racial/ethnic identity is developed, contextual influences in that process, and self-concept. Spencer’s model addresses the process and influence of the interactions between African American youth and their environments (Spencer, 1995). For a developing identity, the nature of the ecosystem and how it treats the individual in the development stage influences development (Spencer, 1987). These

stage-specific coping outcomes can be either adaptive or maladaptive and impact the next stage (Spencer, 2006).

Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST)

The PVEST is an identity-focused application of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which allows researchers to describe development within context (Spencer, 1995; Swanson, et al., 2003). An important aspect of utilizing a phenomenological perspective coupled with an ecological systems approach is that it can give a more compelling, culturally responsive, context centered viewpoint for understanding an individual's process for meaning making in various situations and circumstances (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997). The integration of a phenomenological approach to "Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, emphasizes process-person-context, is critical since it affords a method for capturing the individual's intersubjectivity, the adolescent's ability to understand the shared-in-common and mutually endorsed societal expectations and expressed categories generally shared within a culture" (Spencer, 1995, p. 49). It is not possible to explore the individual characteristics and outcomes without also explaining and understanding the context and role of an individual's ecology (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997). The PVEST examines the influences of race/ethnicity, class, skin color, gender, and maturational differences on an individual within the micro- and macro-systems.

Studies have examined how being a part of a minority group, such as African Americans, can provide psychological protective factors against racism and enhance academic engagement (Smalls, White, Chavous, & Sellers, 2007). Self-perception is important because it can influence how a person adapts and responds for the rest of their lives. It is not just what an individual experiences, but how they perceive that experience within cultural context that affects

how they perceive themselves (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997; Swanson, et al., 2003). Identity formation is an important protective factor against the variety of opportunities to form maladaptive and/or reactionary methods of dealing with various risk contexts (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997; Swanson, et al., 2003). The development of positive racial/ethnic identity adds to an adolescent's ability to fight negative environmental stressors and develop more prosocial responses when stressors occur. In general, higher self-esteem increases the likelihood that certain abilities, attributes, and/or behaviors can be better utilized in the daily lives of African America youths (Spencer, et al., 1997). The model has five elements that are present during middle childhood/adolescence: risk contributors, stress engagement, coping methods, emergent identities, and life stage/adaptational outcomes.

Research has found that racial/ethnic identity impacts a youth's perception of academic achievement and ability in distinct but related ways (Smith, Walker, Fields, Brookins, & Seay, 1999). The *risk contributors*' domain is the self-appraisal process that occurs in response to a stereotype and/or biases experience. For youth of color there is a different process of appraisal than their counterparts, who have a significantly less potential of encountering stereotypes (Spencer, 1995). *Stress engagement*, is an intermediate experience of stress, within the neighborhood, social support, and/or daily life that involves the individual. As an individual develops, their increased cognitive abilities make them aware of the inconsistencies and stressors in their environments (Spencer, 1995). Although this is true of all adolescents, in the life of a minority and/or impoverished adolescents, the risks, dangers, and stressors are at a much higher risk. *Coping methods* are corrective problem solving strategies that an individual utilizes after coming in contact with a stressor. These methods can be adaptive (i.e.: achieved social status,

interpersonal competence/confidence, self-acceptance, etc.) or maladaptive (i.e.: exaggeration of sex role orientation, reactive ethnocentrism, social superiority orientation, etc.) in nature.

In *emergent identities*, there is an integration of perceived cultural goals and available means; this manifest as cultural/ethnic, sex role and personal identity development. The psychosocial process of identity development is an unavoidable and normal aspect of adolescent development (Spencer, 1995). In this stage of the development, the cultural identities of youth fall into one of four possible categories: (1) Pre-encounter, which is the depictions of the identity prior to any change. (2) Encounter, is the point when an individual decides that change is necessary. (3) Immersion-Emersion, deals with the undercurrent of the identity change; and (4) Internalization, which is the process of conforming to this new change identity (Cross, 1985; Spencer, 1995). These different cultural identities have implications for mental health and achievement orientations (Spencer, Cole, DuPree, Glymph, & Pierre, 1993; Spencer, Cunningham, & Swanson, 1995). *Life stage/adaptational outcomes* are behavioral and health relevant outcomes which can be productive (i.e.: competence, good health, healthy relationships, effective parenting, etc.) or adverse (i.e.: deviance, mental illness, poor health, lack of intimacy, etc.). For example, if you were to look at a male African American adolescent, you could find clear implications in either direction based on adaptational outcomes. If the male had little or no negative experiences with police as a stress engagement factor, that should result in a lower chance of developing negative coping strategies (machismo, boasting orientation, etc.). In response to adopting less negative coping methods, a more positive emergent identity toward school-specific outcomes, and individual identity could develop. This positive individual identity and school-based esteem is especially important for adolescent African American males, who have been found to have lower “school-based self-esteem” once they leave their preschool

years. If an African American adolescent sustains a positive academic and individual orientation, then a more positive and productive life stage/adaptational outcomes into adulthood would be the likely trajectory of their lives (Spencer, 1995, 2006).

While Spencer (1995) is clear that in racial/ethnic identity development, risk contributors, stress engagement, coping methods, emergent identities, and life stage/adaptational outcomes are important in defining healthy development and outcomes for African American youth, she also underscores more affective components of the child's experience and shaping of key outcomes. The likelihood of developing high life competence and strong self-efficacy are greatly increased when a youth has a positive academic orientation and confident attitude about their future (Spencer, 1995). In reference to school, having academic competence is an important part of the development of overall competence into adulthood (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997).

Like Bronfenbrenner and Spencer, Vygotsky believed that the interplay between the individual and their environmental factors were fundamentally important to the trajectory of human development. Vygotsky's work speaks to a fuller understanding not from a broad context of influence on children, rather it defines children and their activities (P. H. Miller, 2002). The work done by Vygotsky provides important understanding of cultural and educational implications within the social nature of learning (Dixon, 2003; Schaffer, 2007). Vygotsky's sociocultural context emphasizes the fact that human development cannot be explained independently from the culture in which they exist (P. H. Miller, 2002; Schaffer, 2007). African American youth exist in a bicultural context; they are American's of African descent whose intergenerational experiences reflect racist and derogatory historical events engraved on the culture.

Social Development Theory

Social Development Theory is unique in developmental psychology, because it weaves together insights from history, sociology, economics, political science, linguistics, biology, art, and literature into psychology. The key premise of Vygotsky's Social Development Theory is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Every function in the child's cultural development first appears, on the social level, as interplay between the child and other individual's in their life. Then later, on an individual level as the child then internalizes what they have seen, been taught, experienced, etc. (Vygotsky, 1978). All the higher functions emerge as actual relationships between individuals. Vygotsky believed for the most part, that all psychological processes were social in nature and strongly influenced by the social, historical, and cultural contexts in which children develop (Bergen, 2007; Dixon, 2003; Schaffer, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978).

Vygotsky maintained that influences to development happen at three levels: the phylogenetic affect development first. The Phylogenetic level emphasizes development from an evolutionary perspective, for example, humans differ from apes by having language and communication. At the second level, history affects development. This level explains the development of humans throughout history; this is possible because of language and cultural artifacts, which provide a developmental progression in culture across generations. The third level that influences development is the ontogenetic level. This level is concerned with how an individual develops from childhood into adulthood. Vygotsky thought that each person's development depended on first on biological factors and then primarily on obtaining the signs, symbols and thought processes of their particular culture (Bergen, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978).

Cultural beliefs regarding necessary skill sets usually reach an individual through the direct social situation in which they interact with others, such as a parent, sibling, and/or peer (P. H. Miller, 2002; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). Both the variety of rearing behaviors among parents and the effects of these behaviors on children are interesting to researchers studying child-rearing styles. Researchers who support a more culturally inclusive view tend to regard socialization as a major influence on a number of aspects of human behavior (Sinha & Mishra, 1999). For African American children and youth, racial/ethnic socialization can result in an increase of racial/ethnic pride and the development of better coping mechanisms (Stevenson, Reed, & Bodison, 1996).

For the ontogenetic level, Vygotsky looked at how competence develops for a task or activity, which led him to the concept of the zone of proximal development (Bergen, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). When Vygotsky first saw that the capability of children with equal levels of mental development to learn under a teacher's guidance varied to a high degree, it became apparent that those children were not mentally the same age and that the subsequent course of their learning would obviously be different. This difference between twelve and eight years old, or between nine and eight years old, is what he called the zone of proximal development. This refers to the difference between a child's actual and potential developmental level; this is determined by examining a child's independent problem solving versus their ability to problem solving under guidance or when working with a more advanced peer (Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). The zone of proximal development is a reflection of Vygotsky's interest in using his theoretical ideas in real-life situations and remains incorporated in the modern educational systems (Dixon, 2003; Schaffer, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). Understanding the social nature of development is important, because "every function in the child's cultural development appears

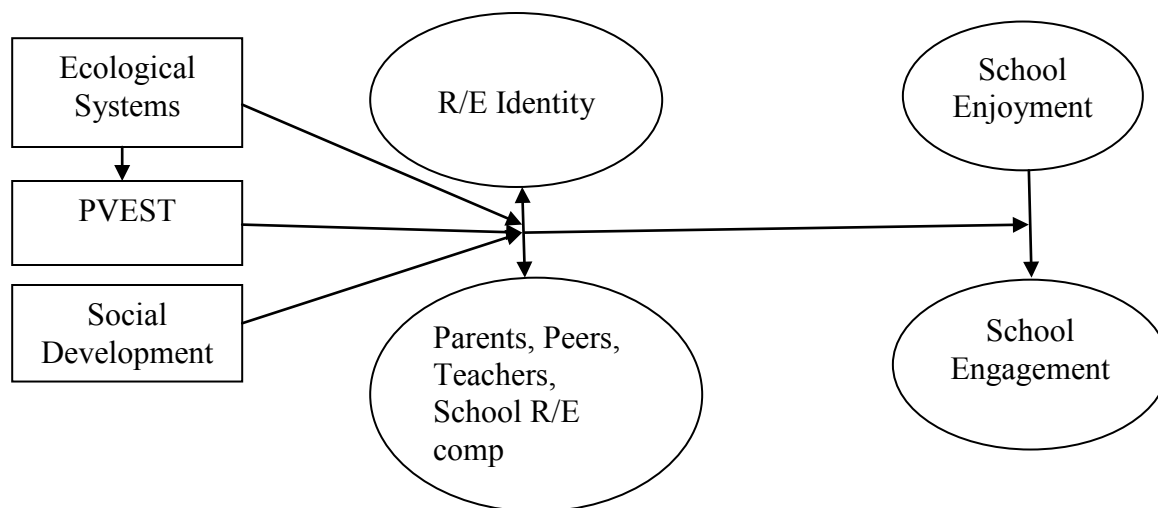
twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Vygotsky's social development theory asserts that the social experiences children encounter from parents, peers, and other adults is central to development (Bergen, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978).

Human development is affected by the values of what the culture communicates (Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). Culture cannot be alienated and considered an external factor; culture is everywhere, and its function is to organize all experiences. It is important to understand the role of culture in development, because culture is one of the important factors that contributes to the psychological processes (Betancourt & López, 1995). This sociocultural way of thinking, highlights culture's identification the knowledge and competence children need to obtain and provides them with tools such as language, technology, and strategies to function in that culture (P. H. Miller, 2002; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). Vygotsky's theory attempts to explain consciousness as the product of socialization. For examples, in the learning of language, our first utterances with peers or adults are for the purpose of communication but once mastered, are internalized and allow "inner speech". Vygotsky's theory provides understanding of the link between development, cultural communication and behavior (Bergen, 2007). For this research, Vygotsky's theory helps to explain the interplay between culture, identity and the importance of the affect that both have on overall development and school dynamics, such as engagement and enjoyment.

The theories developed by Bronfenbrenner, Spencer and Vygotsky all express the importance of environmental and cultural influences on development (Dixon, 2003). Ecological systems theory is a focused understanding of the complex environmental interactions and influences of the interactions between African American youth and their environments. PVEST provides a more detailed perspective of how racial/ethnic identity influences contextual processes and self-concept. Social development theory explains how historical contexts, communication of cultural values, and social aspect of cognitive development that influence how individuals learn to live and function within society. These theories allow for a more specific understanding of several perspectives significant to child development, minority children & families, and identity development among African American youth. This integrated approach is very important because it helps scholars understand both the universal and diverse mechanisms of culture (P. H. Miller, 2002). These three theories are the underlying mechanism for development of this study's research questions and hypotheses that focus on racial/ethnic identity development over time and moderating ecological factors for the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement for African American youth. When looking at the theories collectively one can develop a framework of understanding for how racial/ethnic identity influences the way that an individual processes information, which in turn will influence all areas of their life (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Theoretical Underpinnings for Racial/Ethnic Identity Influences Framework



Racial/ethnic identity is one of several possible group identities, and not all African Americans give the same level of importance to racial/ethnic identity (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999; Sanders-Thompson & Akbar, 2003). The integration of Spencer's theory with Bronfenbrenner's perspective allows for a more specific understanding of process and differences, specific to African American youth that occurs between them and their context (Spencer, 1995). Vygotsky's work allows for the understanding of the social aspect of cognitive development and communication of cultural values to children, as they are actively involved with adults in the development of their understanding (Schaffer, 2007; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). Collectively, these theories allow for an expansive exploration of the relationship between racial/ethnic identity development within a cultural context and change over time.

Overview of Study

To fully grasp human development, all aspects of an individual's personal experiences within social contexts as well as information about their culture must be considered (Bergen, 2007). Identity development is one of the central processes of childhood and adolescence

(Harris, 1995). During adolescence is when youth are taking a more conscious role in trying to understand and gain knowledge, related to being a member of their racial/ethnic group (Phinney, 1989). An individual's culture encourages them to acquire some approaches more than others and provide greater opportunity to put into practice the more culturally valued strategy (P. H. Miller, 2002). For African American youth, a better understanding of racial/ethnic identity attitudes can help with the understanding, enhancement, and development of practices which could foster more positive outcomes academically and in other areas of life (D. Carter, 2008b).

African American children and youth who have not developed a level of pride in their culture, will face additional risks as they move into larger society (Spencer, 1987). Identity long been understood to play a major and determining role in an individual's growth and developed. For African American youth, positive racial/ethnic identity is related with higher overall academic performance (Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001). Therefore, this study focuses on the relationship between racial/ethnic identity and other indicators of school engagement over time. The purpose of this project is to formulate and develop a longitudinal model that will help better understand the dynamic role of racial/ethnic identity and its relationship to school enjoyment and engagement outcomes for African American youth. The model developed in this study will contribute to the field by focusing attention on the dynamic role of racial/ethnic identity and its relationship to school outcomes for African American youth.

The remaining four chapters of this dissertation will review the racial/ethnic and school engagement literature, discuss the study's research questions and hypotheses, review methodology of data collection and analyses, provide and review results and give conclusions, study limitations and future directions.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

For almost thirty years, the K-12 educational system has been examining and testing various efforts to reform, increase student achievement, and reduce the existing achievement gaps (Gandara & Bial, 2000). Many racial/ethnic minority students continue to do poorly in school settings, even with the many changes and reforms that have occurred in an attempt to reduce the gap (Tyler et al., 2008; Ward & Robinson-Wood, 2006). Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the disparity in academic achievement is the fact that educational inequality is undeniably apparent, learning opportunities differs for young people depending on their race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Ward & Robinson-Wood, 2006). A student's success in school "is a holistic outcome of positive child development" (D. Carter, 2008a, p. 473), therefore, the study of school success should be addressed in a comprehensive way. The measurement of school success should be multifaceted and not just based on academic and/or extracurricular activities alone.

There are numerous studies looking at various influences on school success and performance characteristics, such as parent involvement, school climate, and cognition (Chavous et al., 2003; Cole, et al., 2007; Lockett & Harrell, 2003). D. Carter (2008b) found that the combination of positive racial/ethnic identity, race/ethnicity consciousness, and practical attitudes about school helped African American students to continue in school. Additionally, researchers have found a consistent relationship between positive racial/ethnic identity and school success for African American youth (Altschul, et al., 2006; Awad, 2007; Bowman & Howard, 1985; D. Brown, 2008; D. Carter, 2008b). In general, researchers have not studied the relationship between non-performance based indicators, such as school enjoyment and

engagement with racial/ethnic identity factors. This current research focuses on racial/ethnic identity development and potential influences to school attitudes in African American adolescents.

Racial/Ethnic Socialization

Parents and other members of the society impart to children the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values nurtured in the respective society or culture through their unconscious and deliberate efforts (Gordon, 1989; Grusec & Davidov, 2007; Maccoby, 1984; Schaffer, 2007). The transfer of knowledge constitutes the basic contents of a culture, and if the means and styles of transmission are appropriate, then children generally show a mastery of these elements. The socialization process allows children to gain certain insight into the rules, preferences for appropriate societal behaviors (Ochs, 1986). Minority children may have a need to develop multiple socialization skills and strategies. For example, there is accumulating evidence to show that African American children are socialized to be bi-culturally competent (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Cross, 1991), in order to function well and be successful in American society. Understanding racial/ethnic socialization is important because it helps to explain how sociocultural factors develop in children and youth. Although this study is not a socialization study, it is important to be aware of how this dynamic process helps in the formation of racial/ethnic identity.

The study of racial/ethnic socialization has grown tremendously over the last decade (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Hughes, et al., 2006; McAdoo, 2002; D. B. Miller, 1999; Rivas-Drake, et al., 2009; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008). The work that has been done in this area of socialization has highlighted the multifaceted nature of the racial/ethnic socialization process. Racial/ethnic socialization is the process whereby parents

deliberately or implicitly teach their children racial/ethnic group specific behaviors, values and attitudes. Among families of color, racial/ethnic socialization plays a central role in the formation of racial/ethnic identity (Sanders-Thompson & Akbar, 2003). Racial/ethnic socialization is the part of the socialization process, which is responsible for the transmission of values, beliefs, and attitudes about race and ethnicity from parents to their children (D. J. Johnson, 2001; McAdoo, 2002). Racial/ethnic socialization is an additional process that some parents focus on for raising children to have a positive view of themselves in spite of living in a racist and potentially hostile environment; and includes awareness of culture and cultural practices, encouragement of racial/ethnic pride, and preparation for discrimination (Thomas & Speight, 1999; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2010).

In addition to the universal demands of parenting, African American parents also must deal with helping their children deal with and understand potential discrimination and stereotyping that go along with being African American (McHale et al., 2006). African American children growing up in the United States have a higher chance of experiencing racism and discrimination. Parents of African American children, as well as other adults involved in their upbringing, utilize racial/ethnic socialization as one way to help children deal with prejudice and discrimination. When parents intensify and increase their racial/ethnic socialization practices, their children show better emotional, behavioral, as well as academic outcomes (Coard, et al., 2004; Stevenson, et al., 1996), however, for African American parents the emphasis of school success, as a protective factor is more important than the enjoyment and/or engagement of school. Racial/ethnic socialization by African-American parents stress the importance on education and the fact that educational achievement is one of the best defenses their children could have against a racist society (Eccles, et al., 2006).

Racial/ethnic socialization is an important protective factor that acts as a barrier against negative societal views towards people of color and contributes to the development of self-respect, positively influence racial/ethnic identity, and academic outcomes (Sinha & Mishra, 1999; Stevenson, 1998) (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009; Stevenson, 1994; Thomas, et al., 2010).

Specifically, among African American children, the messages received from parents about their race/ethnicity are an important aspect in the process of identity development (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). It is within the race/ethnicity socialization process that individual's gain understanding of other people as people, whose behavior is motivated and governed by their unique feelings, perceptions, meanings, and intentions (Brownell & Kopp, 2007; Schaffer, 2007). The complex nature of race and ethnicity should be recognized and viewed from compound perspectives such as cultural differences and developmental processes like racial/ethnic identity (Swanson, et al., 2003).

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

Racial/ethnic identity has some bearing on self-perception and our perception of the world around us. It is part of an individual's self-concept as well as their racial/ethnic group membership perceptions (Thomas, et al., 2010). In general, racial/ethnic identity is an individual's understanding, perception, beliefs, and behavior about their membership within a racial/ethnic group. The way an individual functions is influenced by race/ethnicity. However, the understanding of the variety of ways that race/ethnicity impacts an individual functioning is far more complex than most social scientists have been able to describe (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998). Racial/ethnic identity is prompted by developmental changes, environment influences, peer influences and other groups interactions and influences (Rotheram-Borus &

Phinney, 1987). There are two components (individual and group) of racial/ethnic identity development, the individual's views of his or her own group and personality and the shared understanding of members of the dominant and non-dominant groups (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998). The development of these beliefs and rituals begin in childhood and continues through adolescence into adulthood. According to the literature, racial/ethnic identity proceeds from more rudimentary forms to more fully developed adult forms of identity.

Although there are varying models of racial/ethnic identity development for African Americans, whites, and other ethnic groups, racial/ethnic identity development happens within all of them (R. Carter & Boyd-Jackson, 1998). Racial/ethnic identity is a developmental process occurring across all groups; however, because of stigmatization, racism, discrimination, and stereotypes that they experience, the process has more complexities for racial/ethnic minority adolescents (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009). Altschul, et al. (2006) identified three distinct aspects of racial/ethnic identity development: connectedness, awareness of racism and embedded achievement. "*Connectedness* is a positive feeling of one's racial/ethnic group membership, history, and traditions. *Awareness of racism* is knowledge of how others view an individual's group and/or negative ideas or prejudices. *Embedded achievement* is the belief that achievement is an in-group identifier, a part of being a good in-group member, and the related sense that achievement of some in-group members helps other in-group members succeed" (p. 1156).

The development of a positive racial/ethnic identity can be challenged by experiences of racism, negative views in the media, as well as stereotypes for African American children and youth (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Thomas & Speight, 1999; Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001). Hardiman et al. (1992) found that culture, history of racism and systemic oppression in America has an influence on African Americans individual identity. Thomas et al. (1999) found that

African American parents face the complicated job of raising children to have positive self-concept and racial/ethnic identity, in spite of consistent racism, negative media images, and stereotypes. Racial/ethnic identity is a factor in the overall adjustment of racial/ethnic minority children and youth (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009; Hughes, et al., 2006; Hughes, Witherspoon, et al., 2009; Phinney, 1989; Spencer, 1995). A study done by French et al. (2006), found that African American and Latino American adolescents were more likely to score lower on overall group-esteem (an individual's feelings about being a member of their racial or ethnic group) but showed a greater increase over time than European Americans adolescents.

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development in Childhood

Racial/ethnic attitudes and evaluations begin developing at an early age, and have been traced from childhood, to adolescence and into adulthood (Aboud, 1987; Pahl & Way, 2006; Spencer, 1984). There is much less research examining racial/ethnic identity in children than in adolescent and adults (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). Children are not proficient in the abstract thinking skills that are necessary for the more complex thought processes that help to understand what it means to be a member of a racial/ethnic group (Branch & Newcombe, 1986; French, et al., 2006). Children's "cognitive developmental constraints may limit the ability to grasp and incorporate the content of their racial/ethnic identity" (Bernal, et al., 1990, p. 6). Evidence has shown that young children can act on racial/ethnic stereotype information and seemingly internalize at least some aspects of racial/ethnic identity components by early adolescence (Altschul, et al., 2006; Bigler, Averhart, & Liben, 2003).

Children as young as six years old have the ability to form associations, which incorporate culture. For instance, they are able to describe racial/ethnic group behaviors they have participated in with their family; however, they often do not have full understanding of

concepts about the nature of cultural differences (Bernal, et al., 1990; Ramsey, 1987). Altschul, et al. (2006) found that young children are aware of negative views about their race/ethnicity and then incorporate that knowledge into their racial/ethnic identity in adolescences. A study done by Branch et al (1986) found that as children grow and move closer into adolescence, they develop a more global and expansive worldview, which influences their racial/ethnic attitudes. Quintana et al. (2006) found that the exploration of racial/ethnic identity increases from late childhood to early adolescence.

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development in Adolescence

Adolescence is a critical period for racial/ethnic identity development (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Yip, Seaton, & Sellers, 2006). Racial/ethnic identity is a key area of exploration and becomes more complex during this period because of adolescents ability to think abstractly (Keating, 2004; Pahl & Way, 2006; Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1987). Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen (2008) found that racial/ethnic identity development during adolescence is important because individuals start to display and increase in social and cognitive maturity. The developmental changes that occur during adolescence not only bring about physical and cognitive change, but also the enhancement of exploration and decision-making. With the activation of abstract reasoning and thinking, adolescents begin to take on a more active role in their views and opinions about their group and the importance of group membership adds to their sense of self and wellbeing (Hughes, Witherspoon, et al., 2009). These attitudes and behaviors are the foundation for beliefs and ideas about racial/ethnic identity, academics, etc.

Researchers have found it especially important to examine the messages and experiences that are associated with early adolescents racial/ethnic identities (Rivas-Drake, et al., 2009) given the salience of race/ethnicity during early adolescence as well as shifts in the nature of

adolescent experiences across contexts. For example, Rivas-Drake, et al. (2009) found that race/ethnicity messages received from parents, teachers, and other school staff and peers are related to what youth believe about their race/ethnicity. During the early adolescent years, individuals begin to understand the significance and complexities of their racial/ethnic identity (Ruble et al., 2004). Swanson et al. (2003) in a study of psychosocial development in youth found that experiences with racism related to stressors for racial/ethnic minority youth that added to the normative developmental issues that all adolescents go through. Issues of racial/ethnic consciousness vary and manifest differently for individuals at different periods of adolescence (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyễn, 2008). Also, it is during the early adolescent period when youth can experience decreases in self-esteem and academic engagement (Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, & Saylor, 1999; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994).

Racial/ethnic identity may also serve as a protection function for perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination among adolescents of color (D. B. Miller, 1999; Seaton, 2009; Spencer, et al., 1993; Spencer, et al., 2006). Various contextual forces (i.e. political, cultural, economic and social) interact in multifaceted ways with developmental aspects of adolescence, such as identity and self image, autonomy, relations with peers, school achievement and future goals (Spencer, et al., 1995). African American youth are more vulnerable to personal identity, reference group orientation maladjustment and a decrease in their academic self-esteem due to experiences of racism and discrimination (Spencer, et al., 1995; Stevenson, 1998). Although researchers acknowledge the significance of racial/ethnic identity, the role it plays in relation to non-academic educational outcomes has not been widely studied (Swanson, et al., 2003). Multiple developmental contexts, like schools and neighborhoods are important factors

contributing to deepening of racial/ethnic identity development in adolescents (Abdullah, 1988; Aboud & Doyle, 1995; Swanson, et al., 2003).

Racial/Ethnic Identity in Context to the School Enjoyment-Engagement Relationship

Commitment to education is a vital necessity for acquiring the skills required to succeed in this current global society (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). The ability to receive quality education and training is important to an individual's future financially as well as emotionally. Chavous, et al. (2003), found an association between educational achievement, life satisfaction, and well-being. Engagement in school is essential to educational achievement and success. When a student is engaged in school, they obtain the necessary knowledge and competence for a successful transition into higher education, and/or professions (Wang & Eccles, 2013). Recent studies found that the average level of racial/ethnic affirmation increased over the transition from elementary into middle school for all youth; while it was particularly noticeable among the African American and Latino youth (French, et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake, et al., 2009). Enjoying and remaining engaged in school is important for the completion and progression of a student's academic career.

School Enjoyment

When individuals enter into school, they not only begin a new learning process and enhance their cognitive abilities and skills; they develop beliefs and emotions associated with learning and achievement (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). The term enjoyment can refer to various aspects of school life, including academic extracurricular and/or after school activities (Gorard & See, 2011). There have been no definitive links made between school enjoyment and its influence on school achievement among youth. Therefore, some

researchers believe that it should not be hard to influence the enjoyment of all students, including the more unenthusiastic and/or disenfranchised students (Gorard & See, 2011; Pekrun, 2006).

Research on school enjoyment has been used in analysis as both an outcome and predictor of higher achieving students. Additionally, enjoyment is related to higher levels of student engagement (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999; Gorard & See, 2011). The research on school enjoyment focuses on variables that range from activity specific (i.e. sports, clubs) to relationship specific (i.e. peer relationships). Researchers have also found connections between school enjoyment and learning motivations, self-regulation, school engagement, performance, and achievement (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002; Schiefele, 1991). Aspects of school enjoyment can lead to positive outcomes for students such as, enhancing problem solving, promoting resiliency, as well as other positive student related outcomes (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Pekrun, et al., 2002). Yet, approaches to school improvement have had narrow indicators of school attainment and have excluded such indicators (Gorard & See, 2011). Additionally, current research has not focused on racial/ethnic identity as a variable and certainly not as a moderator to the school enjoyment-engagement relationship. Pekrun, et al. (2002) found that school enjoyment promoted problem solving skills, resiliency, learning motivation, self-regulatory, and performance. These findings underscore the significance of school enjoyment as a critical indicator of student success.

School Engagement

Different from school enjoyment, school engagement is a student's perception, connection, interest, and dedication to their school, which represents the expectations they relate with being a student (Fine, 2003; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). School engagement explains how a student behaves and thinks regarding their overall school

experiences and has been found to have influences on academic achievement and high school completion (Dotterer, et al., 2007). The emphasis on factors that promote school engagement and academic success is of great concern to both researchers and educators, especially in light of the continuing academic achievement gap for African American youth (Dotterer, et al., 2007). Learning what these factors are can help to understanding ways to lessen achievement gaps. Many school reform programs focus on increasing student engagement as a way to combat issues such as lack of school interest, isolation, low achievement and high dropout rate (Marks, 2000; Wang & Eccles, 2013).

Among African American students, studies have found that youth who have positive racial/ethnic identity as well as high self-esteem have better academic engagement and other outcomes (Chavous, et al., 2003; W. Johnson, McGue, & Iacono, 2006; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). A study done by Hughes, et. al. (2009) found racial/ethnic socialization (which helps in the promotion of racial/ethnic identity development) is a potential protective factor for youth that acts a buffer against discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice; which leads to higher engagement in the pursuit of academic achievement. W. Johnson et al. (2006) found that school engagement directly influenced academic achievement for 11 to 17 year olds. For youth of color and lower socioeconomic status adolescents, there continues to be various challenges within the context of school (Spencer, et al., 1997). Students with high racial/ethnic identity have been found to also be engaged and perform well in school (Smith, et al., 1999).

For a racial/ethnic group that has historically experienced racism and discrimination, the practice of racial/ethnic socialization and identity development can offer the psychological ability to develop healthy racial/ethnic self and group concepts (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Lesane-Brown, 2006). Positive racial/ethnic identity is related to higher overall academic

performance for African American youth (Spencer, et al., 2001; Swanson, et al., 2003). Additionally, the messages and views of a racial/ethnic group have an influence on the academic outcomes of youth (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Bowman & Howard, 1985). Chavous et al. (2003) found that youth who had more positive in-group affect and centrality had lower dropout rates by the 12th grade and higher college attainment than youth who had negative views in the same areas. Students that were identified as higher achievers by teacher and school counselors were students who were shown to have greater awareness of racial/ethnic barriers and obstacles (Bowman & Howard, 1985). Positive relationships between high racial/ethnic identity with higher school efficacy and achievement have been found in several studies (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; G. Davis & Stevenson, 2006; Hughes, et al., 2006; Marshall, 1995; McHale, et al., 2006). It has been found that during the middle school years are when adolescents begin to segregate themselves by race/ethnicity (Tatum, 1997). Studies have provided support to the fact that racial/ethnic identity typically will have developed by mid-adolescence; however, the question of context, developmental change, and stability in this age group has not fully been examined (Altschul, et al., 2006). Additionally, research has shown a connection between various behavioral issues and educational disparities for racial/ethnic minority youth (Swanson, et al., 2003). However, few studies focus on emotions in education, despite the existence of emotions in the classroom (Frenzel, et al., 2009), and this is especially true for the middle school age group.

Other Moderating Context of the Enjoyment-Engagement Relationship

In light of how interrelated aspects of development are, focusing solely on an individual context would not give the wealth of understanding that is needed in this area of study (Bergen, 2007). The adolescent's social contexts (ecological systems) provide protection from societal

unpredictability. Additionally, other ecological contexts, such as parental involvement, peers support, teacher support, and school ethnic compositions also have the potential to enhance school engagement for youth (Steinberg & Avenevoli, 1998). A study done by Steinberg et. al (1998) on school disengagement and problem behavior in adolescents found that multiple variables are linked together in a multifaceted, dynamic, reciprocal pattern that develop over time.

Interactions with parents, peers, schools, religious and social institutions have the potential to enhance youths' understanding of various events and experiences (Spencer, et al., 1995). During adolescence, racial/ethnic messages received from family, peers, society, as well as experiences of discrimination in schools and community are examined (Rivas-Drake, et al., 2009). This is also true when it comes to school enjoyment and engagement. For African American youth and other youth of color, school enjoyment and engagement may correspond to complex negotiations within and between their home, community and school lives (Tyler, et al., 2008).

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a broad concept that can include a variety of things. Parental educational aspirations, expression of positive achievement attitudes, verbal encouragement, time spent checking on assignments, asking about school, and coming to school activities are all components of parental involvement (Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Taylor, Hinton, & Wilson, 1995). Additional aspects of parental involvement include parental communication with school, parents in school volunteering, parents' involvement in school decision-making and parent-school collaborations (Epstein, 1987, 1991; Fan & Chen, 2001). Of the many influences that have been found to contribute to academic performance, parental involvement has consistently

been shown to be of great significance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Taylor, et al., 1995). Although peers play an increasingly important role, for most teens in early and middle adolescence, the family is still the primary socializing agent (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes, et al., 2006; Scottham, et al., 2008).

Parents manage, organize and facilitate social opportunities in more indirect ways, which influences every aspects of their children's development (Schaffer, 2007). Fan & Chen (2001) found that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is more easily identified when examining more indicators of academic achievement. For example, parents who spend more time discussing school and school activities with their children promote positive school outcomes and improved academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Taylor, et al., 1995). A study of parental involvement on academic and social development, found that students with highly involved parents displayed superior social functioning and fewer behavioral problems (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Overall, parents positively influence self-esteem, ethnic identity, behavioral outcomes, and academic achievement and expectations (D. Carter, 2008b; Eccles, et al., 2006; El Nokali, et al., 2010; Hughes, Witherspoon, et al., 2009; Voelkl, 1993).

Peer Support

During adolescence, parental influence decreases due to an increase in cognitive ability, peer and community interactions and other social influences (Phinney, 1989). Friendships allow youth an opportunity for learning and enhancing socioemotional skills and developing long-term relationship patterns (Crosnoe, 2000). Studies have found that when an adolescent has friends, they are more confident, unselfish, less aggressive, and show greater school involvement (Crosnoe, 2000; Hartup & Stevens, 1997).

Ryabov (2011) found that the average achievement of a peer network was a significant predictor of educational achievement and attainment for all racial/ethnic groups. Having peer support is important for school engagement, particularly for adolescents. Several studies have found that an adolescent who has positive connections with peers are more engaged in school (Wang & Eccles, 2013; Wentzel, 2003). Wang et al. (2013) found that students who experienced peer support were more likely to feel engaged in school. Supportive friends help to diminish identity problems and motivate achievement (Crosnoe, 2000; Frey & Röthlisberger, 1996; Herman-Stahl & Petersen, 1996).

Teacher Support

During school, students are constantly interacting with teachers and school personnel (Ferguson, 2003). Teacher support plays a role in the way that students enjoy and become engaged in school (Frenzel, et al., 2009; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Additionally, higher teacher support enhances achievement, promote higher engagement, and inhibit risky behaviors (Demaneet & Van Houtte, 2012; Klem & Connell, 2004). Frenzel et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between teachers' enjoyment and student enjoyment. School enjoyment can be hindered if there is a perception that school staff does not care for and/or respect students (Gorard & See, 2011; Wang & Eccles, 2013). In study on school context, achievement motivation, and academic engagement, Wang et al. (2013) found that when teachers create caring environments and are supportive, students are more engaged. When teachers express more enjoyment when teaching, students are more likely to express more enthusiasm as well.

More specifically for African American students, teacher support has been found to have a direct effect on student achievement and student engagement when controlling for other factors (Maylor, 2009; Tucker et al., 2002). Furthermore, in a study focusing on outcome expectations

in African American high school students, teacher support was positively associated with self-efficacy and career outcome (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). For African American youth, having supportive teachers that are consistent in expressing positive achievement beliefs to their students, contribute to higher academic performance and provide achievement motivation (D. Carter, 2008b; Klopfenstein, 2005).

School Racial/Ethnic Composition

Studies have shown that racial/ethnic density and composition are related to racial/ethnic identity development and an increase in educational achievement when there are higher concentrations of minority students (Garcia & Lega, 1979; Longshore & Prager, 1985; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Ryabov, 2011). Studies of peers influence in African American student achievement have produced mixed results, “whether a high percentage of African American peers are likely to generate a higher or lower value on schooling for African American students is theoretically uncertain, holding other factors constant” (Farkas, Lleras, Maczuga, Downey, & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Klopfenstein, 2005, p. 419).

Schools are ecological environments that act as socializing agents for racial/ethnic identities of minority youth (Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Trickett & Formoso, 2008). There was no one particular context that could be identified or considered as a indisputable driving force for school enjoyment or engagement (Cook, et al., 2002). The way that an adolescent feels about learning, school and other aspects of school are important outcome variables for academic beliefs and achievements (McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Spencer, et al., 1997). Positive attitudes toward ones racial/ethnic group have also been found to be associated with higher school engagement and improved academic performance (Smith, et al., 1999). Further study is important to gaining a better understanding of the potential processes through which racial/ethnic identity relates to a

variety of positive outcomes for African American youth (Smith, et al., 1999). The need for further study and additional clarification on the role of racial/ethnic identity in the academic life of African American youth was a driving force behind this current study.

The Current Study

The current study will focus on racial/ethnic identity development among African American youth, and its and other moderators' role as a possible influence to school enjoyment and engagement. Researchers have suggested that when looking at academic outcomes that we move beyond the focus on student's grades and test scores because these provide only a narrow view of the overall educational experience (D. Carter, 2008a; Wong & Rowley, 2001). The racial/ethnic identity development work is very extensive in its scope, however, very few empirical studies have examined this topic longitudinally (Seaton, Yip, Morgan-Lopez, & Sellers, 2012; Swanson, et al., 2003). A large portion of the research has used a cohort-sequential type of methodology to examine racial/ethnic identity development over time.

A cohort is a group of people who share a common characteristic or experience within a defined period, or some factor other than a time (Baltes & Nesselroade, 1970, 1972). Although cohort-sequential designs are a form of longitudinal study, this approach follows a group not an individual over time, and as such, it is a type of study comparable to a cross-sectional study. For example, a 3-year longitudinal study of racial/ethnic identity, socialization, and adjustment outcomes done by (Seaton, et al., 2012), collected at three different time points, across two cohorts, only required a minimum of one time point per subject. Longitudinal work in the area of racial/ethnic identity development is needed in order to better conceptualize and identify more in-depth racial/ethnic identity changes over time, particularly as children moves from their more homogeneous communities and schools to more diverse educational settings (Phinney, 1991;

Smith, et al., 1999). Longitudinal designs are stronger and support the discovery of the structure of identity development within person to uncover true paths of that development.

The continuing educational gaps, along with the fact that adolescence is a critical development period, make understanding the role that racial/ethnic identity plays in school outcomes very critical. This study will add to the longitudinal body of work in the area of racial/ethnic identity development by following the same individual over a three-year period. The longitudinal approach taken in this study will add to the literature in two major ways: 1.) it will help to achieve a fuller understanding of racial/ethnic identity development in an individual over time, and 2.) it will highlight the dynamic role of racial/ethnic identity's relationship to school outcomes for African American youth.

Hypotheses and Models

In Phinney's (1989) model of racial/ethnic identity development, it was proposed that during adolescence is when individuals move from an unawareness of race/ethnicity into an understanding of its race/ethnicity in their lives. The interaction between racial/ethnic socialization, racial/ethnic identity, academic performance, and achievement are found across all age groups on some level (Banerjee, et al., 2011). Negative attitudes towards racial/ethnic identity and/or group affiliation in African Americans have been associated to poor outcomes of self-esteem, psychological adjustment, school achievement and others (Altschul, et al., 2006; Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Awad, 2007; Crain, 1996; Cross, 2003; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Thomas & Speight, 1999). In a study done by (Yasui, Dorham, & Dishion, 2004), it was found that the association of racial/ethnic identity was more strongly related to psychological, social and academic outcomes for minority adolescents than for their Caucasian counterparts.

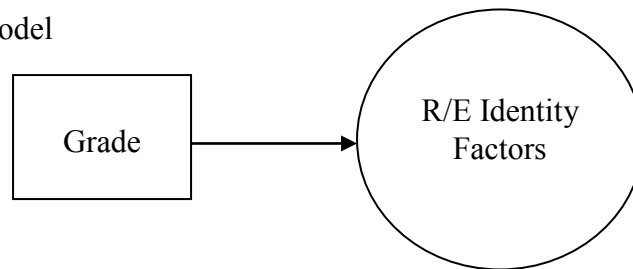
Research Question 1

Racial/Ethnic identity development develops throughout the lifespan. According to French (2006), there is an increase in racial/ethnic identity over time for minority students, and given the developmental nature of racial/ethnic identity, there should be more longitudinal research being done. Phinney (1989) found that as a youth goes through the adolescent period, racial/ethnic identity changes would manifest as they mature. Additionally, research has found a significant and positive relationship between grade and racial/ethnic identity beliefs (Herron, Barnes, & Almerigi, 2008). In light of the knowledge of the gradual nature of identity development across the lifespan, how and in what way does the adolescent period show significant changes over time in the development of racial/ethnic identity?

Hypothesis 1a

Racial/ethnic identity factor structures differ for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders

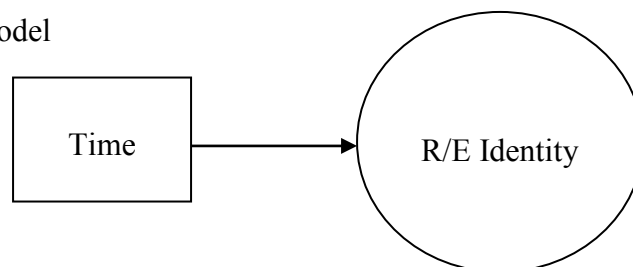
Figure 2: H_{1a} model



Hypothesis 1b

An adolescent's racial/ethnic identity scores will increase over the three time points, with significant changes between time 1 and 3.

Figure 3: H_{1b} Model



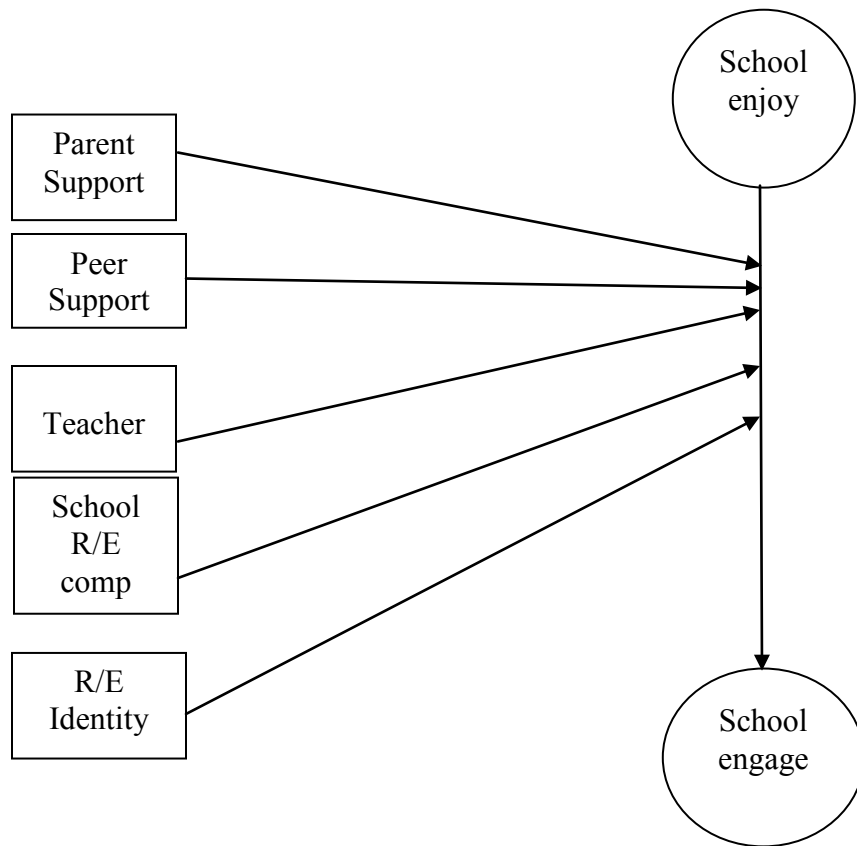
Research Question 2

Multiple contextual factors are causally interdependent in multifaceted ways in order to influence human development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Cook, et al., 2002; Spencer, et al., 1997). Spencer's model explains that racial/ethnic identity development is an essential and fundamental characteristic that provides the foundation for future behavior across the life span (Spencer, 2006). When looking at the context of school, "higher racial salience might moderate the extent to which the individual's racial beliefs influence their interpretation of a specific event in school and his or her subsequent behavior in response to the event" (Carter-Andrews, 2009, p. 300). For racial/ethnic minorities, there is a complex interchange that occurs with school enjoyment/engagement and cultural values and behaviors (Tyler, et al., 2008). What individual and contextual factors play a role in the relationship between school enjoyment and school engagement?

Hypothesis 2

Parental, peer, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition, and racial/ethnic identity are moderating factors for the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement.

Figure 4: H_2 model



The momentous, physical, cognitive, physiological, and emotional changes that happen during adolescence makes the understanding of racial/ethnic identity development and the relationship that it plays with school outcomes especially important for African-American adolescents as they move into adulthood (Spencer, et al., 1997). This study uses data from the Coordinated Community Student Survey, a collaborative effort that has collected longitudinal data from 4th thru 12th grade students across 117 Midwestern urban, suburban, and rural schools. Surveying occurred in the spring of each year using paper surveys and internet-based surveys. Consent forms were distributed to the parents of all students in participating schools. University

research staff administered surveys during school hours to all students whose parents provided written consent.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

This study focused on racial/ethnic identity development among African American youth and potential influences to the non-academic outcomes of school attitudes in African American adolescents. A description of the study's data source and data, participants, procedures, measures, and data analysis plan for the evaluation of the proposed hypotheses are provided in this chapter. This racial/ethnic identity development among African American youth study will add to the field of research by helping to increasing the understanding of influences of racial/ethnic identity on non-academic aspects of school outcomes.

Data Source

In 2003, a research team that included research staff at Michigan State University Outreach & Engagement and program staff from schools, districts, the Intermediate School District (ISD) in Genesee County and the Flint Community schools convened to create a survey instrument called the Coordinated Community Student Survey (C2S2) (Barnes, Almerigi, & Hsu, 2009). The current study uses data from the Coordinated Community Student Survey, a collaborative effort that has collected longitudinal data from ~12,000, 4th thru 12th grade students across 117 Midwestern urban, suburban, and rural schools. C2S2 is a comprehensive (physical, psychological, and emotional functioning) needs and outcome assessment instrument that has 205 questions, with multiple constructs. The survey provides information on the effects of school programs and services have on students' healthy development and functioning across five domains: 1. Family/home environment, 2. Physical development, 3. Socio-emotional development, 4. Cognitive development, and 5. Community/school environment (Barnes, et al., 2009).

The *Coordinated Community Student Survey (C2S2)* was part of a longitudinal, comprehensive research project that aimed to evaluate the impact of school health programs in Genesee County. The guiding research questions proposed where: What are student needs and strengths, and do these needs and strengths differ across communities? What are the critical ages to begin prevention activities across different domains of student outcomes? What are the differences in needs and strengths for males and females? How do the home, school, and neighborhood environments influence student outcomes? How do these influences change as the student ages? How does participation in support services offered at school influence student outcomes? Each individual school was provided with information on the physical, psychological, and emotional functioning of their students.

Participants

This research will follow only the 7th – 9th grade African American students who completed the C2S2 survey, over five years (year 2 thru year 6) of data collection. The cohort contains 403 individual African American students that completed the survey 1-3 times; 697 (42% male and 58% female) surveys where across five year period. The following table (1) shows the sex break down for each grade level throughout the cohort. A chi-square test showed no significant difference gender difference by grade for this sample.

Table 1: Student sex comparison by grade			
Grade	Male	Female	Total
7th	126	180	306
8th	114	149	263
9th	54	74	128
Total	294	403	697

Additionally, individual students in the year 2 through year 6 cohort that completed all three 7th-9th grade (N=69, 41% male and 59% female) surveys were analyzed, in order to access longitudinal changes of racial/ethnic identity over time.

Procedures of the Larger Study

The C2S2 was administered yearly to approximately 12,000 4th – 12th graders in 127 school across 24 districts across the county (Barnes, et al., 2009). Surveying occurred in the spring of each year using paper surveys and internet-based surveys. Consent forms were distributed to the parents of all students in participating schools. MSU Outreach full time staff, undergraduate/graduate students, and Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) staff schedule all survey dates with individual schools. University research staff administered surveys during school hours to all students whose parents provided written consent (approximately 32% of enrolled students and ranged from 2-98% depending on school administrator buy-in). Each individual school was provided with information on the physical, psychological, and emotional functioning of their students. De-identified individual data and scales scores from the original study were used for this project.

Measures

Classifications and corresponding measures for the variables are listed below.

Independent Variable

School enjoyment is a 6-item enjoyment of school ($\alpha = .82$) Participants respond to the schooling questions using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree* to 4 (*strongly agree*) (Almerigi & Barnes, 2009).

Table 2: “My School” Enjoyment Questions

1. I like reading.
 2. I like my school.
 3. I enjoy learning new things at my school.
 4. I do interesting things at my school.
 5. I feel like I am part of my school.
 6. I feel bored at my school.
-

Dependent Variable

School engagement is a 5-item Engagement in school ($\alpha = .91$). Participants respond to the schooling questions using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) (Almerigi & Barnes, 2009).

Table 3: “My School” Engagement Questions

1. I actively participate in my school’s activities. (for example, school plays, school clubs, fund-raising events)
 2. I do volunteer activities to help my school.
 3. I am interested in talking about ways to improve my school.
 4. I encourage others to do things to help improve my school.
 5. I try to help people in my school when they are in need.
-

Moderator Variables

There are five moderator variables for this study, parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition, and racial/ethnic identity.

Parental involvement ($\alpha = .87$) is 9-items, participants respond to the questions using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*a lot*) (Almerigi & Barnes, 2009).

Table 4: Parental Involvement Questions

1. Ask about what you have been doing in school?
 2. Check whether you have done your homework?
 3. See if your homework is correct?
 4. Come to your school's activities or help in your classroom?
 5. Talk to you about your problems?
 6. Limit the amount of time you can watch TV?
 7. Limit the amount of time you can play video games?
 8. Tell you that you should not drink alcohol or use drugs?
 9. Let you stay home alone with no adults around?
-

Peer support will be measured with the peer hostility scale ($\alpha = .77$); is 4-items, participants respond to the questions using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) (Almerigi & Barnes, 2009).

Table 5: Peer Hostility Questions

1. I feel alone when I'm at my school
 2. There are students at my school who really care about me
 3. It is hard to make friends at my school
 4. I usually spend lunch and/or recess time alone at my school
-

Teacher support ($\alpha = .77$) is 6-items, participants respond to the questions using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) (Almerigi & Barnes, 2009).

Table 6: Teacher Support Questions

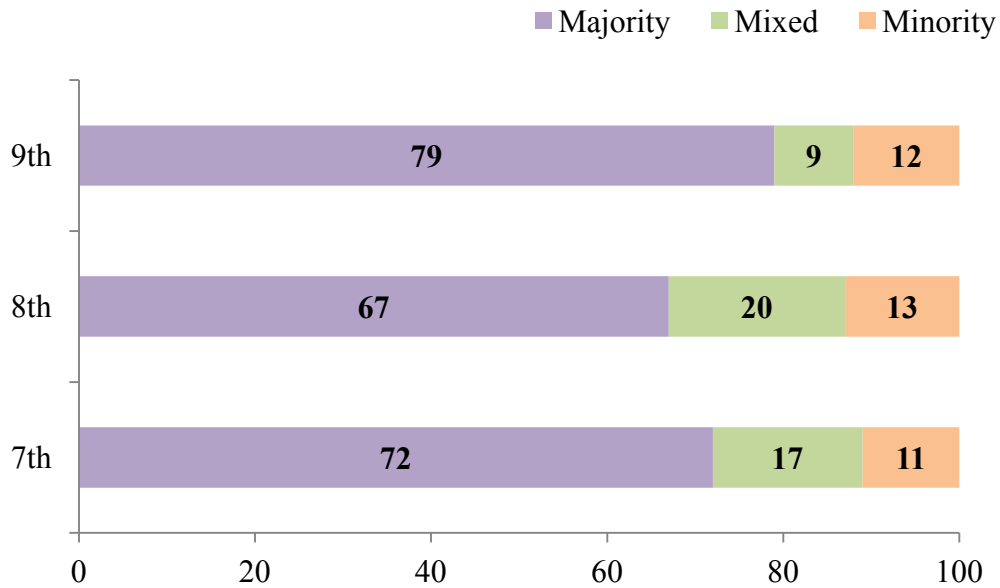
1. Teachers and students are nice to each other at my school.
 2. There is a teacher or some other adult who really cares about me at my school
 3. There is a teacher or some other adult who listens to me at my school.
 4. It is easy to talk with a teacher or counselor at my school.
 5. The teachers are fair to students at my school.
 6. I will get into trouble if I break a rule at my school.
-

School racial/ethnic composition, is important to understand when examining the issue of racial/ethnic identity development and the role that it plays in school adjustment factors

(Quintana et al., 2006). In this data, schools were coded as majority, mixed or minority African American settings, based on the Genesee Intermediate School District Statistical Summary Report (2008-2009). Table 7 shows the gender and total number of African American students in the districts of the students whose data will be analyzed in this study. For the African American students, in this data set, less than 15% (7th=31, 8th=32, 9th=23) of the participants in each of the grades came from districts in which they were not the majority of the student population (fig. 6). Figure 7 shows the school composition for the y2-y6 African American cohort in this study. The African American students, in this subset of the C2S2 data set, mostly attended schools in which they were the majority. Less than 18% (7th=43, 8th=51, 9th=28) of the participants in each of the grades came from schools in which they were not the majority of the student population.

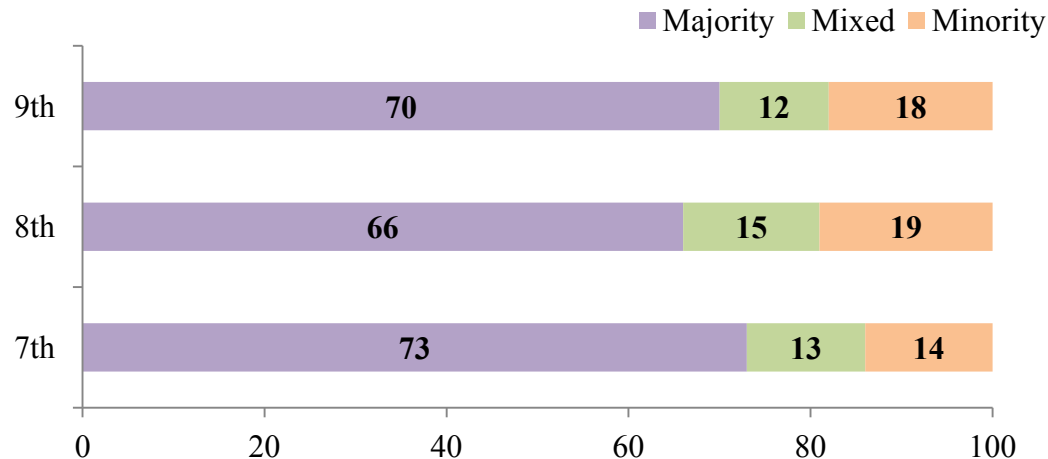
Table 7: 2008-2009 African American Students per District (%)			
District	Male	Female	Total
Flint	80.76	81.70	81.22
Grand Blanc	10.41	11.57	10.97
Mt. Morris	29.27	27.91	28.63
Bendle	11.88	10.39	11.13
Genesee	5.83	4.44	5.17
Carman-Ainsworth	37.60	38.69	38.14
Flushing	4.73	5.60	5.16
Atherton	10.71	8.09	9.43
Davison	2.81	1.74	2.27
Westwood	77.90	79.90	78.94
Bentley	4.17	3.77	3.97
Beecher	87.30	88.13	87.73
Linden	0.44	0.41	0.42
Lake Fenton	1.31	0.93	1.13
Kearsley	5.04	6.05	5.55
LakeVille	2.51	1.27	1.89
Perry	Missing	Missing	Missing
Genesee Intermediate School District Statistical Summary Report - (District, 2008-2009)			

Figure 5: y2-y6 African American District Composition (%)



**For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.*

Figure 6: y2-y6 African American School Composition (%)



Racial/ethnic identity was assessed, using a scale developed based on the 1) *Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-Evaluation of One's Social Identity (CSES)* and 2) *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)* scales. The CSES is a scale to assess collective an individual's level of social identity based on their membership in reference to grouping such as gender, race,

religion, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The CSES scale has a 16-item with four 4-item subscales (public, identity, membership, and private); alpha coefficients range from .83 to .88. Factor loadings for this scale ranged from .54 to .83, with each item clearly loading on the intended factor. Total scale reliability α is .85 with the four subscales alphas ranging from .73 to .80. Test-retest reliability for the total scale $r = .68$ (membership subscale $r = .58$; private subscale $r = .62$; identity subscale $r = .68$; and public subscale $r = .66$).

The MEIM is an 14 item scale with 2 subscales, that assess three aspects of racial/ethnic identity: 1) affirmation/belonging 5-item; 2) ethnic identity achievement 7-item; and 3) ethnic behaviors 2-item (Phinney, 1992). Reliability coefficients Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$, for high school participants and $\alpha = .90$ for college participants. For the affirmation/belonging subscale $\alpha = .75$ (high school) and .86 (college) and ethnic identity achievement subscale $\alpha = .69$ (high school) and .80 (college). Reliability for the 2-item ethnic behaviors subscale cannot be calculated because it only has 2-items. The measure used is a 16-item collective racial/ethnic identity scale (Herron, et al., 2008). In the administration of racial/ethnic identity questions during the C2S2 survey participants responded to the racial/ethnic identity questions using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*).

Table 8: Racial/Ethnic Identity Questions

1. Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others.
 2. Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on the average, to be less effective than other groups.
 3. In general, other people respect my race/ethnicity.
 4. In general, other people think that my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.
 5. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
 6. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
 7. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
 8. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
 9. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
 10. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
 11. I understand pretty well, what my ethnic group membership means to me.
 12. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group
 13. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
 14. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
 15. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
 16. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
-

Pearson correlation analyses, was conducted to evaluate the strength of a linear association between school enjoyment, school engagement, parental involvement, peer support (hostility), teacher support, and racial/ethnic identity. Significant relationships between all of the scales with the expectation of parental involvement and peer support (hostility) as well as racial/ethnic identity and school engagement. These significant relationships indicate in general, higher scores on one measure tend to be paired with higher scores on the other and that lower scores on one measure tend to be paired with lower scores on the other. However, the reasons underlying the correlation cannot be used to assume a causal relationship between the measures. The following table (9) shows the correlations between each of the previously described scales; covariance matrices for each individual scale can be found in appendix A.

Table 9: Measures Correlation Table

	R/E Identity	Parent	Teacher	Peer	Enjoy	Engage
R/E Identity	1					
Parent	.16*	1				
Teacher	.11*	.26*	1			
Peer	-.14*	.06	-.11*	1		
Enjoyment	.16*	.27*	.46*	-.25*	1	
Engagement	.06	.41*	.36*	-.15*	.29*	1

* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Data Analysis

This section will review the data cleaning, transformation, missing data, and analyses for the study. Data used in this study are de-identified individual data and scales scores from the original study used for this project. All analyses were completed using SPSS 22.0.

Data Cleaning, Reduction, and Transformation

Cleaning of data will consist of aggregating and merging. In the overall C2S2 database, there were approximately 4600 4th through 12th grade African American students. The focus of this study was to examine 7th through 9th grade students only. Therefore, data for 7th through 9th grade students was extracted from the overall C2S2 database. After extraction, the data was reduced to 403 individual African American students that had completed the survey 1-3 times. The examination of the longitudinal nature of racial/ethnic identity required an individual to have a racial/ethnic identity score in all three grades. The individuals who had completed three surveys were extracted from the database (N=403) of 7th – 9th graders. The extraction of longitudinal sample provided 69 individuals that had three scores.

Computation of the scores for the 16 racial/ethnic identity items was necessary to form the racial/ethnic identity scale score. The dataset had the parent involvement (9-item), teacher support (6-item), peer hostility (4-item), school enjoyment (6-item), and school engagement (5-

item) scales already computed. A high score for each all of the scales, except peer hostility, are considered better. Transform school codes into school racial/ethnic composition codes (majority, mixed, minority) based on Genesee Intermediate School District statistical summary report's racial/ethnic breakdown (District, 2008-2009). The longitudinal analyses only included individual African American students with racial/ethnic identity scores in three grades (7th, 8th, and 9th).

Missing Data

If missing data is completely random, meaning that no other variables known or unknown are associated, lessening of statistical power to detect differences or relationships that are the only potential issue, if the data are deleted. On the other hand, if missing data is systematically related to other variables, inaccurate parameter estimates can occur if data is deleted (Enders, 2010). The extraction of only African American 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students from the overall all C2S2 database and selection of students with only three surveys for the longitudinal analysis helped to reduce the amount of missing data in this study. This dataset contained very few missing data points, there for missing data was not estimated. School engagement had the highest missing data N=8 of the total available y2-y6 cohort. Participants that did not answer a question were excluded from that particular analysis.

Analyses

A factor analysis was conducted for hypotheses 1a, to identify the essential relationships between the measured racial/ethnic identity variable and grade. This analysis is important for the identification of any grade specific latent constructs and development of grade specific scales.

Hypothesis 1a: Racial/ethnic identity factor structures differ for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders.

An ANOVA analyses was conducted, to test for statistical significance changes for hypothesis 1b. Using this analysis will decrease the chances of committing a type 1 error between the 3 different time points.

Hypothesis 1b: An adolescent's racial/ethnic identity scores will increase over the three time points, with significant changes between time 1 and 3.

A hierarchical regression model with school engagement as the dependent variable was conducted to answer hypothesis 2. A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted, in order to examine the contribution of school racial/ethnic composition, parent involvement, peers, teachers, and racial/ethnic identity above and beyond the role that school enjoyment contributes.

Hypothesis 2: Parental, peer, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition, and racial/ethnic identity are moderating factors for the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement.

Findings demonstrate that context specific factors have stronger influences in development for racial/ethnic majority children (Garcia-Coll, Crnic, Lamberty, & Wasik, 1996). Spencer posits a relationship between the individual and their ecosystem. Racial/ethnic identity develops within these complex systems and can have influence on or be influenced by the ecosystem (Spencer, 1987). Having an ecological approach to the influence of racial/ethnic identity on the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement is important. Even though contextual influences are important, it is essential to guard against over-generalization (Cook, et al., 2002). The addition of multiple contextual factors is more systematic way to account for individual differences (Cook, et al., 2002), in this area of study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter presents the results of the analyses by research question and hypotheses, as well as the results of further adhoc analyses. The analyses presented below are divided into three sections; factor structures, longitudinal examination of racial/ethnic identity, and ecological moderators of school engagement. There are two major questions in the research. The first question has to do with racial/ethnic identity differences between students based on grade and the second has to do with moderating factors to the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement. Part 1a of the first question focused on exploring factor structure differences between grades. Next, part 1b of the first question explored longitudinal changes to racial/ethnic identity scores among 7th-9th grade African American students. Finally, the second question examined the contribution of the ecological factors: parent involvement, peer support, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition, and racial/ethnic identity beyond school enjoyment to school engagement.

Factor Structures

A factor analysis was conducted to identify relationships between the measured racial/ethnic identity variables and grade. This analysis is important for the identification of any latent constructs and scale development. Sixteen racial/ethnic identity items were factor analyzed using principal component analysis.

Hypothesis 1a

Racial/ethnic identity factor structures differ for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders, a factor analysis where conducted. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity

(BTS) criteria for the factorability of a correlation were used. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy for all three grades were above the recommended value of .5, and BTS were all significant, $p < .05$. The KMO value indicates that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and if factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors. The closer the value is to 1, the more relatively compact the patterns of correlations are, with any value greater than 0.5 being considered acceptable. Additionally, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great, and values above 0.9 are excellent (Kaiser, 1974). The BTS tests the correlation matrix and tells if there are relationships between the variables. A significant test $p < .05$ shows that there are some relationships between the variables that have been included in the analysis (Field, 2005). The factor analysis found that 7th, 8th, and 9th graders all had 4 factors for the racial/ethnic identity questions.

For 7th graders, the Kaiser value was 0.834, which falls into the range of being great, and Bartlett's test $p < .0001$. The first factor explained 33% of the variance, the second factor 13% of the variance, the third factor 9% of the variance, and the fourth factor 7% of the variance. The total variance explained for these factors was 61.4%. For 8th graders, the Kaiser value was 0.844, which falls into the range of being great, and Bartlett's test $p < .0001$. Factor 1 explained 33% of the variance, the second factor 12% of the variance, the third factor 8% of the variance, and the fourth factor 7% of the variance. The total variance explained for these factors was 61.2%. For 9th graders, the Kaiser value was 0.870, which falls into the range of being great, and Bartlett's test $p < .0001$. The first factor explained 40% of the variance, the second factor 14% of the variance, the third factor 8% of the variance, and a fourth factor 6% of the variance. The total variance explained for these factors was 67.6%. The following tables 10 and 11 show

the factor loading values, commonalities, and differences of the loadings for each question by grade.

Table 10: 7th, 8th, and 9th graders R/E Identity Rotated Component Matrix Factor Loadings				
	Questions	7th graders	8th graders	9th graders
Factor 1:				
<i>Beliefs</i>	22c	.527	.581	.678
	22e	.794	.747	.673
	22f	.772	.799	.835
	22g	.752	.757	.770
	22i	.786	.808	.849
	22k	.722	.769	.849
	22l	.648	.678	.668
	22h	n/a	n/a	.420
Factor 2:				
<i>Knowledge</i>	22a	.716	.633	.554
	22b	.655	.633	.725
	22d	.530	.604	.732
	22h	.707	.711	.619
	22j	.668	.662	.664
	22c	.423	n/a	n/a
Factor 3:				
<i>Perception of Others</i>	21a	.864	n/a	.908
	21c	.863	.847	.780
Factor 4:				
<i>Perception of Others</i>	21b	.841	.862	.812
	21d	.740	.729	.822
	21a	n/a	.875	n/a

Table 11: Racial/Ethnic Identity Factor Loadings by Questions

Factor 1: Beliefs

- 22c. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
- 22e. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
- 22f. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
- 22g. I understand pretty well, what my ethnic group membership means to me.
- 22i. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
- 22k. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
- 22l. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

➤ *9th graders: 22h had a factor loading (.42) in addition to a higher loading in factor 2*

Factor 2: Knowledge

- 22a. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
- 22b. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
- 22d. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
- 22h. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group
- 22j. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.

➤ *7th graders: 22c had a factor loading (.42) in addition to a higher loading in factor 1*

Factor 3: Perception of Others

- 21a*. Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others.
- 21c. In general, other people respect my race/ethnicity.

➤ **21a did not load into this factor loading for 8th grade students*

Factor 4: Perceptions of Others

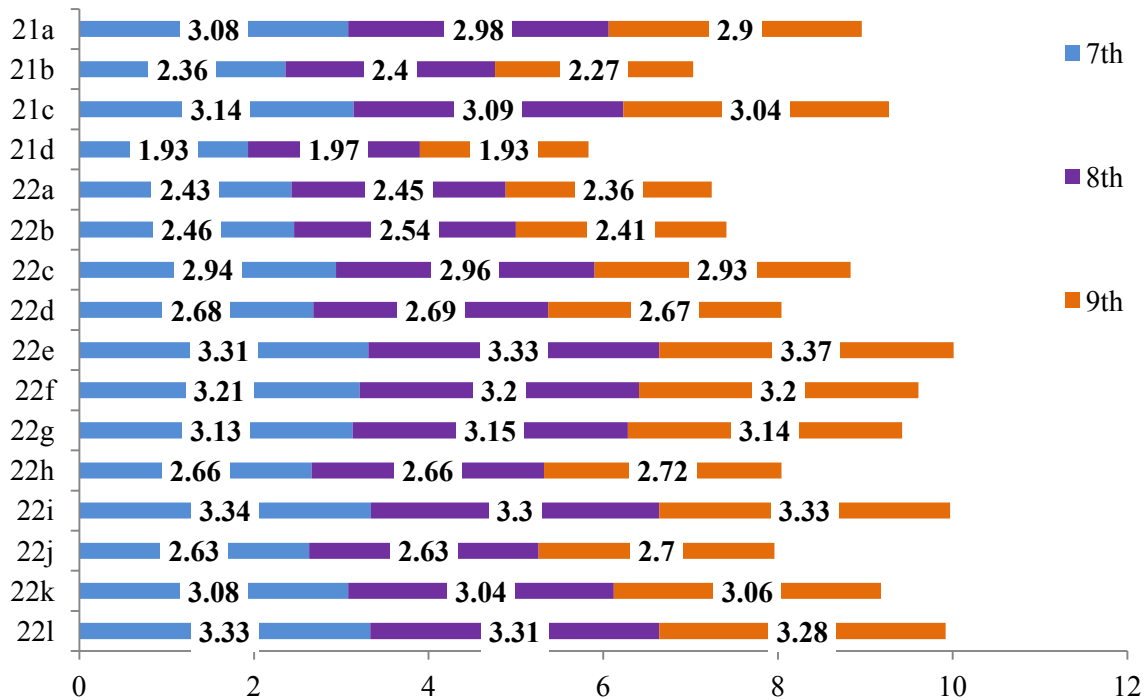
- 21a*. Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others.
- 21b. Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on the average, to be less effective than other groups.
- 21d. In general, other people think that my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.

➤ **Only 8th graders had 21a loading in this factor*

Factors 1 and 2 had loadings that were consistent between the three grade levels. Factors 3 and 4 were mostly consistent, with one question loading completely different for 8th grade students. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for mean differences in each of the 16 racial/ethnic identity questions among the three grade levels (7th, 8th, and 9th). No statistically

significant differences found for the mean racial/ethnic identity questions. A graph of the mean scores by grade for each question is located below in figure 8.

Figure 7: Racial/Ethnic Identity Questions Means by Grade



These findings are an indication that there is no significant maturation or change in response to this questionnaire within and between these 7th, 8th, and 9th grade African American students.

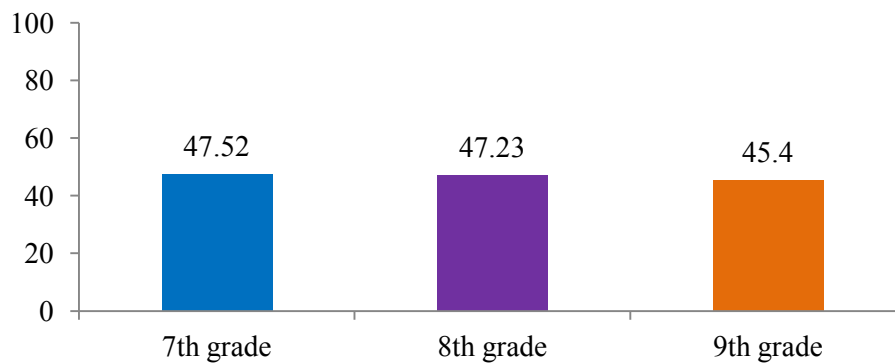
Longitudinal Examination of Racial/Ethnic Identity

A one-way ANOVA was performed to test for longitudinal differences in racial/ethnic identity questions from 7th through 9th grade. The use of this analysis will decrease the chances of committing a type 1 error between the 3 different time points.

Hypothesis 1b

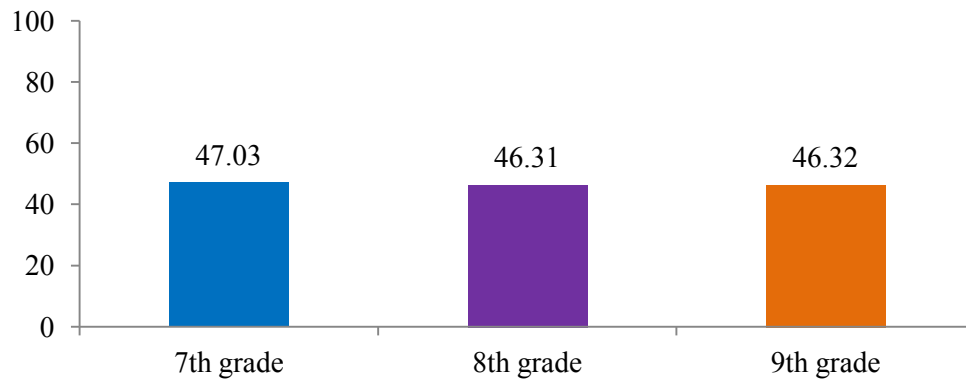
An adolescent's racial/ethnic identity scores will increase over the three time points, with significant changes between time 1 and 3. A comparison between the 7th and 8th, 8th and 9th, and 7th and 9th grade students (N=69) who had three consecutive racial/ethnic identity scores was not statistically significant at $p < .05$, for any of the groupings. A graph of the mean scores for each grade is below in figure 9 below.

Figure 8: Longitudinal Means Racial/Ethnic Identity Scores



According to what is known in the literature, racial/ethnic identity is a developmental process that proceeds from forms that are more rudimentary to more fully developed forms of identity. Therefore, in light of the lack of significance found among the longitudinal group, a cohort sequential analysis was conducted, using the y2-y6 cohort. A comparison between the three grades $N = 697$ (306 7th graders, 263 8th graders, and 128 9th graders), also was not statistically significant at $p < .05$. A graph of the mean scores for each grade is below in figure 10 below.

Figure 9: y2-y6 COHORT Means: Racial/Ethnic Identity Scores



In a study by Herron, Barnes, & Almerigi (2008), using structural equation modeling, 2 subscales of this racial/ethnic identity scale were found. The subscales used only 12 of the original 16 items of the collective racial/ethnic identity scale (Herron, et al., 2008). Racial/ethnic identity knowledge and racial/ethnic identity beliefs (see appendix B). In an effort to further clarify the analysis and assure that these findings are not an artifact of analyzing the total racial/ethnic scale score, which would then obscure variation, a third ANOVA for racial/ethnic identity changes was performed using subscales of the racial/ethnic identity scale. The ANOVA for both racial/ethnic identity beliefs and knowledge subscales among three grade levels (7th, 8th, and 9th), was not statistically significant at $p < .05$. Graphs of the mean scores for each subscale by grade are below in figures 11 and 12.

Figure 10: Longitudinal Means Racial/Ethnic Identity Knowledge

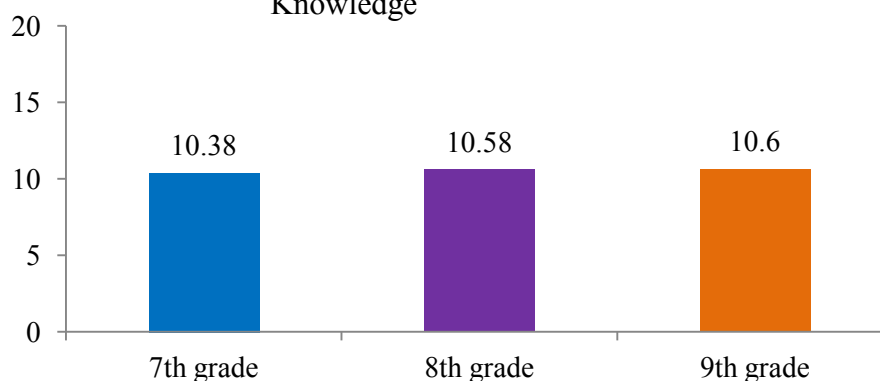
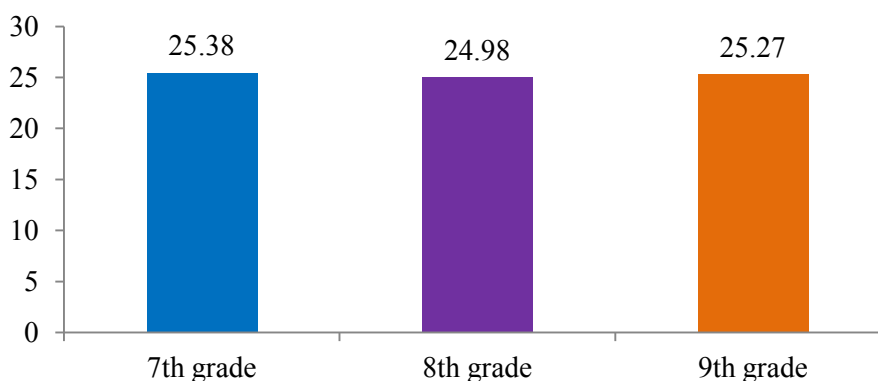


Figure 11: Longitudinal Means Racial/Ethnic Identity Beliefs



The longitudinal examination of racial/ethnic identity scores among 7th through 9th grade African American students found no statistically significant differences over time. Additionally, a cohort-sequential examination of racial/ethnic identity scores between 7th through 9th grade students also found no significant differences.

Moderators of School Engagement

To examine the unique contributions of the ecological moderating factors racial/ethnic identity, parent involvement, peer support, teacher support, and school racial/ethnic composition beyond the role of school enjoyment as a predictor in the explanation of school engagement, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed. The hierarchical regression allows a

researcher to control for the effects of covariates and test the effects of individual predictors independent of the influence of other variables.

Hypothesis 2

Parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition, and racial/ethnic identity are moderating factors for the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement. Variables that help to explain school engagement were entered in six steps. In step 1, school engagement was the dependent variable and school enjoyment was the independent variables. In steps 2 through 6, the ecological moderator variables were entered into the model. Step 2, parental involvement scale was entered into the step 1 equation. In step 3, the peer hostility scale was entered into step 2 of the equation. In step 4, the teacher support scale was entered into step 3 of the equation. In step 5, the school racial/ethnic composition variable was entered into step 4 of the equation. In step 6, the racial/ethnic identity scale was entered into step 5 of the equation. This set of analysis was first performed using all y2-y6 (N = 689) student cohort data, then again by each grade (7th N=303, 8th N=259, 9th N= 127) individually.

Y2-Y6 Student Cohort. The results of model 1 indicated that the variance (R^2) accounted for with the school enjoyment scale equaled .087 (adjusted $R^2 = .085$), was significant ($F_{(1, 687)} = 65.24, p < .0001$) and $\beta = .294, p < .0001$. Model 2, was statistically significant, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .121, ($\Delta F_{(1, 686)} = 104.92, p < .0001$). In model 3, ΔR^2 was equal to .015, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 685)} = 13.24, p < .0001$). Model 4, was statistically significant $\Delta R^2 = .037$, ($\Delta F_{(1, 684)} = 34.5, p < .0001$). In model 5, $\Delta R^2 = .005$, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 683)} = 4.3, p = .038$). In the 6th

and final model, ΔR^2 was equal to .003, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 682)} = 2.47, p = .117$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported below in table 12.

Table 12: y2-y6 Cohort Standardized Regression Coefficients					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	<i>B</i>	p
1*	Enjoyment	.438	.054	.294	<.0001
2*	Enjoyment	.295	.052	.198	<.0001
	Parent	.484	.047	.361	<.0001
3*	Enjoyment	.242	.054	.163	<.0001
	Parent	.506	.047	.378	<.0001
	Peer	-.170	.047	-.127	<.0001
4*	Enjoyment	.104	.058	.070	.072
	Parent	.462	.047	.345	<.0001
	Peer	-.169	.046	-.127	<.0001
	Teacher	.300	.051	.221	<.0001
5*	Enjoyment	.101	.058	.068	.079
	Parent	.453	.047	.338	<.0001
	Peer	-.174	.045	-.131	<.0001
	Teacher	.307	.051	.226	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.068	.033	.069	.038
6	Enjoyment	.108	.058	.073	.060
	Parent	.462	.047	.345	<.0001
	Peer	-.182	.046	-.137	<.0001
	Teacher	.309	.051	.227	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.068	.033	.069	.036
	Racial/Ethnic	-.005	.003	-.053	.117

For all students in the y2 through y6 cohort, the regression found higher reporting of parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, school racial/ethnic composition were significant for school engagement. Initially, school enjoyment was a significant predictor of school engagement. The addition of parental involvement, peer support, teacher support and school racial/ethnic composition caused school enjoyment to no longer be a significant predictor of school engagement. The full model that included racial/ethnic identity was not statistically significant at $p < .05$.

7th grade students. The results of step 1 indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with the school enjoyment subscale equaled .072 (adjusted $R^2 = .069$), which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(1, 301)} = 23.45, p < .0001$) and $\beta = .269, p < .0001$. In step 2, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .13, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 300)} = 41.5, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .016, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 299)} = 5.98, p = .015$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .018, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 298)} = 6.7, p = .010$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .006, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 297)} = 2.45, p = .119$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .004, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 296)} = 1.38, p = .249$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported below in table 13.

Table 13: 7th graders Standardized Regression Coefficients					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	B	p
1*	Enjoyment	.395	.082	.269	<.0001
2*	Enjoyment	.244	.080	.166	.002
	Parent	.463	.072	.351	<.0001
3*	Enjoyment	.193	.082	.131	.019
	Parent	.493	.072	.374	<.0001
	Peer	-.175	.071	-.131	.015
4*	Enjoyment	.092	.090	.063	.307
	Parent	.470	.072	.356	<.0001
	Peer	-.170	.071	-.128	.017
	Teacher	.205	.079	.153	.010
5	Enjoyment	.087	.090	.059	.338
	Parent	.459	.072	.348	<.0001
	Peer	-.179	.071	-.134	.012
	Teacher	.215	.079	.160	.007
	School r/e comp	.085	.054	.081	.119
6	Enjoyment	.092	.090	.063	.306
	Parent	.476	.074	.361	<.0001
	Peer	-.190	.072	-.143	.008
	Teacher	.222	.080	.165	.006
	School r/e comp	.085	.054	.081	.120
	Racial/Ethnic	-.006	.005	-.063	.241

When examining only the 7th grade students, parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support were statistically significant moderators. In the first three models, school enjoyment was a significant predictor of school engagement. As the parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support variables were included in the models, school enjoyment was no longer a significant predictor of school engagement. For these 7th grade students, school racial/ethnic composition and racial/ethnic identity were not statistically significant at $p < .05$.

8th grade students. The results of step 1 indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with the school enjoyment scale equaled .119 (adjusted $R^2 = .116$), which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(1, 257)} = 34.75, p < .0001$) and $\beta = .345, p < .0001$. In step 2, the change in

variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .136, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 256)} = 46.66, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .009, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 255)} = 3.24, p = .073$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .058, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 254)} = 21.76, p < .0001$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .006 which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 253)} = 2.22, p = .137$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .006, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 252)} = 2.18, p = .141$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported in table 14 (see below).

Table 14: 8th graders Standardized Regression Coefficients					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	β	p
1*	Enjoyment	.522	.089	.345	<.0001
2*	Enjoyment	.379	.084	.251	<.0001
	Parent	.517	.076	.380	<.0001
3	Enjoyment	.334	.088	.221	<.0001
	Parent	.527	.076	.388	<.0001
	Peer	-.139	.077	-.101	.073
4*	Enjoyment	.151	.093	.100	.105
	Parent	.446	.075	.328	<.0001
	Peer	-.152	.074	-.110	.042
	Teacher	.394	.085	.281	<.0001
5	Enjoyment	.147	.093	.097	.114
	Parent	.432	.075	.318	<.0001
	Peer	-.161	.074	-.117	.031
	Teacher	.400	.084	.285	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.076	.051	.078	.137
6	Enjoyment	.163	.093	.108	.081
	Parent	.431	.075	.317	<.0001
	Peer	-.168	.074	-.122	.024
	Teacher	.404	.084	.288	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.078	.051	.080	.127
	Racial/Ethnic	-.008	.005	-.077	.141

For the 8th grade students, parental involvement, and teacher support were consistently significant moderators. The third model, which included the peer support variable was not significant ($p=.073$), however with the inclusion of the teacher support variable in the model 4, peer support was significant in the model. The initial findings showed school enjoyment to be a significant predictor of school engagement. However, the addition of the parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support removed the influence of school enjoyment as a significant predictor of school engagement. Both the school racial/ethnic composition and racial/ethnic identity were not statistically significant at $p<.05$.

9th grade students. The results of step 1 indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with the school enjoyment subscale equaled .060 (adjusted $R^2 = .053$), which was significantly

different from zero ($F_{(1, 125)} = 8.02, p = .005$) and $\beta = .246, p < .0001$. In step 2, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .114, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 124)} = 17.1, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .026, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 123)} = 3.99, p = .048$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .057, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 122)} = 9.34, p = .003$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .000, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 121)} = .046, p = .831$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .001, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 120)} = .137, p = .712$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported in table 15 (see below).

Table 15: 9th graders Standardized Regression Coefficients					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	β	p
1*	Enjoyment	.362	.128	.246	.005
2*	Enjoyment	.240	.124	.163	.055
	Parent	.469	.113	.347	<.0001
3*	Enjoyment	.169	.128	.115	.188
	Parent	.505	.113	.374	<.0001
	Peer	-.210	.105	-.166	.048
4*	Enjoyment	.040	.130	.027	.760
	Parent	.470	.110	.348	<.0001
	Peer	-.206	.102	-.165	.045
	Teacher	.340	.111	.258	.003
5	Enjoyment	.041	.131	.028	.757
	Parent	.469	.111	.347	<.0001
	Peer	-.205	.102	-.165	.047
	Teacher	.343	.112	.259	.003
	School r/e comp	.015	.069	.017	.831
6	Enjoyment	.039	.132	.027	.776
	Parent	.458	.115	.339	<.0001
	Peer	-.198	.104	-.159	.060
	Teacher	.347	.113	.263	.003
	School r/e comp	.015	.069	.017	.834
	Racial/Ethnic	.003	.008	.031	.712

Parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support for 9th grade students, were significant for school engagement. In this group of 9th graders, school enjoyment was initially significant but was immediately no longer significant with the addition of the first additional variable. School racial/ethnic composition and racial/ethnic identity were not statistically significant at $p < .05$.

This analysis found parental involvement, peer support and teacher support variables to be consistently significant for overall and each individual grade level. School racial/ethnic composition and racial/ethnic identity were consistently not found to be significant, with the exception of a significant school composition for only the full cohort analysis. In an effort to

further review racial/ethnic identity as a moderator, additional analyses were performed. The supplemental analyses used the knowledge and beliefs subscales, instead of the total racial/ethnic identity scale. In these regression analyses, steps 1-5 were identical to the regression above. For step 6, racial/ethnic identity knowledge and racial/ethnic identity beliefs subscales were entered into step 5. The Y2-Y6 cohort $N = 687$, with 7th $N=302$, 8th $N=258$, and 9th $N= 127$.

Y2-Y6 Student Cohort (Racial/Ethnic Knowledge & Beliefs). The results of step 1 indicated that the variance (R^2) accounted for with the school enjoyment scale equaled .087 (adjusted $R^2 = .085$), which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(1, 685)} = 64.99, p < .0001$) and $\beta = .294, p < .0001$. In step 2, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .120, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 684)} = 103.17, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .015, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 683)} = 13.34, p < .0001$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .037, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 682)} = 34.1, p < .0001$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .005, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 681)} = 4.23, p = .04$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .019, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 679)} = 8.93, p < .0001$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported in Table 16 (see below).

Table 16: Y2-Y6 Cohort Regression Coefficients: R/E Knowledge & Beliefs					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	B	p
1*	Enjoyment	.437	.054	.294	<.0001
2*	Enjoyment	.295	.052	.199	<.0001
	Parent	.482	.047	.359	<.0001
3*	Enjoyment	.242	.054	.163	<.0001
	Parent	.504	.047	.376	<.0001
	Peer	-.171	.047	-.128	<.0001
4*	Enjoyment	.104	.058	.070	.071
	Parent	.461	.047	.343	<.0001
	Peer	-.169	.046	-.127	<.0001
	Teacher	.299	.051	.220	<.0001
5*	Enjoyment	.102	.058	.069	.078
	Parent	.452	.047	.337	<.0001
	Peer	-.175	.046	-.131	<.0001
	Teacher	.306	.051	.225	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.067	.033	-.068	.040
6*	Enjoyment	.092	.057	.062	.110
	Parent	.439	.047	.327	<.0001
	Peer	-.193	.045	-.145	<.0001
	Teacher	.297	.051	.218	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.045	.033	.046	.163
	Racial/Ethnic Knowledge	.043	.012	.160	<.0001
	Racial/Ethnic Beliefs	-.024	.006	-.158	<.0001

For all students in the y2 through y6 cohort, the regression found that parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, and both racial/ethnic identity subscales (knowledge and beliefs) were consistently significant for school engagement throughout the full model. School racial/ethnic composition was also significant, until the addition of the racial/ethnic identity subscales to the model. School enjoyment was significant in the initial through third model but, once the parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support were included in the model, school enjoyment was no longer be a significant predictor of school engagement.

7th grade students (Racial/Ethnic Knowledge & Beliefs). The results of step 1 indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with the school enjoyment subscale equaled .072

(adjusted $R^2 = .069$), which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(1, 300)} = 23.32, p < .0001$) and $\beta = .269, p < .0001$. In step 2, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .11, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 299)} = 40.7, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .016, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 298)} = 6.04, p = .015$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .017, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 297)} = 6.56, p = .011$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .006, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 296)} = 2.40, p = .122$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .031, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 294)} = 6.18, p = .002$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported in Table 17 (see below).

Table 17: 7th graders Regression Coefficients: R/E Knowledge & Beliefs					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	β	p
1*	Enjoyment	.394	.082	.269	<.0001
2*	Enjoyment	.245	.808	.167	.002
	Parent	.461	.072	.349	<.0001
3*	Enjoyment	.193	.082	.132	.019
	Parent	.490	.073	.371	<.0001
	Peer	-.176	.072	-.132	.015
4*	Enjoyment	.093	.090	.064	.303
	Parent	.468	.073	.354	<.0001
	Peer	-.171	.071	-.128	.017
	Teacher	.204	.080	.152	.011
5	Enjoyment	.087	.090	.060	.333
	Parent	.458	.073	.346	<.0001
	Peer	-.179	.071	-.135	.012
	Teacher	.213	.080	.159	.008
	School r/e comp	.084	.054	.080	.122
6*	Enjoyment	.086	.089	.058	.336
	Parent	.433	.073	.328	<.0001
	Peer	-.210	.071	-.158	.003
	Teacher	.188	.079	.140	.018
	School r/e comp	.056	.054	.053	.301
	Racial/Ethnic Knowledge	.057	.018	.217	.001
	Racial/Ethnic Beliefs	-.032	.101	-.202	.002

For 7th grade students in the y2 through y6 cohort, the regression found parental involvement, peer support, teacher support and both racial/ethnic identity subscales (knowledge and beliefs) were consistent significant moderators for school engagement throughout the full model. School racial/ethnic composition was not significant for 7th grade students. School enjoyment was significant until the addition of the parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support variables to the model, which negated the significance of school enjoyment as a significant predictor in the model.

8th grade students (*Racial/Ethnic Knowledge & Beliefs*). The results of step 1 indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with the school enjoyment scale equaled .119

(adjusted $R^2 = .116$), which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(1, 256)} = 34.61, p < .0001$) and $\beta = .345, p < .0001$. In step 2, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .134, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 255)} = 45.72, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .010, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 254)} = 3.3, p = .071$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .058, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 253)} = 21.52, p < .0001$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .006 which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 252)} = 2.18, p = .141$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .011, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 250)} = 1.99, p = .138$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported in Table 18 (see below).

Table 18: 8th graders Regression Coefficients: R/E Knowledge & Beliefs					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	β	p
1*	Enjoyment	.521	.089	.345	<.0001
2*	Enjoyment	.379	.084	.251	<.0001
	Parent	.514	.076	.378	<.0001
3	Enjoyment	.334	.088	.221	<.0001
	Parent	.524	.076	.385	<.0001
	Peer	-.140	.077	-.102	.071
4*	Enjoyment	.152	.093	.100	.105
	Parent	.444	.075	.326	<.0001
	Peer	-.152	.074	-.111	.041
	Teacher	.393	.085	.281	<.0001
5	Enjoyment	.147	.093	.098	.113
	Parent	.430	.075	.316	<.0001
	Peer	-.162	.074	-.117	.031
	Teacher	.398	.085	.284	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.076	.051	.077	.141
6	Enjoyment	.151	.093	.100	.106
	Parent	.419	.076	.308	<.0001
	Peer	-.175	.074	-.128	.019
	Teacher	.398	.084	.284	<.0001
	School r/e comp	.062	.052	.063	.235
	Racial/Ethnic Knowledge	.020	.019	.071	.292
	Racial/Ethnic Beliefs	-.020	.101	-.132	.048

For the 8th grade students, parental involvement, and teacher support were consistently significant moderators. The third model, which included the peer support variable was not significant, however with the inclusion of the teacher variable in the model 4, peer support was significant for the model. The school racial/ethnic composition, racial/ethnic identity knowledge, and racial/ethnic identity beliefs variables were not statistically significant at $p < .05$. The addition of the parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support variables removed the influence of school enjoyment as a significant predictor of school engagement.

9th grade students (*Racial/Ethnic Knowledge & Beliefs*). The results of step 1 indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with the school enjoyment subscale equaled .060

(adjusted $R^2 = .053$), which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(1, 125)} = 8.02, p = .005$) and $\beta = .246, p = .005$. In step 2, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .114, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 124)} = 17.1, p < .0001$). In step 3, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .026, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 123)} = 3.99, p = .048$). In step 4, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .057, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 122)} = 9.34, p = .003$). In step 5, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .000, which was not significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 121)} = .055, p = .816$). In step 6, the change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .043, which was significantly different from zero ($\Delta F_{(1, 119)} = 3.64, p = .029$). The unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), for the full model are reported in Table 18 (see below).

Table 19: 9th graders Regression Coefficients: R/E Knowledge & Beliefs					
Model	Variables	B	SE(B)	β	p
1*	Enjoyment	.128	.128	.246	.005
2*	Enjoyment	.240	.124	.163	.055
	Parent	.469	.113	.347	<.0001
3*	Enjoyment	.169	.128	.115	.188
	Parent	.505	.113	.374	<.0001
	Peer	-.210	.105	-.168	.048
4*	Enjoyment	.040	.130	.027	.760
	Parent	.470	.110	.348	<.0001
	Peer	-.206	.102	-.165	.045
	Teacher	.340	.111	.258	.003
5	Enjoyment	.041	.131	.028	.758
	Parent	.469	.111	.347	<.0001
	Peer	-.205	.102	-.165	.047
	Teacher	.343	.112	.259	.003
	School r/e comp	.015	.069	.017	.816
6*	Enjoyment	.004	.129	.003	.972
	Parent	.453	.112	.335	<.0001
	Peer	-.195	.103	-.157	.059
	Teacher	.360	.110	.272	.001
	School r/e comp	.007	.068	.008	.915
	Racial/Ethnic Knowledge	.070	.026	.258	.008
	Racial/Ethnic Beliefs	-.018	.014	-.130	.184

For 9th grade students, the regression found parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, and both racial/ethnic identity subscales (knowledge and beliefs) were consistently significant for school engagement throughout the full model. School racial/ethnic composition was not significant in this model. The addition of the parental involvement, and peer support variables to the model negated the significance of school enjoyment as a significant predictor in the model.

Summary of Findings

Racial/ethnic identity and development. The results of this study indicated no differences in factor loadings between the 7th, 8th, and 9th grade African American students. The

longitudinal assessment of racial/ethnic identity scores from 7th to 9th grade found no statistically significant differences in scores over time.

Ecological moderators of the enjoyment and engagements relationship. Overall, school enjoyment was consistently a significant predictor of school engagement; however, the importance of enjoyment was diminished as ecological factors were added to the model. The assessment of moderators for school engagement found parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support to be significant across all models. School racial/ethnic composition was a significant variable only when the total y2-y6 cohort was assessed. Racial/ethnic identity assessed as a total 16-item score was not significant for any of the models. Further assessment of racial/ethnic identity, utilizing subscales (knowledge and beliefs) produced various results by grade. The assessment of racial/ethnic identity knowledge subscale found that for overall cohort, 7th, and 9th grade student's knowledge was a significant for school engagement. The racial/ethnic identity beliefs subscale was a significant for the overall cohort, and 7th, grade students, but not 9th graders. For the 8th grade students, the racial/ethnic knowledge and beliefs subscales were not significant. The following chapter five will provide a results summary as well as some conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion & Conclusion

This study focused on racial/ethnic identity development and other potential influences on school engagement among African American adolescents. The purpose of this project was to develop a longitudinal model that would add to the understanding of the dynamic role of racial/ethnic identity and the relationship to school engagement outcomes for African American youth. Additionally, this study added to the literature for middle school aged African American youth in the area of racial/ethnic identity development. The presentation of this chapter will include a discussion of findings, study limitations, conclusions, and implications for future research.

Summary of Findings

Overall, no racial/ethnic identity differences were found among 7th – 9th grade African American students. Additionally, the importance of school enjoyment on the outcome of school engagement was diminished as ecological factors were added to the model. Initial assessments of racial/ethnic identity as a moderator for the school enjoyment and engagement relationship found no significant results. The addition of more refined analyses provided information on the significant contribution racial/ethnic identity components. In the discussion to follow these findings are explained more thoroughly by hypothesis. The current study provides a good start for better assessing racial/ethnic identity for African American adolescents. Additionally, the findings in this study provide an additional understanding of the complex interrelations that occur in understanding school enjoyment and engagement.

Hypotheses 1a . Phinney (1989) found that during the adolescent period individuals move from an unawareness of race/ethnicity into a greater understanding of race/ethnicity in

their lives. In a study done by Herron et. al (2008), it was found a significant relationship between grade and racial/ethnic identity beliefs. In this first hypothesis, it was anticipated that racial/ethnic identity factor structures would differ for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders a factor analysis was conducted. The purpose of this hypothesis was to obtain a better understanding of the underlying factors that may have influenced the way that African American students responded to the sixteen racial/ethnic identity questions. Discovering potential factors is important, because factors correspond to principal concepts that could not be effectively measured by one individual variable; as such the hypothesis was not supported.

In the analysis, factor loadings were nearly identical for each of the three grades, as such, no developmental differences were found. The results showed that the sixteen racial/ethnic identity questions for each grade were associated with four factors. The variance explained by the four different factors was ~61%, for both 7th and 8th grade students and 68% for 9th grade students. The factors for the racial/ethnic questionnaire were consistent for each grade level. Additional analyses were performed on each of the questions individually, in order to assess if there were any differences in how each individual question was answered, by each grade level. The test found no statistically significant difference for any of the sixteen racial/ethnic identity questions among the three grade levels (7th, 8th, and 9th). It is unlikely that the findings are not applicable for the general African American adolescent population. It is more likely that this set of racial/ethnic identity questions are interpreted in the same way for all African American adolescents. Expanding the analysis to include other racial/ethnic groups could allow for a better evaluation of the underlying factors and interrelationships between each question and particular factors. Furthermore, the factor loadings found in factors 1 and 2, are consistent with work

previously done by Herron, Barnes, & Almerigi (2008), with the exception of one question (22d. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership) shifting from placement in factor 1 to being in factor 2 for these results. It could be that these groupings of questions are not a good assessment of developmental changes, but overall racial/ethnic identity assessment for African American youth.

Hypothesis 1b. In the second part of question 1, it was predicted that an adolescent's racial/ethnic identity scores would increase over the three time points, with significant changes between time 1 and 3. An important contribution of this hypothesis was to add to racial/ethnic identity studies in literature with longitudinal designs. As we know from the literature, developmental changes, environment influences, peers influence and other group interactions, influence racial/ethnic identity development (Ocampo, Knight, & Bernal, 1997; Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1987). Spencer (2006) found that racial/ethnic identity development is an essential and fundamental characteristic that provides the foundation for current and future behavior across the life span. During adolescence is when youth are taking a more conscious role in trying to understand and acquire some approaches more that provide greater opportunity to put into practice the more culturally valued strategy, related to being a member of their racial/ethnic group (P. H. Miller, 2002; Phinney, 1989).

The hypothesis was not supported; results for this hypothesis showed that there were no significant differences between the 7th and 8th, 8th and 9th, and 7th and 9th grade students for racial/ethnic identity scores. As a youth goes through the adolescent period, racial/ethnic identity changes would manifest as they mature (French, et al., 2006; Phinney, 1989). The findings in this study did not coincide with prevailing literature. Therefore, further analyses utilizing factor loadings found in work previously done by Herron, Barnes, & Almerigi (2008),

which yielded two subscales, racial/ethnic identity beliefs and knowledge. The analysis of racial/ethnic identity the beliefs and knowledge subscale also found no significant differences in racial/ethnic identity scores between any of the three grade levels. Based on what documentation throughout the literature on the developmental nature of racial/ethnic identity, these findings are surprising. It is unlikely that there were no development changes in racial/ethnic identity development. It is more likely that the grade range was not adequately expansive enough to see the developmental shifts in racial/ethnic identity. It could be that development in this area is so incremental it could not be detected in ages that are in such close proximity to each other. Larger gaps between age groupings maybe needed for a comparison with this group. Expanding the grade range, could allow for a better evaluation of developmental changes in racial/ethnic identity.

Hypothesis 2. There is a complex interchange that occurs with school enjoyment/engagement and cultural values and behaviors; context coupling is more systematic once individual differences are accounted for (Cook, et al., 2002; Tyler, et al., 2008). Social context can enhance or hinder the already trying and stressful adolescent developmental period. Many micro and meso level interactions, in homes, schools, and peer groups, play a role in changes within that individual context (Cook, et al., 2002). It is not possible to investigate individual characteristics and outcomes without explaining and understanding the contextual role of an individual's ecology (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997). Interactions with parents, peers, and other social institutions can enhance youths' understanding of various events and experiences, including school outcomes. In this hypothesis, it was expected that parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, racial/ethnic school composition, and racial/ethnic identity were moderators of the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement. The

purpose of this hypothesis was to find out what ecological contextual factors play a role in the relationship between school enjoyment and school engagement. The following results will first review each individual factor then a summary of the overall model and relationships will be discussed.

Parental Involvement. The findings for parental involvement in this hypothesis were supported. Parental involvement has consistently been shown to be of great significance to academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Taylor, et al., 1995). Fan & Chen (2001) found parents who spend more time discussing school and school activities with their children promote improved academic achievement. Parental involvement was found to be a moderating factor for the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement in all models.

Peer Support. The results for peer support in this hypothesis were supported. Adolescents who have peer support have been found to have higher school engagement (Wang & Eccles, 2013; Wentzel, 2003). Additionally, supportive friends help to diminish identity problems, increase confidence, lessen aggressive behavior, enhance school involvement, and motivate achievement (Crosnoe, 2000; Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Herman-Stahl & Petersen, 1996). Peer support (as assessed by levels of peer hostility) was consistently found to be a positively related to school engagement in this study.

Teacher Support. The results for teacher support in this hypothesis were supported. Having supportive teachers has been found to enhance achievement, inhibit risky behaviors, increase students school enjoyment, and engagement (Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012; Frenzel, et al., 2009; Klem & Connell, 2004; Wang & Eccles, 2013). For African American youth, teachers contribute to higher academic performance, and provide achievement motivation, by expressing positive achievement beliefs to their students (D. Carter, 2008b; Klopfenstein, 2005). The study

found that teacher support was positively related to school engagement in all models among African American 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students.

School Racial/Ethnic Composition. The results for school racial/ethnic composition in this hypothesis were partially supported. Studies have found that racial/ethnic density and composition are related to racial/ethnic identity development and an increase in educational achievement when there are higher concentrations of minority students (Garcia & Lega, 1979; Longshore & Prager, 1985; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Ryabov, 2011). School racial/ethnic composition was a significant predictor variable only when the total y2-y6 cohort was assessed. The assessment of school composition was no longer found to be significant when the analysis where done for each of the individual grade levels.

Racial/Ethnic Identity. The assessment of racial/ethnic identity utilizing a total score of all sixteen questions from the C2S2 survey did not support the hypothesis. On some level, the interaction between racial/ethnic identity and academic performance and achievement has been found across all age groups (Awad, 2007; Banerjee, et al., 2011). Racial/ethnic identity was found to be more strongly related to psychological, social and academic outcomes for minority adolescents more than for their Caucasian counterparts (Yasui, et al., 2004). Additionally, positive feelings toward ones racial/ethnic group have also been found to be interrelated with higher levels of school engagement as well as enhanced academic performance (Smith, et al., 1999). The total racial/ethnic identity score was not a significant moderator for any of the grade levels.

Further analyses of racial/ethnic identity using subscales (racial/ethnic identity knowledge and racial/ethnic identity beliefs) of these questions instead of the full set of questions were performed. The analyses utilizing the subscales supported the hypothesis and showed some

developmental differences. Understanding of specific racial/ethnic identity attitudes can help with the understanding, enhancement, and development of practices, which could foster outcomes that are more positive academically, and in other areas of life (D. Carter, 2008b; Spencer, et al., 2012). When examining racial/ethnic identity, contextual interactions must be a fundamental conceptual part of the investigation because they have been linked with positive psychological outcomes in adolescence (Rivas-Drake, et al., 2009; Swanson, et al., 2003). The assessment of racial/ethnic identity knowledge as a predictor for school engagement was significant for the overall y2-y6 cohort, 7th, and 9th grade students. The 8th grade students in this study did not show any significant results for racial/ethnic identity knowledge. The assessment of the racial/ethnic beliefs subscale was significant for the overall y2-y6 cohort and 7th grade students. The racial/ethnic beliefs subscale was not found to be significant for 8th or 9th grade students in this study.

In the literature, some researchers have discussed the idea of racial/ethnic identity being a protective factor for African American students, which leads to better school success (D. Carter, 2008a; Spencer, et al., 2012). Finding showed that the overall y2-y6 cohort, 7th, and 9th grade students showed positive relationship between racial/ethnic identity knowledge and school engagement. Additionally, the overall y2-y6 cohort and 7th grade students who showed higher racial/ethnic identity beliefs were less likely to be engaged in school. Based on the literature I believe that gender maybe the cause of the negative relationship. African American male youths have positive school-based self-esteem during the preschool years, but become progressively less positive as they move into adolescence (Spencer, 1995). Additionally, gender differences in socialization have been documented in terms of the attitudes, behaviors, academic and vocational

socialization parents reinforce for girls versus boys (Bandura & Bussey, 2004; Bussey & Bandura, 2004; Lips, 2004). These gender differences are influential, but are often inadvertent and go unrecognized (Martin & Ruble, 2004), as they are also profoundly entrenched in larger macrostructural regularities and customs (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009). The further exploration of potential gender differences for the role of racial/ethnic identity beliefs could provide clarity of the negative relationship found between racial/ethnic beliefs and school engagement.

Overall Model. The findings for this hypothesis were supported. The interaction between an individual, culture and various aspects of their environment over time influences the course and nature of development, learning, and psychological processes over the course of the lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Vygotsky, 1963, 1978). For African Americans, being a part of a minority group, can provide psychological protective factors against racism and enhance academic engagement (Spencer, et al., 1995; Spencer, et al., 1997). Parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support consistently were found to be predictors of school engagement for the overall and individual grade levels. The total y2-y6 cohort assessment found school racial/ethnic composition to play a significant role in school engagement, but this significance did not hold up when grades were assessed individually. Racial/ethnic identity assessed as a total 16-item score was not significant; however, utilizing subscales (knowledge and beliefs) produced various results. For overall cohort, 7th, and 9th grade student's racial/ethnic knowledge was a significant in this model. The racial/ethnic identity beliefs subscale was a significant addition to the model for the overall cohort, and 7th, grade students. Individual assessment of 8th grade students, found that neither of the

racial/ethnic subscales were significant. Collectively these moderator variables showed the strength of multiple factors working together to influence the level of engagement for these African American youth.

Limitations

A limitation to this study may be that having a measure that was conceptualized for more diverse populations instead of specific to African American populations may not have allowed for the subtle nuances to be assessed. For example, Sellers et. al, (1997) identified four interrelated but independent dimensions of racial identity have been *Racial salience* is the amount that an individual's race is a significant part of their self-concept during a certain moment or circumstance. *Racial centrality* is the extent that a person typically defines themselves by their race. *Racial regard* is how a person feels about and evaluates his or her own race. *Racial ideologies* are an African Americans' attitudes and beliefs about the way that they believe that African Americans behave (Jones, 1998; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Smalls, et al., 2007). There is a possibility that a racial/ethnic identity measure may be needed that has been designed and normalized specifically for African American populations may have clarified the developmental outcomes that were the focus of this study.

A second limitation is that the study was constrained to just three years of data, 7-9th grade. Some researcher suggested that while there is an increase in identity exploration from late childhood to early adolescence, this exploration appears to slow down during middle to late adolescence (Quintana, et al., 2006). Feasibly using a larger span of time could have provided a different set of findings in relationship to developmental differences in racial/ethnic identity development for this population.

Finally, a third limitation of the study is the measurement of school composition. Studies of racial/ethnic composition and peers influence for African American student achievement have produced mixed results (Garcia & Lega, 1979; Longshore & Prager, 1985; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). However, generally findings so that an increase in educational achievement has been found when there are higher concentrations of minority students (Farkas, et al., 2002; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ryabov, 2011). In this sample, a good number of the participants were from predominately African American schools. The preponderance of homogeneity and lack of diversity in school racial/ethnic compositions may have weakened the ability to assess this construct.

Understanding the complex interrelations that racial/ethnic identity plays in a person's life and environment is very important. Due to the developmental nature of racial/ethnic identity, there is a need for additional longitudinal research. Despite the limitations of the current study, the preceding research has provided evidence of the important contributions of racial/ethnic development to school engagement, which makes an important contribution to this field of study.

Conclusions

In the 2004 population estimate, the Census Bureau projected that by 2035; children of color would constitute 50% of the U.S. school population. For years, the "K-12 public schools have been under a spotlight and heavily criticized for failing at decreasing achievement gaps with low-income and nonwhite children" (Gandara & Bial, 2000, p. 20). Schools are ecological settings that act as socializing agents for racial/ethnic identities of minority youth (Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Trickett & Formoso, 2008). The way that an adolescent feels about learning and school are important outcome variables for academic achievement (McKown & Weinstein, 2003;

Spencer, et al., 1997). Engagement in school is a significant component of the school experience because of its consistent association to positive achievement (Marks, 2000). Research on the role of student enjoyment and engagement merits further attention in the field of child development, because of the critical importance in reference to the quality of learning and other educational outcomes (Pekrun, et al., 2002; Schutz & Lanehart, 2002).

Exploring all possible interactions among schools, neighborhoods, friendship groups, and nuclear families are important to the identification of the combinations of contexts that best protect adolescents more effectively against any possible negative contextual forces in their lives (Cook, et al., 2002). African American youth who have not developed a level of pride in their culture, will face additional risks as they move into larger society. Racial/ethnic identity acts as an important protective factor against a variety of risky contexts, and adds to an adolescent's ability to fight negative environmental stressors and develop more prosocial responses when stressors occur. Negative attitudes towards racial/ethnic identity and/or group affiliation in African Americans have been associated to poor outcomes of self-esteem, psychological adjustment, and others (Altschul, et al., 2006; Awad, 2007; Cross, 2003; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Studying school engagement as a multidimensional construct and as an interaction between the individual and the school environment can allow for the identification of what particular factors promote or reduce student engagement and how it influences various school outcomes (Wang & Eccles, 2013).

Students with strong and positive racial/ethnic identities have been found more engaged and perform better in school (Chavous, et al., 2003; W. Johnson, et al., 2006; Smith, et al., 1999; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). The model in this study confirmed findings that among African American students, positive racial/ethnic identity is important for academic engagement.

Additionally, one of the conclusions that can be derived from this study is that the assessment of racial/ethnic identity should be studied in reference to particular aspects of identity and not overall and/or collective scores. The results of this study provided evidence of four individual subscales of the sixteen item racial/ethnic identity items. We now know that studying racial/ethnic identity with more specific subsets provides more information of the predictive nature of racial/ethnic identity for school engagement. In references to school enjoyment, the inclusion of the ecological moderators weakened the significant predictive nature of enjoyment for school engagement. In this study, it was found that although school enjoyment is an important predictor, other ecological factors contribute over and above the benefit of enjoyment. The findings suggest that parental involvement, peer support, and teacher support can enhance school engagement irrespective of a student's level of school enjoyment. Racial/ethnic identity knowledge and beliefs were also significant to understanding school engagement. The model developed in this study can contribute to the field by focusing attention on the importance of these ecological factors significant influence on school engagement for African American youth.

Future Directions

In future studies, the addition of the students standardized test scores and GPA could add to the depth of understanding and allow for the addition of school performance. Additionally, future research in this area of study should examine how the relationships found in this model may differ for males and females. Testing a multi-group model males and females, could help to remove any ambiguity of findings. Gender differences have been well documented in terms of the communication, attitudes, school-based self-esteem, academic achievement, as well as in the individual characteristics that are associated with it (Hughes, Hagelskamp, et al., 2009; Kimball, 1989; Spencer, 1995). Considerable mean gender differences exist in gender and gender biases

are also common in the adolescent experience and are compounded by their cognitive understanding of racial/ethnic biases (Kimball, 1989; Spencer, et al., 1995). Also, the inclusion of teacher race/ethnicity might also provide more information about the interactions in the model. Finally, in the future testing this model with adolescents of other racial/ethnic groups can help with generalizability.

Implications

The research presented in this study explored the developmental nature of racial/ethnic identity among African American youth and the role of ecological moderators as a possible influence to school enjoyment and engagement. Utilizing theoretical underpinnings in a systematic way to assess the multiple ecological factors in this model provided for a more compelling, culturally responsive, context centered viewpoint for understanding what influences the relationship between school enjoyment and engagement. Although the importance of school enjoyment on engagement was diminished as other ecological factors were added to the model, addition of these factors provided information on the significant contribution that they make.

For African American youth, normative developmental experiences are often overlooked or misinterpreted. Additionally the established literature mainly has a point of view that focuses on deficits and negative outcomes and not resilience and/or positive aspects demonstrated by youth of color (Swanson, et al., 2003). One of the strengths and contributions of this study is the focus on positive aspects of racial/ethnic identity development and its links to school engagement outcomes. The growing interest in more effective parental involvement has produced several ways to classify or describe ways parents involved strategies (Bauch, 1994; Jarrett, 1997). Additionally, this study contributed to the parent involvement literature, by moving beyond traditional ideas of parent involvement and rethinking and assessing what parent

involvement is for African American middle students. Researchers who study cultural differences often fall short in the identification of specific characteristics and related contextual factors that influence behavior. As a result, we learn that race/ethnicity may be related to a given outcome, but not the specific elements that contribute to the proposed relationship (Betancourt & López, 1995). The hope of this study was to discover combinations of contexts that especially protect African American youth by adding to and offsetting any negative contextual forces in their lives. This study is step in the right direction toward a greater understanding of racial/ethnic identity development and the predictive role of it plays in relation to school engagement for African American youth.

A number of studies have found well-established links between educational achievement and attainment in American society and to enhanced life satisfaction and well-being (Chavous, et al., 2003; Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Spencer, et al., 2012). Unfortunately for youth of color, there still remains a gap in educational achievement. Educators need to understand that African American youth have an increased capacity to understand racial/ethnic identity issues and are actively seeking information pertaining to their identity (Hughes, Witherspoon, et al., 2009). The public school system has been “under a spotlight of public attention and heavily criticized for failing at this mission, especially with low-income and nonwhite children, and intervention programs are an important way for schools to demonstrate their commitment to improving outcomes for students” (Gandara & Bial, 2000, p. 20). In the future, this model could be used to inform our schools of the importance of parental involvement, peer support, teacher support, and racial/ethnic identity beliefs and knowledge for school success among African American students.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 20 : School Engagement Covariance Matrix

	22a	22b	22c	22d	22e
22a	.88				
22b	.41	.77			
22c	.31	.38	.85		
22d	.25	.40	.53	.80	
22e	.21	.29	.34	.36	.59

Table 21: School Enjoyment Covariance Matrix

	3a	3b	3c	3d	3e	3f
3a	.79					
3b	.18	.78				
3c	.22	.30	.51			
3d	.15	.30	.27	.67		
3e	.16	.43	.27	.35	.71	
3f	-.06	-.31	-.16	-.20	-.23	.97

Table 22: Parental Involvement Covariance Matrix

	23a	23b	23c	23d	23e	23f	23g	23h	23i.r
23a	.63								
23b	.39	.84							
23c	.35	.62	1.15						
23d	.18	.35	.53	1.25					
23e	.36	.42	.42	.31	.90				
23f	.16	.24	.45	.40	.31	1.32			
23g	.15	.25	.47	.43	.32	1.19	1.44		
23h	.18	.16	.16	.08	.23	.10	.04	.85	
22i.r	.01	.06	.23	.10	.06	.10	.07	.02	.92

Table 23: Peer Hostility Covariance Matrix

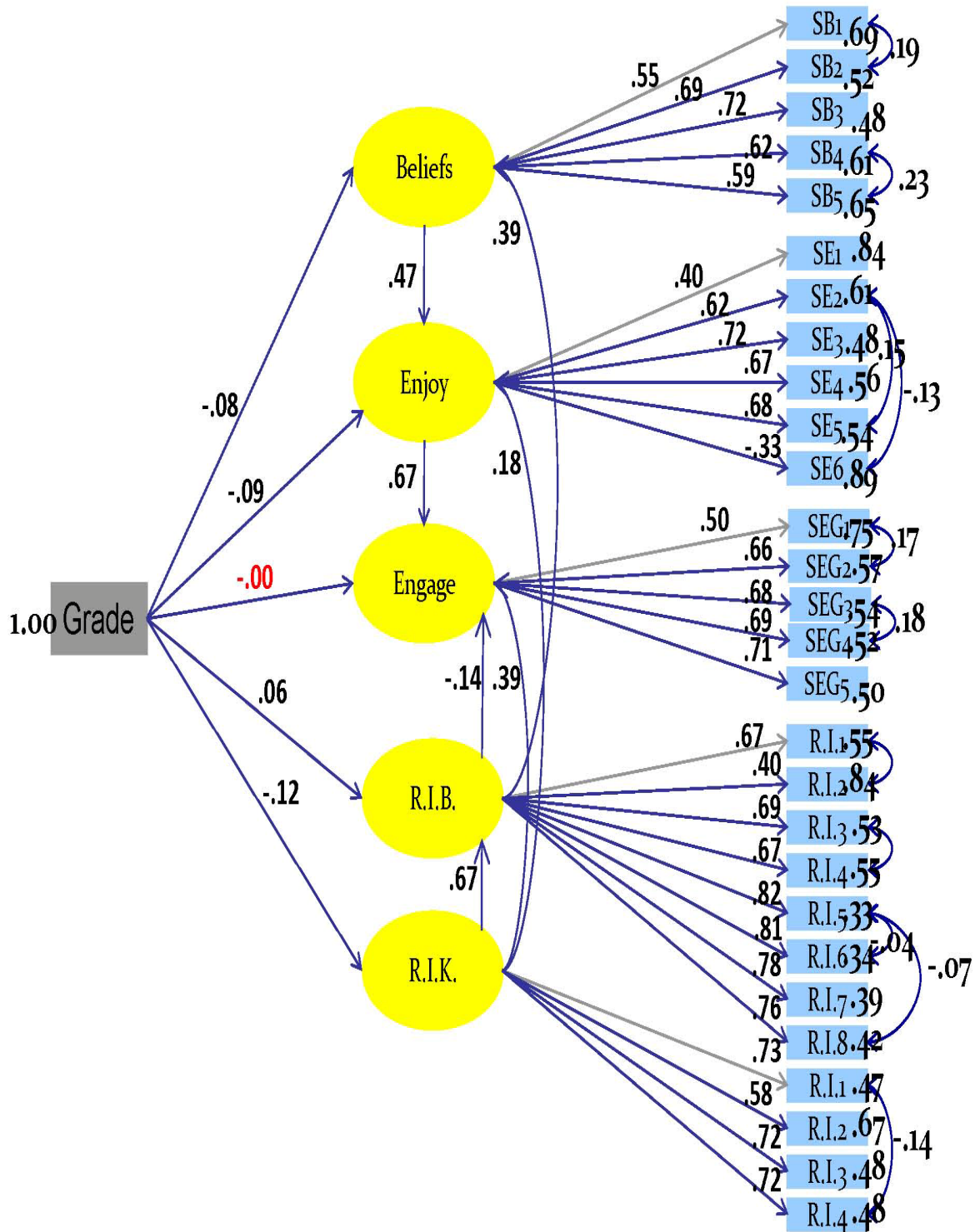
	6a.r	6b	6c	6d
6a.r	.68			
6b	.16	.58		
6c	.03	.32	.72	
6d	.07	.27	.29	.43

Table 24: Teacher Support Covariance Matrix						
	5a	5b	5c	5d	5e	5f
5a	.85					
5b	.23	.78				
5c	.25	.52	.72			
5d	.30	.42	.44	.91		
5e	.54	.29	.28	.39	.84	
5f	.17	.17	.17	.13	.19	.55

Table 25: Racial/Ethnic Identity Covariance Matrix																
	21a	21b	21c	21d	22a	22b	22c	22d	22e	22f	22g	22h	22i	22j	22k	22l
21a	.71															
21b	.08	.84														
21c	.40	-.14	.60													
21d	-.10	.44	-.34	.95												
22a	.28	.22	.10	.10	1.01											
22b	.33	.10	.20	.04	.37	1.05										
22c	.21	.05	.17	-.05	.50	.51	.77									
22d	.09	.19	.05	.23	.51	.21	.18	.95								
22e	.09	.01	.03	.03	.19	.28	.32	.12	.51							
22f	.02	.00	.02	.07	.16	.24	.22	.21	.23	.62						
22g	.12	-.01	.19	-.13	.25	.21	.36	.09	.26	.26	.51					
22h	.17	.13	.08	.09	.54	.28	.31	.30	.20	.25	.29	.75				
22i	.14	.04	.19	-.12	.29	.34	.44	.18	.33	.32	.34	.27	.57			
22j	.20	.10	.25	.00	.42	.36	.39	.27	.29	.37	.32	.52	.40	.94		
22k	.12	.06	.17	.03	.33	.29	.41	.21	.29	.32	.32	.32	.44	.48	.57	
22l	.13	-.02	.12	-.10	.25	.31	.30	.12	.33	.26	.24	.24	.32	.34	.29	.41

Appendix B

Figure 12: Final Model (Model 4)



Fit Indices

Degrees of Freedom = 355
Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square = 900.26 (P = 0.0)
Normal Theory Weighted Least Squares Chi-Square = 937.45 (P = 0.0)
Estimated Non-centrality Parameter (NCP) = 582.45
90 Percent Confidence Interval for NCP = (495.55 ; 677.00)
Minimum Fit Function Value = 1.14
Population Discrepancy Function Value (F0) = 0.74
90 Percent Confidence Interval for F0 = (0.63 ; 0.86)
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.046
90 Percent Confidence Interval for RMSEA = (0.042 ; 0.049)
P-Value for Test of Close Fit (RMSEA < 0.05) = 0.98
Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI) = 1.39
90 Percent Confidence Interval for ECVI = (1.28 ; 1.51)
ECVI for Saturated Model = 1.11
ECVI for Independence Model = 28.57
Chi-Square for Independence Model with 406 Degrees of Freedom = 22428.52
Independence AIC = 22486.52
Model AIC = 1097.45
Saturated AIC = 870.00
Independence CAIC = 22650.93
Model CAIC = 1551.01
Saturated CAIC = 3336.23
Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.96
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = 0.97
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = 0.84
Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.98
Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.98
Relative Fit Index (RFI) = 0.95
Critical N (CN) = 368.09
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) = 0.036
Standardized RMR = 0.048
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.92
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.91
Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) = 0.75

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