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**Demystifying the Lens of Color: Examining the Relationship Between
Academic Achievement and Racial Identity**

BY

MARLA E. WYCHE-HALL

B.A., Psychology, Saint Augustine's College, 1996
M.Ed., Guidance and Counseling, K-12, Frostburg State University, 1998
Ph.D., Family Studies, The University of New Mexico, 2011

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Family Studies**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2011

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Dedication

In this day and age, for a black woman, the accomplishment of a Ph.D. is not seen as a sole accomplishment of the individual, but more the accomplishment of an inter-woven community. Thus:

*It is the accomplishment of my heavenly angels, who watched over me through the midnight hour. To Papa Hall (Richard H. Hall); To Grams (Bernice Stewart) and Grandfather George (The Wiz); To Grand Ma and Grand Pa Morgan (Thomas and Francis Morgan); To Great-Great Grandparents (Ma and Pa Farmer); and To Charlie O. (Charles Olayinka). Thank you all for being my calm in the midst of life's storm. I miss you all and love you all lots. You will forever be etched in my heart...

*It is the accomplishment of my "hard hitters" — the Hall tribe (Jeffery, Lincoln, Tatum, Starsky, Hutch, Satchel—new members of the Hall tribe, our lizards Goku & Chi-Chi), you all are amazing. Thank you for your patience, love, and support. We did it! Hey Hall family, did someone say pack up the bags and let's head to "Disneyland" to celebrate this DREAM coming true?! Let's do it! ☺

*It is the accomplishment of LaMonte G. Wyche, Sr. and Janise M. Wyche (my parents) — WOW. I told you all at Padre Island (Xmas 2009) that it will "be o.k." and...here we are today. Our President noted on January 27, 2010 during the State of the Union address, "We don't quit; I don't quit!" Hence forth, here we stand. Thank you both for helping me learn and master, how to DANCE in the RAIN! Love ya...

*It is the accomplishment of LaMonte Jr. – my brother (Jamesetta, LaMonte III, James, Mason), Tracey – my sister (Melvin, Courtney, Cayla), Mama Carol (MC) – my mother in-law, Ma and Pa Bobo – my Godparents. It takes a village! Thank you all for being there for me during this CRAZY process...

*It is the accomplishment of my mentors, instructors and professors – men and women of good will at Saint Augustine’s College, Frostburg State University, Johns Hopkins University, and The University of New Mexico who challenged me and stretched me to reach my goals and make a difference...

*By grace and excellence, it is the accomplishment of the spectacular young men and women who will do better than this generation and who will dare to defy all odds and will move onward and upward...

*It is the accomplishment of Mr. Jeffery A. Hall, my hubby and my dear friend. Man...what can be said? Thank you for standing in and filling in the gaps on so many different levels. The words “for better or worse” have truly come into play throughout this process and we’re BOTH here—TOGETHER-- to talk about it...smiles. You’re fantastic! Thank you for being the wind beneath my wings. You darn Alphas are spectacular!

This scholarly work is dedicated to my “village tribe”, the *unrelenting* wind beneath my wings, who continue to be my number one fans. Many, MANY thanks!

I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

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To my loving immediate and extended family of cousins, aunts, uncles, god-parents, very dear friends, thanks for all of your prayers and support. In sum, to all of my number one fans, it may have appeared that some or all go nameless and without notice....however, your faces, kind words and prayers are forever etched into my heart....thank you, thank you, thank you...hugs and love always.

Last, but not least, a special and heartfelt thanks to the University of New Mexico African American, undergraduate students who participated in my study, both formally and informally; without each of you, this scholarly and important piece of work would not have been possible. Thank you all for lending your voice to my study.

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain. Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE unto you.

Matthew 17:20

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Abstract

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to examine the dynamic interaction between the racial and academic identities of African American, undergraduate students who were enrolled full time at an academic institution of higher education that was both a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) and a predominately White institution (PWI). The two main research questions addressed by this study were: 1. To what extent does the racial identity of African American, undergraduate students shape their expectations and beliefs about succeeding at the higher education level? and 2. What is the relationship between students' racial identity, selected aspects of their university environment, and students' interactions with prior environments including their home environment (i.e., family structure and background) with their academic achievement while matriculating towards a bachelor's degree? Racial identity has been noted as a variable that impacts academic achievement within the realm of higher education for African American, undergraduate students (Sellers, 1998). How does it function in the center of these other potentially important influences on higher levels of academic achievement?

This study employed a conceptual framework that was based on four theoretical / model approaches: 1. Nigrescence Model; 2. Critical Theory/Critical Race Theory; 3. Family Systems Theory; and 4. Phenomenological Approach. These conceptual frameworks were integrated in an attempt to understand the complexity of the African American undergraduate students who participated in this study.

In 2010, the African American undergraduate student population that consisted of 647 students at the University of New Mexico (UNM) main campus was invited to participate in a study examining the relationship of Black identity to academic success as college undergraduate students by completing the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) online survey. In order for students to be a part of this study, they had to be eighteen years of age or older, self-identify as African American / Black and be enrolled in at least twelve credit hours at the main campus. One-hundred and twenty-five students completed a demographic data sheet, along with the MIBI. Upon completion of the survey, participants were asked to consider participating in a one-on-one interview with the researcher to address these issues further. Out of these 125 students, 77 agreed to volunteer for the interview. Their names were entered into a pool from which a random selection process was employed using a Microsoft Excel program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 15 undergraduate, African American students identified. Seventy-three of the 125 participants came from another state than New Mexico or another country. In addition, 67 participants came from two-parent family homes during their high school upbringing. Of the 125 participants, 95 of them reportedly were not first-generation college attendees in their family. The mean age of the study sample was 22.87, with a standard deviation of 1.56. Their mean cumulative grade point average was 3.10. Most participants (88) were upper classmen –

junior and senior students and 37 participants were lower classmen – freshmen and sophomore students.

The students in this study obtained low to moderately high racial identity scores on the 7 sub-measures of the MIBI. The quantitative partial estimated correlation analysis of data from this research study indicated that the 3 dimensions of racial identity assessed (centrality, regard, ideology) by the MIBI selected aspects of the university environment, and the students' home environment (i.e., family structure and background) showed weak to moderate relationship to the academic success of African American undergraduates enrolled at this HSI / PWI institution of higher education. Prior family school involvement and various narratives describing their family household, as well as students' earlier school experiences within their educational environment could be factors for this finding. It should be noted that the data supported a number of factors shown to be related to academic achievement of black children and adolescents. For example, a positive relationship was found for students raised in a two-parent family structure, whereas a one-parent family structure and students' rating of their high school as inadequately preparing them for college was negatively related to their college grade point average.

The qualitative analysis of the interview data revealed that the subgroup of the study sample who were interviewed were proud to be a part of the African American culture and wanted to include others who were supportive of their personal and academic efforts, but the participants reported being influenced by elements of racism, alienation, and marginalization. The participants described being faced with similar daily challenges that all university students experience, such as the typical challenges of time management and adjusting to a new environment, but these African American students also reported dealing with issues of

social status as minority students. Although they recognized an effort by the university to promote diversity, most participants were not convinced that the university was doing all that could be done to address the concerns on campus regarding race issues. The overall steadfastness of this group of participants was evident by their ability to progress academically in spite of the continuous barriers they reportedly faced on a daily basis. In sum, the participants who were interviewed appeared to realize that they are comparable to their peers academically and are able to compete within the classroom setting, but they seemed to experience a sense of not belonging within the general mainstream community of this campus and not being included in the mainstream culture at this university. To assure validity of this study, the researcher utilized various steps such as member check-in, researcher's journal and observations to account for the researcher's bias in being a Black female doctoral student, staff member and advocate of Black students at The University of New Mexico.

Despite the limitations of a small sample, this research is a step toward heightening African American students' critical thought by using their voices as a tool to recommend to university officials ways to review policies regarding the recruitment, retention, and matriculation towards a bachelor's degree of African American students as well as to transform the campus into a more diverse and hospitable environment conducive to learning and the promotion of cultural awareness and sensitivity to diverse needs. Sharing these findings and implications with senior administration officials and other key stakeholders may encourage the university to take actions to improve the environment and thereby facilitate the realization of not only admitting a diverse students population, but meeting the diverse needs

of this population so that all students can achieve success in meeting their academic and personal goals.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The 1954 United States Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. The Board of Education* is among the most significant judicial turning points in the development of this country. Due to this case being such a landmark case in the country, this case, single handedly, dismantled the legal basis for racial segregation in schools and other public facilities. Before the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, policy indirectly or directly permitted or required discrimination based on race in public, quasi-public, and/or private facilities. These facilities included state and local schools and state colleges and universities (Abraham, 1996). From an historical viewpoint, public policy, as displayed in the famous case *Brown v. Board of Education*, has shaped many of this nation's social institutions (Rector, 2002). Research suggests that in cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, these policies have both created and sustained the climate and equity within social institutions. As Fife (1996) stated, when examining *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, it is critical to note that this world-renowned case was not solely related to children and education.

As a result, many state and local laws were enacted that stifled the educational development of African American citizens. In states where the law did not directly prohibit the education of African Americans, social practice limited public education to White Americans only (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). The aftermath of these decisions and acts are impacting the educational plight of African Americans today, especially those who are in pursuit of obtaining a degree in higher education. Therefore, research as it relates to ethnic groups, as in this study, must not be approached from a shortfall point of view, but from a vivid, colorful and non-competing position. When examining history from an historical lens,

the fundamental goals of creating social justice, maintaining liberation, and changing the power dynamic that exists between the mainstream and marginalized groups are important issues to explore (Rector, 2002).

General Background

Research indicates a growing disparity in educational outcomes between White students and African American students in terms of degree completion at the undergraduate level. Although there are some studies that suggest otherwise (Harvey-Smith, 2002; Love, 1993), there is consistent research to suggest that the disparity is growing (Harvey-Smith, 2002). In their review of literature, Rovai, Gallien and Wighting (2005) consistently found a lack of degree completion highest amongst the African American population. This is now referred to as the “African American” achievement gap.

In order to examine why students are not completing a bachelor’s degree while enrolled at a majority Caucasian institution of higher education, one must look at the differences of cultural, communication, and learning style characteristics of African American students and the schooling conditions and practices enforced at predominately Caucasian institutions of higher education. (Stevenson, 1995, p. 54)

The review of literature for this study performed by the researcher examines the factors that support or present a challenge to degree completion for undergraduate, African American students. The research suggests that the majority of students who are enrolled in post-secondary institutions are not graduating from college with an undergraduate degree in four years (Harvey-Smith, 2002). Moreover, studies have shown that male students across ethnicities do not complete undergraduate degree programs in various timeframes in the same numbers (30 to 40%) as their female counterparts. African American males are particularly at risk for not completing their degrees due to lack of support, resources, and motivation (Wesley & Southerland, 1994). Rovai, Gallien and Wighting (2005) speak directly to vital

issues that affect African American students in their pursuit of higher education. One major question arises: What is the challenge of African American students in general not achieving at a higher educational level? This study will explore to what extent academic achievement is affected by racial identity, university environment (e.g., African American Student Services), and home environment (i.e., family structure and background) for African American students, both male and female, who are enrolled in a Hispanic-serving/predominately White institution of higher education.

Current research on the academic achievement of African American, undergraduate students who are enrolled in Hispanic-serving/predominately White institutions of higher education is limited. However, this area needs to be examined due to the changing enrollment climate of institutions of higher education. Additionally, it may be useful to examine the impact of one's racial identity, university environment, and home environment as it relates to academic achievement, due to these factors, as suggested by the literature, impact African American students when examining academic achievement across childhood and adolescence. Such research would provide useful information for administrators, faculty, regents, staff, and community partners for the recruitment and retention of African American, undergraduate students and for evaluating existing strategies and programs focused on minority students. As research suggests, PWIs are the norm among higher education institutions in the United States (Rowley, 2000).

As noted by Giles-Gee (1992), "the number of students that enroll, matriculate, and graduate from an institution cannot serve as a measure of retention efforts for minorities, due to the many factors that are involved in a student's college experience during their tenure in pursuing a bachelor's degree" (p.100). These factors are not limited to the general

environment, campus climate, and integration into mainstream society. However, Giles-Gee (1992) stated that, “research suggests that most administrators at PWIs measure African American student retention and measure diversity by counting the number of federally defined minorities. As suggested in the literature, minority student retention can be assessed more accurately by the structural changes made within the institution to accommodate the adeptness, skill, historical legacy, and diversity of cultural backgrounds that all minorities bring to the university” (p.98).

This mixed methods study was designed to gather in-depth information from African American, undergraduate students working towards obtaining a bachelor’s degree from an HSI/PWI of higher education. The quantitative and qualitative methodologies used provided information about how racial and academic identities as well as the university environment and the student’s home environment are related to students’ academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the records of the University of New Mexico’s (UNM) Enrollment Management Report (2000-2010) and the records of UNM’s African American Student Services, in examining the academic record of African American, undergraduate students, degree completion is an issue of major concern. This particular ethnic group has consistently low graduation rates. When examining the records of students who directly after graduating from high school enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program at UNM, fewer than 50% graduated (UNM Enrollment Management Report – (2000-2010).

In examining the American college campus of today, there has been an influx of racial and ethnic diversity (Fleming, 2007). However, although an influx has appeared throughout

the country on college campuses, the low graduation rates of Black students compared to their student peers suggests that there are still challenges for Black students at the undergraduate level. Table 1 displays the comparative data by race to further support the need to study the African American experience in higher education. The table reflects the number of college-age persons by race and ethnicity in 2002 in the United States and in New Mexico.

Table 1.

Racial/Ethnic Diversity of Population Age 18-49; New Mexico Compared to the Nation in 2010.

Population in 2010	Age 18 - 64	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
U.S.	308,745,538	0.9%	5.0%	12.6%	16.3%	63.7%	2.9%
NM	2,059,179	9.4%	1.5%	2.1%	46.3%	40.5%	3.7%

New Mexico Report, 2010. US Census Bureau, Retrieved July 12, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35000.html>

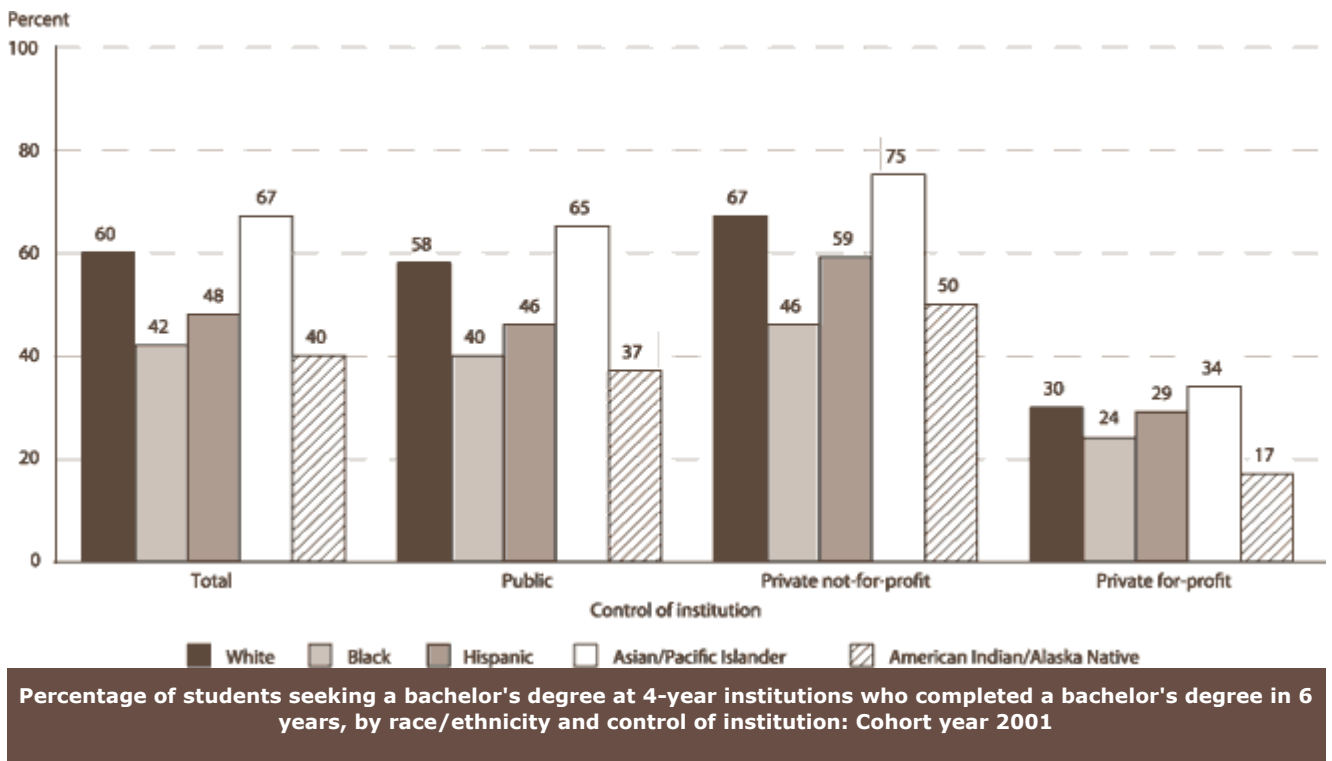
The U.S. Census Bureau reported that ethnic minorities represented 39.8% of the U.S. population in 2010. Szelenyi (2001) has suggested that by 2050 minorities will account for 47% of the overall U.S. population. These demographics are also reflected in the enrollment patterns of American universities and colleges. Between 1976 and 1994, ethnic minorities accounted for more than half of the 30% expansion in student enrollment (Szelenyi, 2001). Research has been conducted on how to increase Black student enrollment (Szelenyi, 2001). Now research is needed to explore matriculation, retention, and graduation efforts for these students.

According to a U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report and the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2001-2002 approximately 57% of first-time, full-time students seeking a bachelor's degree or its equivalent at a four-year institution completed the degree in six years or less (NCES 2010-028 Indicator 21). These graduation rates were calculated using the total number of completers within the specified time to degree attainment divided by the cohort of students who first enrolled in the 2001–02 academic year. Based on the NCES website, completion rates of students seeking a bachelor's degree at four-year institutions varied by student characteristics, including race/ethnicity and sex. Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest six-year graduation rate, followed by White, Hispanic, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native students (NCES, 2010). Approximately 67% of Asians/Pacific Islanders, compared with 60% of Whites, 48% of Hispanics, 42% of Blacks, and 40% of American Indians/Alaska Natives graduated with a bachelor's degree or its equivalent within six years. According to the NCES 2010 report, “this pattern held for Asians/Pacific Islanders, Whites, and Hispanics at each institution type while Blacks and American Indians/Alaska Natives consistently had the lowest graduation rates of the five racial/ethnic groups”(p.73).

Table 2.

Percentage of Undergraduate Students at Four-year Institutions Who Completed a Bachelor’s Degree in Six Years (By Race/Ethnicity and Control of the Institution. Cohort Year 2001).





https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/charts/chart21_2.asp?popup=true

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring, 2008, Graduation Rates Component.

When examining the numbers at the University of New Mexico (UNM), based on the Office of Enrollment Management and the Division of Student Affairs reports (<http://www.unm.edu/~unmreg/statsinfo/OER1010/Spring%202010%20OER.pdf>), the total enrollment of African American undergraduate students in a bachelor's degree-seeking program in the spring 2010 semester was 647 (out of a total enrollment of 18,499 UNM undergraduate students), representing 3.50% of the total undergraduate student population. Thus, the main focus of this study is to examine the extent to which academic achievement is affected by racial identity, university environment, and students' home environment (family structure and background).

Research Questions

This study was designed to capture the perceptions that Black, undergraduate students have about themselves while enrolled at a HSI/PWI. In addition, this study attempted to uncover the phenomenon about the meaning of being a Black student at a HSI/PWI and how it impacts individual academic achievement. The main research questions addressed in this study were: to what extent does the racial identity of African American, undergraduate students enrolled in a Hispanic-serving/predominately White institution shape their expectations and beliefs about succeeding at the higher education level? More specifically, the aim of this study was to investigate the question, what is the relationship between students' racial identity, selected aspects of their university environment, and students' interactions with prior environments, including their home environment (i.e., family structure and background), with their academic achievement while matriculating towards a bachelor's degree?

A mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) was used for this study. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) and one-on-one interviews were used to capture the experiences of Black students enrolled in a HSI/PWI. The perceptions of students were analyzed using the MIBI (Appendix B). To further explore perceptions about what it means to be a Black student at a HSI/PWI, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were held with a subsample of these participants (Appendix C). In addition, the following questions were explored: What are the challenges to having multiple identities as a student and as an African American at a HSI/PWI? How does academic identity impact students' academic matriculation at a HSI/PWI? How have influential African Americans in students' lives impacted their beliefs and expectations about higher education? How have students'

families impacted academic achievement? How has the university environment impacted academic achievement on this campus?

Definition of Terms

Academic Achievement / Success – for the purpose of this study, academic achievement and academic success will be used interchangeably. In addition, it is being defined as making progress each semester towards degree completion as measured by a student’s cumulative grade point average, per the university’s academic policy.

Academic Identity – is defined as a combination of one’s educational history (i.e., types of schools attended, academic opportunities prior to and during undergraduate years, etc.) and beliefs about learning and achievement in general as they relate to one’s history. This is measured by the various questions asked in the one-on-one interviews and within the Demographics Data Sheet.

African American (or Black) – is defined as students who self identify with the African American ethnic background. The researcher uses “African American” and “Black” interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Both terms are inclusive of members of the African Diaspora who are both multi-generation African Americans and children of recent immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean (Reid, 2007). In addition, this term has received great prominence in the 1980s when several Black leaders championed it as an alternative ethnonym for Americans of African descent. The term does not allude to skin color, but to an ethnicity constructed of geography, history and culture (American Heritage Dictionaries of the English Language, 2007).

Current Cumulative Grade Point Average – the collective grade point average earned as a UNM undergraduate student taking credited academic course work each semester. The cumulative grade point average is based on a 4.0 scale.

Dual Identities (African American and Student) – identities that are multifaceted and dynamic in nature and that may intersect, compliment, or be in conflict with each other.

Extended Family Members – these family members are defined by grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles and cousins outside of the immediate family. This is assessed in the interview.

Family Composition – the overall family structure that a student grew up in within his/ her household. This could be a single-parent home, two-parent home, other relative’s home or an alternative home such as the foster care system. This is assessed by the Demographic Data Sheet and the interview.

Fictive Kin - people who are regarded as being part of a family even though they are not related by either blood or marriage bonds. Fictive kinship may bind people together in ties of affection, concern, obligation, and responsibility (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition, 2009).

HBCU or HBI – defined as Historically Black Colleges and Universities or Historically Black Institutions.

HSI – defined as a Hispanic-serving institution. Literature suggests that an institution of higher education is classified as a HSI when the total student population classified as Hispanic is over 25%. Thus, the institution in this study, having a student population of Hispanic students classified above 25%, is noted as being a HSI. *Exceleñica in Education*,

retrieved from "<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/hsi/default.sp>-December 2008"

<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/hsi/default.sp>-December 2008

Immediate Family Members – these family members are defined as mother, father, sister, brother, stepmother, stepfather, stepsister, and stepbrother.

Peer Group Involvement – having the support of other collegiate and non collegiate students who are in your age group while participating in various student services/activities such as tutorial sessions, classes, study halls, extracurricular activities (sports, playing video games, watching movies, bowling, roller skating, etc.). This is assessed by the interview and the Demographic Data Sheet.

PWI – defined as a predominately White institution. Literature suggests that an institution of higher education is classified as a PWI when the majority of the student population is classified as White/non-Hispanic. Thus, due to the University of New Mexico encompassing a unique make-up of the undergraduate student population, with the majority of undergraduate population classified as White/non-Hispanic, as well as being classified as an Hispanic Serving Institution and the premier flagship, Research I university of the state of New Mexico, for the purpose of this study and utilizing the federal guidelines of ethnic / racial breakdown of groups, PWI is being utilized to note the largest undergraduate group population on this campus which is classified as White/non-Hispanic (Smith & Moreno, 2006).

Racial Identity – defined as the sense of an ethnic self that one both discovers and creates as a result of interaction with African Americans as well as other cultural and ethnic influences, worldviews (e.g., political, social, economic), and traditions. In addition, it is defined as personal identification with one's race. Racial identity is more often examined among

African Americans and refers to the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs that an individual holds toward his or her racial group in relation to the majority racial group (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995). For the purpose of this study, racial identity will be captured by utilizing the MIBI survey.

Success- for the purpose of this study, success or being successful, in general, is defined as the balance of one's racial identity and academic achievement. Ford & Obgu 1986; Sellers, 1998; 2009 and Cross, 1991, discuss the essence of being "true to self" and striking a balance with mainstream America and who one is a person. The notion of acting white is in line with striking a successful balance. The phrase double conscious from the work of W.E.B. DuBois sheds light on the term of success as it is being used within this study. This will be evaluated by the MIBI, interview, and the Demographic Data Sheet.

University Environment – For the purpose of this study, university environment is being defined as activities and services sponsored by the African American Student Services. These activities include, but are not limited to: tutorial, academic counseling/advisement, social peer group interactions via activities offered by the center, graduate school exploration advisement and individual personal peer support. This will be assessed by the Demographic Data Sheet prior to participants completing the MIBI.

Justification

The primary purpose of this study was to understand how undergraduate, African American students enrolled at a Hispanic-serving/predominately White institution of higher education are affected by racial and academic identities and to what extent racial and academic identities impact academic achievement. In addition, the study explored how racial identity, the selected aspects of university environment, and students' home environment

(i.e., family structure and background) helps, hinders, or neutralizes a student's academic achievement. A mixed methods approach was used to gather comprehensive data for these research questions, and both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The quantitative portion of the study utilized the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI). To add richness to the data retrieved in the MIBI, selected participants were interviewed to capture the in-depth experience of being an African American, undergraduate student at a HSI/PWI. A conceptual framework for this study used four theories which were: the five-stage Nigrescence Model, critical theory / critical race theory, family systems theory and a phenomenological approach for collecting and analyzing interview data. The self in all of its complexity, especially when examining one's racial and academic identity, is difficult to capture and classify for research. As such, further research and investigation are needed in order to unveil the global picture of one's experiences. Therefore, it is critical and important to examine to what extent racial identity is impacted by academic success for African American students enrolled at a Hispanic Serving / Predominately White institution of higher education.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature and research dealing with academic achievement of Black, undergraduate students enrolled at a Hispanic Serving/Predominately White institution (HSI/PWI). Hispanic Serving Institutions, as defined by Jones (2001), are described as institutions having a student body that consists of 25% or more students who self-identify as Hispanic. The majority undergraduate population is defined as White-Non Hispanic at this institution, however, as this institution has two identifiers because of the large Hispanic population at the university, as well as this institution having a large predominately White student population.

To comprehend the plight of an African American student earning a bachelor's degree at a HSI/PWI, factors and findings relevant to the experiences, perceptions, and responses to racial identity at a HSI/PWI are presented. In addition, this chapter examines the extent to which perceptions of one's racial identity, the university environment, and student's home environment (i.e., family structure and background) help, hinder, or neutralize a student's academic journey to obtaining a bachelor's degree.

The literature review has been divided into sections that deal with pertinent aspects of the Black, undergraduate student experience and the research questions presented within this study. The topics reviewed are: 1. African Americans in higher education: A historical perspective; 2. The achievement gap and factors of learning of African Americans in Higher Education; 3. "College" experiences; 4. Multiple identities of African American students; and 5. Conceptual framework of this study.

The body of research spans over several decades and delves closely into the works of DuBois, Woodson, Sellers, Ogbu, Hilliard, Ford, Fordam, and Tatum. Each broad topic should help provide insight into the experience of Black, undergraduate students who attend a HSI/PWI and how this experience impacts academic success and affects students' mindsets about higher education and degree attainment. In addition, the various issues discovered and discussed during the era of DuBois, Woodson and Ogbu, are the same pertinent issues African Americans are facing today.

African Americans in Higher Education: A Historical Perspective

As history suggests, *empower*, *uplift*, *achieve*, *promote*, and *excel* are words that propelled Black America into the educational world. As W.E.B. DuBois (1973) noted, for Black scholars the intention of higher education was to make “men of power, of thought, of trained and cultivated taste; men who know whether civilization is tending and what it means” (pp.87-88). Famous authors, such as DuBois and Carter G. Woodson, wrote books that spoke of the plight of the African American people during harsh times in the United States. DuBois (1973) suggested that higher education was necessary for African Americans (Negroes, as he referenced in some of his pieces of work) to fully develop their power as human beings.

Yet, as more predominantly White colleges and universities admitted African American students, a new struggle emerged. Woodson (2000) noted that Black males worry about being ostracized from their own community and not being accepted into the larger, White community. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) provided support for this view by suggesting that African American students sometimes under-perform in school because of their cultural opposition to “acting White.” Horvat & Lewis (2006) examined the term of “acting white”

within the literature and delved into the notion of self-destructive behaviors and attitudes by many blacks which lends itself to the conclusion that academic excellence is not consistent with one's racial identity as it relates to one's academic success inside the classroom. It is to be noted that this concept has been the center of much controversy.

Rector (2002) noted that in the 1960s there were massive numbers of predominately White institutions (PWIs) that enacted the concept of affirmative action in their recruitment and admissions policies (Fleming, 1984; Rector, 2002). With the legal right to attend Caucasian schools, African American enrollments at PWIs increased dramatically during this time. For four consistent years, 1964-1968, Black student enrollment at PWIs increased 144%, from 114,000 to 278,000 (Fleming, 1984). By 1970, 378,000 African American students were attending PWIs (Fleming, 1984). In 1990, African American students accounted for 9.6% of all full-time freshmen students attending college across the country (Phillips, 1994). By 1995, The American Council on Education reported total college enrollment of African American students across the country was at approximately 1.5 million. By the end of the 1990s, approximately 80% of all African American undergraduates that were attending institutions of higher education across the country were enrolled in PWIs (Arenson, 1997).

As noted by Seidman (2005), in 1990 African American students comprised 9% of college enrollment and in 2002 the numbers increased to 11.9%. In looking at other numbers, a report titled *The Condition of Education, 2003*, by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) stated that in 1990 Caucasian students comprised 77.6% of college enrollment. However, that number decreased to 66.1% in 2004. Another NCES report (2003) studied a 2002 United States cohort of college-aged students, ranging in age from 18-49

years old, who were pursuing a bachelor's degree. Of those tracked, 12% were African American students and 67% were Caucasian. Thus, although the number of Caucasian students pursuing a bachelor's degree decreased, the percentage was still markedly higher for Caucasian students than for African American students.

Summers et al. (2008) found that in 2001, 87.1% of Black undergraduate students attended predominately White institutions (PWIs), and these institutions accounted for 78.5% of undergraduate degrees conferred upon Black students. In comparison, 12.9% of African American undergraduates (13.5% of all African American male students and 12.6% of all African American female students), attended historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), yet graduates of these institutions accounted for 21.5% of undergraduate degrees conferred upon African American students. Therefore, despite enrolling a much larger percentage of African American students, graduates of PWIs accounted for a disproportionately lower percentage of degrees awarded to African American students.

These studies show that the shift in policy from segregation to integration, aided by affirmative action, increased enrollments of African Americans at PWIs. As a result of policies enacted in the 1960s, 36% of African American college students were enrolled in HBCUs (Redd, 1998). By 1987, The American Council on Education reported an even greater decline in enrollment: 18% of African American college students were attending HBCUs (Redd, 1998). By 1994, only 16% of all African American college students were enrolled in these same schools (Redd, 1998; Schexnider, 1998).

By exploring various educational trends, Rector (2002) noted that despite the decrease in African American student enrollment at colleges and universities across the county within the time frame of 1976-1994, there was an increase in African American student enrollment

at HBCUs by 26%, thus what becomes evident is that the numbers of African American students at HBCUs has increased; however, the retention rates are dropping compared to the numbers during the period of 1976-1994. When examining such statistics as previously noted by Rector (2002), policies were implemented that obligated institutions of higher education to demonstrate that they provided high quality educational experiences for students in an effective and efficient manner. These standards for quality and overall effectiveness were measured by student outcomes, such as student retention, matriculation, and graduation rates (Redd, 1998).

Researchers (e.g., Barnett-Theodori 2000; Bonner & Evans, 2004) have also been examining the level of satisfaction for African Americans attending PWIs. Measures used historically, such as retention and graduation rates, have found that African Americans at PWIs have been less pleased with their collegiate experiences than their White counterparts (Stovall, 2005). However, African American students at PWIs have higher compelling rates than their White counterparts at the same institution (Allen, 1987).

Research also suggests that African American students attending HBCUs seem to be more satisfied with the college environment than their counterparts at PWIs (Bohr, Pascarella, Nora, & Terenzini, 1995). In addition, as noted by other researchers (e.g., (Brown, 2000; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Love, 1993), graduation rates for African Americans at HBCUs equal those of White students at PWIs, but are lower than for African American students who are attending PWIs. Moreover, despite the optimism and self-confidence students exhibited at a HBCU or PWI when initially entering college in pursuit of their bachelor's degrees, some students were more successful than others. This fact lends itself to the idea of "the survival of the fittest." By examining this concept within the literature, it often leads to the thought that

when students decide to attend college, there are some who will succeed and others who will not. Brown (2000) and Stovall (2005) noted that there are many variables that can impact academic achievement and successful matriculation at an institution of higher education. Harvey-Smith (2002) wrote, “the research on African American students has provided few solutions to the problems of retention and the doors of higher education continue to revolve for this population” (p. 45).

Harvey-Smith (2002) further noted that the extent to which a student feels a bond and a connection with an environment and establishes support relationships with friends and basic resource venues, determines the basis for social success. Thus, in examining the review of literature as it relates to academic success, variables associated with racial identity, university environment, and family factors will be examined in greater depths.

Other researchers’ studies (e.g., Ainsworth-Darnell, & Downey, 1998; Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1997) have found that African American students have an abiding faith in education, even though their educational outcomes do not always match this belief. The research suggests that there are many reasons why students of African American descent, especially male students, are not completing their degrees, including the issue of having viable support systems within the institutions of higher education. In a study of undergraduate students, Ancis, Sedlack, and Mohr (2000) concluded that African American students consistently reported more racial conflict related to pressures to conform to stereotypes on predominantly White campuses than on campuses with a larger number of African American students. In the same study, undergraduate students reported less equitable treatment by faculty. Faculty members reportedly incorrectly pre-judged students’ academic performance more negatively than that of the Caucasian students and students from other

racial backgrounds (Ancis, Sedlack, & Mohr, 2000). Also, Perry, Steele, and Hilliard (2003) have suggested, that “Black students perform more poorly on tests when they believe they are being judged as members of a stereotyped group rather than as individuals” (pp.82-83). Previous research suggests that campus climate is linked to student-faculty relationships; thus, it has an influence on educational outcomes (Allen & Haniff, 1991).

There are historical factors that play into why and if eligible students of African American descent may or may not make this decision to attend college. Also, for those Black students who do attend an institution of higher education, the overall graduation rate is low. From an historical viewpoint, there was a time when the transformation of the African American plight began to change. This occurred when President Lyndon. B. Johnson’s welfare and job initiative programs were implemented to help low- income African American families, as well as other minorities as part of the War on Poverty. These programs were then replaced by President Reagan’s new plan for reform. Recently, affirmative action has been under attack by those opposing the essence of the cause, which is to provide opportunities to those who otherwise would not have been afforded the opportunity to advance.

In summary, as noted by Fleming (2007), “equity in higher education has been a long struggle for African Americans. It is important to review what occurred in the past to fully understand and have an appreciation for what is happening today” (p.35). In looking at cases such as *Plessey v. Ferguson and Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, there has been an historical struggle for Blacks in higher education, and Black students on college campuses today are feeling the consequences of society’s decisions that were made, which are the direct and indirect outcomes of the challenges Black students are dealing with on today’s college campus.

It is critical to underscore that researchers began examining student retention, academic success, and other issues related to the collegiate experience prior to the onset of minority students becoming a critical mass on college campuses as a whole (Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000). Consequently, much of the research that directs theories of student involvement, retention, transition, learning, college departure, and the like, were more often than not based on white male students (Tierney, 1992). It has been noted that:

America came to its current level of development through the contributions of the Native Americans, Africans, Whites, Asians and Hispanics. From the beginning, diversity was a part of this society. To act as though this diversity does not exist is to deny racial and ethnic groups their identity (O'Donnell & Green-Merritt, 1997, p. 86).

Therefore, African American students have an embedded feeling to belong. In looking from an historical view of Blacks in higher education, the struggles and challenges continue.

The Achievement Gap and Factors Affecting African Americans in Higher Education

Achievement gap. Research from the past and the present consistently shows a growing disparity in educational outcomes between the majority Caucasian and minority African American populations when looking at degree completion. Rovai, Gallien and Wighting (2005) researched vital issues that affect African American male students when looking at their quest to achieving the American Dream of obtaining a college degree at the collegiate level of higher education. The research of Rovai, Gallien and Wighting (2005) addressed the lack of degree completion among the African American population, which they reported, is now being referred to as the “African American” achievement gap. The main factors that are attributed to African Americans not completing their bachelor’s degree, as noted in their research study are:

in order to examine why students are not completing a bachelor’s degree while enrolled at a majority Caucasian institution of higher education, one must look at the

differences of cultural, communication, and learning style characteristics of African American students and the schooling conditions and practices enforced predominately at Caucasian institutions of higher education.... (Rovai, Gallien & Wighting, 2005, pp. 364-365).

Therefore, one major question arises, “what challenges are impeding African American students achieving at the higher educational level?”

As the literature reflects, there are many factors frequently mentioned as contributing to the achievement gap. These factors include: limited education levels of parents; students’ lack of access to high quality preschool and K- 12 education; weak study habits; negative peer influences; White faculty and administrators who have low academic expectations for Blacks; Eurocentric curricula and pedagogy; poor campus racial climate, relatively limited financial resources among many Black college students; and the absence of a strong and relatively large core of Black students on campus (Bennett, 2002; Hale-Benson & Hilliard, 1986; McWhorter, 2001).

In research conducted by Allen (1985) and then again three decades later by Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, and Master (2006), it was suggested that the minority achievement gap remains to be one of the most challenging problems today in the United States’ educational arena. Schwartz (2000) stressed that the literature continuously stresses the point that although there have been continuous efforts being made throughout the United States to close the academic achievement gap between racial minority and Caucasian students these have been largely unsuccessful as a nationwide effort. In addition, the differences revealed in achievement gaps are not just at the collegiate levels, but at all levels of educational performance. The greatest gap occurs between students of color and their White and Asian American peers who are at higher achievement levels. Therefore, is there any substance to

what some educational researchers are saying is the cause of this “major achievement gap?” Some researchers within this field (e.g. Boyd, 1997) have suggested that the main reason for the lack of minority student progress could include the claims that the hip-hop and “gangsta” cultures, as glamorized by the media, and the general move away from the more positive images of Blacks, may have contributed to greater sentiments of apathy and alienation in young Blacks in a misdirected attempt to reaffirm Black culture.

Learning factors. Learning styles over the past decades have been on the forefront of this on-going discussion of African American students, more specifically, African American males, and the achievement gap as it relates to earning a bachelor’s degree. According to Cassidy (2004), “there is a general acceptance that the manner in which individuals choose to or are inclined to approach a learning situation has impact on performance and achievement of learning outcomes” (p. 423). Thus, the general assumption that can be concluded from this researcher’s perspective is the fact that in general students will reach higher levels of achievement when they are taught in ways that are more responsive to their preferred learning styles.

Two typologies that have been described when examining the learning styles of African American students versus the learning styles of White students are that African American students reportedly express more field-dependent tendencies and their White peers tend to express independent tendencies. Ibarra (2001) suggested that “the field dependent learner prefers student-centered, more personal environments where learning occurs in a global fashion and are limited in their abilities to separate parts from the whole”, p.56. The findings described in articles and research studies from the past to the present that have examined similarities and differences in learning of students of color vs. Caucasian students,

lend themselves to multiple sides of the issue, thus making scholarly analysis very challenging and should be taken with caution.

Rovai, Gallien and Wighting (2005) delved into the issue of race and entitlement of students who attend an institution of higher education. Mangold, Bean, Adams, Schwab, and Lynch (2003) pointed out that activities or programs that bring together students facilitate the development of social and learning communities. Therefore, relationships can be fostered, promoting a shared consensus regarding a common goal that promotes persistence and a goal that will get all students excited and motivated to achieve.

Research dated from the early 1980s to the present (e.g., Delpit, 1996; Hale-Benson & Hilliard, 1986), debate the various forms of pedagogy that are dominant in many White university classrooms that consist primarily of lecture and question / answer techniques that are viewed as adverse to African Americans' dominant learning styles of cooperation, extensive interaction, and field-dependency. Anderson (2001) examined the viewpoint that the overall delivery of teaching that takes place at predominately White university classrooms in higher education is oriented toward field-independent learners who tend to be critical thinkers who are comfortable with learning concepts in various abstract ways. Therefore, in reviewing the research, Anderson makes the inference that most African American students are often excluded from opportunities within the classroom. Although this teaching style may be functional for White university students, for African American students, their learning experience is likely to not be valued and consequently a feeling of worthlessness and that their overall presence is not valued will come into play, thereby blocking the learning experience overall.

As the research continues to reflect this mismatch in teaching and learning styles at the higher educational level, for African Americans this may result in the students showing a lack of motivation toward the educational environment in the first place. This may ultimately explain the racial achievement gap in higher education today. As Anderson and Adams (1992) pointed out, this viewpoint stems from the fact that White pedagogy is based on the view that all university students learn in similar ways, which suggests arrogance and elitism by endorsing one group's learning style while discrediting the style of others. In a study conducted by Cheatam, Tomlinson, & Ward (1990), the results indicated that many programs designed specifically for African American male students, to help retain these students and increase the overall graduation rates, are failing due mostly to the fact that the programs being designed and implemented are lacking a clear understanding of the unique academic and psychosocial needs of African American students.

The challenge is great when looking at the achievement gap of African American students throughout the country in higher education. Clearly, as the research indicates, there is no one quick fix to this challenge. However, university administrators, professors, advisors, faculty and staff within the universities need to seriously look at the needs of African American students and create various learning communities in which key concepts can be taught in a variety of ways to match the student with his or her specific learning style so that the student can see on-going success as it relates to academic achievement. Some of the opposition needs to be thoroughly examined by those who work at various institutions, because if professors begin to teach one way for all students, unintentionally professors may be setting up some students for unwarranted frustration and possible failure, which leads to dropping out of school (Ibarra, 2001). This speaks directly to the issue of recruitment and

retention as most White universities have a challenging time retaining African American students, especially African American males. Research consistently reflects that the “one size fits all approach” is not working at the higher educational level.

Theories related to African Americans in higher education. When examining racial identity, it is important to note that these frameworks were first developed primarily for African Americans to understand the black experience in the United States. Cross (1978) developed the Nigrescence psychological model, which deals with healthy black progress from a non-Afrocentric to an Afrocentric to a multicultural identity. Cross’ view of development of racial identity has been described as a lifetime evolution, which is a continuously changing process for blacks. Ethnic identity has characteristics similar to those of racial identity. However, this concept emphasizes what people learn about their culture from family and community (Chavez, et al., 1999). Thus, ethnic identity is created by shared culture, religion, geography and language of individuals who are often connected by strong loyalty and kinship as well as proximity.

The number of models and theories focused on racial identity has grown in the last two decades. These frameworks have stemmed from a psychosocial research foundation postured by Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget. In examining these frameworks that are geared to racial identity, the main focus is on the process of defining self. However, as the frameworks have evolved, the more contemporary foundation describes the progression of racial identity as a process that occurs over one’s life (Chavez, et al., 1999).

In examining various theoretical frameworks such as racial identity models and theories, Sellers and his colleagues (2009) pointed out that one attempts to belong to one’s specified group. However, if rejection happens, then one could experience racial

discrimination when examining one's racial identity. Therefore, this component is critical when college selection of African American students transpires, especially when an African American student begins to make a college selection which may be at a predominately White institution of higher education. Thus, when examining the research questions involved in this study, it's imperative to address this topic of academic success amongst undergraduate, African American students because the evidence is showing that although males and Black students in particular are enrolled in a postsecondary a institution, the degree completion rate amongst students in general, is at a dismal low according to the U.S. Department of Education (2000; 2002).

Sellers, Yip, & Seaton (2009) noted that there are multiple theoretical perspectives explaining the relation between racial identity and the global perceptions of racial discrimination. A connection among several of these perspectives is the fact that racial discrimination influences the development of racial identity among minority group members. In examining Cross' Nigrescence model, it infers that an encounter with racism or discrimination may trigger the exploration of racial identity (Cross, 1991). It is suggested that this experience may serve as a stimulus for progression from an unaware racial identity to one that understands the role that race plays in the lives of African Americans.

Previous research examining theoretical frameworks that suggest that perceptions of racial discrimination influence racial identity have resulted in diverse outcomes. In looking at the Nigrescence framework, Hall and Carter (2006) suggested that one's perception of a situation could lead to higher levels of immersion-emersion attitudes, as it relates to racial discrimination over the lifetime. A study conducted by Romero and Roberts (1998) examined

the tenets of social identity among African American, European American, Vietnam American and Mexican American adolescents. They concluded that the exploration level of racial identity predicted perceived discrimination, in contrast to discrimination predicting exploration.

Researchers also have attempted to prove that African American students who possess a strong identification with their racial identity fare better in school than those who do not (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997; Way, 1998). However, there is other research that suggests that students who distance themselves from their ethnic culture perform at higher levels (Fordham, 1988).

Fordham (1988) theorized that, “students struggle with their relationships to what she (Fordham) defines as a “Black fictive-kinship system” (which included family, friends, and a general connection to Black people)”(pp. 64-65). Fordham discussed the challenges when students face their own culture and functioning within this system, but then attempt to manage the mainstream system (the school system) from an individualistic competitive nature, and are not being successful. In examining this notion, Fordham conducted a qualitative research study that examined poor urban youth. It was discovered that successful students chose to absorb into the dominant culture and achieve academic success by distancing themselves from kinship systems. For some, it was noted, that distance was masked as these students avoided appearing intelligent (Carson, 2003).

Mickelson (1990) discovered an ironic connection when exploring what African American students believe about the benefits of education and their actual academic progress. Mickelson found that children of working class minority adults generally had pessimistic attitudes towards schooling and, therefore, these children earned lower grades. In addition,

although these students knew many adults who had successfully completed college, they were progressing at lower rates than their White counterparts. Due to these conditions as noted by Mickelson, students became frustrated with the educational system and believed the notion that hard work does not always equal success, and from this mind set, they withdrew from the achievement journey of progressing forward in their school studies.

College ‘Experiences’ at PWIs for African American Students

Educational experiences can open doors; it can be a tool which promotes positive outcomes and creates opportunities for achievement, or it can be used as a weapon, creating divide lines, and a gate-keeping device. African American scholars, such as W.E.B. DuBois, have long agreed that the need for African Americans’ entry into higher education is a must. However, the goal of attaining higher education has been strongly debated over the decades. Some scholars believe, as did Booker T. Washington, that assimilation into the mainstream is the best way to conquer the goal of attaining a quality education. However, W.E.B. DuBois (1935) offered the idea that higher education was vital for African Americans to attain in order to fully develop their power as human beings.

Throughout DuBois’ work, he was an advocate for Blacks attaining their education. He noted that the aim of Black colleges was to foster scholarly ability and cultural power. In addition, he urged Black colleges to produce students who were versed in many areas, not just the service-oriented careers. W.E.B. DuBois was a firm believer that being educated and gaining an education created an intellectual community of leaders who could potentially affect change within and outside of their ethnic group. According to DuBois (1935), the belief that the purpose of higher education is to solely earn a living, was seen as “educational heresy or deviation” (p.74).

The goals of education from the Black perspective, according to DuBois, were simple. These goals were: to strengthen and empower African American people by gaining worldly knowledge and culture and promote upward movement and economic independence, rather than to assimilate into a mainstream, which would never completely allow entry. Thus, his work and that of others, leads to many questions dealing with the plight of Black students who are questing for a bachelor's degree. In the next section, this plight will be discussed specifically for Black students, as well as underscoring similar plights of minority students in higher education.

Research conducted by Wesley and Southerland (1994) addressed how various models have been used extensively in research to explore how students in general choose a college or university. However, there has been limited research as to how African American students choose a college or university. In the same study, it showed there had been no focused links to the current models being used to choose a college or university and to the recruitment and retention of minority students. As Tinto (1993) and Brown (1995) suggested, students who are integrated and involved, who feel satisfied with the academic and social systems and “in-step” with the mainstream of campus life are more likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree. However, the same is true in reverse, the more socially isolated the students feel, the less likely that they will succeed in college (Austin, 1993). In his thorough review of persistence, Tinto (1993) suggested that students of color may have difficulty gaining access to the campus cultural mainstream.

Sevier (1992/1993) examined the selection process of students seeking admission into a postsecondary school of higher education. The study examined various factors used to determine a “good fit” with a college. In his study, Sevier used college-bound African

American high school juniors. These students were asked to list factors that would influence their college choice. The top ten factors were: reputation of the college, availability of majors, availability of financial aid, total cost of attending, job placement record after graduation, quality of faculty, academic advising, geographic location, number of students, and recreational facilities.

Throughout the research findings (Sellers, et al., 2009; Sevier 1992/1993), reasons for choosing specific colleges amongst ethnic groups vary. The support system is very different when looking at academic accomplishments and motivation. As noted in a study by McDonough and Lising (1996), which included various ethnic groups, Asian, Native-American, Appalachian and African American, first time, freshmen college students noted that their top reasons for choosing a specific college were: good academic reputation, offered financial aid, and graduates go to top graduate schools upon degree completion. However, in a similar study (Stewart & Post, 1990), conducted at a predominately white, mid-western postsecondary university with a minority population of eight percent, black students' responses were focused on the university being close to home and for various financial reasons. In the same study, other majority ethnic groups noted their reasons were more geared towards the reputation of the university. Thus the selection process for African American students used a different set of criteria for choosing a college of higher education than did their peers from other ethnic groups.

Stewart and Post (1990) also found that the African American student population as a whole often perceived their collegiate experiences at a predominantly White institution as a challenge, before stepping foot into a classroom. Accordingly, Black students may consciously or unconsciously remove themselves and become protective, modeling after the

multiethnic schools research, developed and suggested by the literature from Romo and Falbo (1996). Therefore, Black residence structures, Black-themed houses sponsored by the university, Black fraternities and sororities and / or Black professors and staff on campus, will become their new found lifestyle within the university setting. Overall, some students, if not most students, would not gravitate to any of the sub-cultures provided on campus and they feel that they do not belong and become an at-risk student, who may eventually drop out of the institution altogether.

In delving into the realm of collegiate experiences of Black students, the actual “in-college experiences” have found to be more influential in explaining college student persistence than pre-college factors, such as test scores and high school grades (Donovan, 1984). It is this research that speaks directly to the point of academic success and the ability of a student to adjust both academically and socially to the institution (Jones, 2001; Moore, 2001; Tinto, 1993). Thus, students who feel that there is an institutional fit (when they become more integrated and vested in the campus), are satisfied with the academic and social systems and are in-step with the mainstream campus life are more likely to graduate (Light, 2001). Additionally, in examining the collegiate experience, institutional fit is key and is predicated on the success with which a student interacts with faculty (academic success) and students (social) since both shape the cultural climate of any institution (Tinto, 1993).

The Plight of Minority Students of Color in Higher Education

Adjustment and success in college for all students is complex and challenging to say the least, as noted by Terenzini, Rendon, et al. (1994). It involves multiple personal, academic, social, and cultural transitions that are not always negotiated easily. Stressors faced by minority students, however, create additional challenges and increase opportunities

for maladjustment (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005; Lewis, 2004; Phinney, & Hass, 2003). As noted in Logan (2007), “minority student status (i.e., it is not easy being a minority student at a PWI), represents an additional stress load that intensifies the difficulties associated with college attendance” (p. 230). Furthermore, minority student status can exert an indirect effect on students by compounding stressors faced by all students. For example, financial distress, family issues, academic concerns and conflicts may all be experienced as more stressful, and have greater consequences for minority students due to their marginal social, political, and economic status. While stressors associated with college attendance are experienced by and affect all college students, their impact on minority students is more unique. This is because such difficulties interfere with minority students’ effective integration into the university community and heighten feelings of not belonging within the mainstream majority.

Thus, it has been suggested by Schmader, et al. (2001) that there are notable challenges paired with minority student status that create a variety of stressors such as perceived discrimination, cultural differences and a decline in overall family support as it relates to academic success (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Overall, based on the literature focused on this topic, Constantine and Chen (1997) suggested that there were many issues that compounded a student’s quest to achieve academic success within the realm of higher education. In addition, they noted that when students pursue an advanced degree within the realm of higher education, there tends to be greater family challenges and obligations for students of color, along with financial obligations that become a heavy burden on students and becomes even more challenging within the academic classroom.

As noted by Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr (2002), “evidence which supports the uniqueness of the minority college student experiences is also present in the divergent perspectives minority students hold from non-minority students regarding features of campus life (i.e., racial climate, prejudiced attitudes of faculty and staff, and classroom discrimination)”(p.183). Therefore, when examining one’s academic environment, with many barriers presented to Black students on a daily basis, it has been noted and suggested by Piotrowski and Perdue (1998) that more African-American students reported racial tension and hostility in their academic environment, expressed low personal satisfaction, and felt less identified with the Predominantly Euro-American institutions of higher learning. Similarly, from the literature it has been suggested that African American students who enrolled in PWI often experience little to no support from both faculty and the overall campus community and this is also perceived as an unwelcoming academic climate. In summation, the campus climate and overall student perception from the lens of African American students continuously suggests that there are pressures placed upon them to conform to the mainstream campus climate and mainstream majority culture.

Heisserer and Parette (2002) suggested that “minority students are particularly vulnerable to feelings of not belonging, often feel rejected, and have greater difficulty overcoming the challenges associated with being a college student” (p.78). Therefore, in following this line of thought, the likelihood of minority students experiencing a negative outcome such as poor academic performance or dropping-out of college is increased, as compared to their non-African American counterparts. While an appropriate response to these data would be to place such students with the most qualified teachers who can help bring them up to speed, the majority of states in the U.S., are assigning these students to

teachers with less experience, less education, and less skill than those who teach non-minority students (Peske & Haycock, 2006). For example, Peske and Haycock (2006) pointed out that in spite of the research that indicates new teachers are not as effective as seasoned teachers, minority students are assigned novice teachers at twice the rate of their counterparts.

In addition, the literature continues to discuss the plight of Black students in higher education, which lays the foundation for the essence of this study when looking at the plight of Black students in higher education. It is to be noted that the two minority groups that have been examined for the purpose of this study were Native American and Hispanic students. This is not to suggest that these are the only two minority groups in pursuit of a degree, as all minority groups are important. However, in looking at statistical rigor, these were the two most studied minority groups based on the literature (Ancis et al., 2000).

Multiple Identities of African American Students

As stated by Erikson, a person's identity is embedded in the social, cultural, and historical context (Tatum, 1997). As the research suggests, minorities of color are typically not able to choose an identity, but rather are pressed to internalize one by societal signals due to experience with, and perceptions of discrimination and prejudice (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

In examining the current literature related to academic success, African American college students, and Predominately White institutions, there are many factors that play into the lack of degree completion amongst African American students in higher education. Research focused on African American identity suggests that African American students' beliefs about ethnic identity and education are on opposite sides of the spectrum. From a

historical lens, researchers believed that racism would automatically cause low self esteem and marginal academic performance. This idea developed from the popular study that showed African American children's preference for being White based on their choice of dolls and playmates (Clark, 1939). Therefore, from the onset of this well known study, began the igniter for the development of Black Self-Hatred theory that was paramount during the 1960s –70s era (Baldwin, 1979). To move away from the self-hatred framework, the Civil Rights and Black Power movements formed a new group of theorists who began to suggest that racism could be used as a motivator and an element to nurture and hone self respect. From the working of these many factors came a new era of African American activists and educators, whose ideas, though not always well-received, were focused to receive respect for the African American culture in American classrooms and from this, Afrocentric schools were formed. Some factors that played into this notion were cultural differences and learning.

Adler (1998) and Parillo (2003) suggested that one's culture shapes attitudes, which ultimately could impact one's behaviors and how the world is perceived. Adler went on to suggest that these behaviors and perceptions are shared by most members of the same cultural group. This is not to forget about various beliefs, communication patterns, values, customs and aesthetic standards passed from one generation to the next.

Many researchers, such as Hale-Benson and Hilliard (1986) and Ogbu (1995), suggest that differences in Black and White cultures or differences in any cultures mean different approaches to pedagogy. Therefore, in turn, these critical factors can influence learning and help define the behavior of a society. Thus, if Black students who attend Predominately White institutions cannot make sense of the overall educational experience for

themselves, the experience will lose its zest and zeal, making the educational experiences non-functional for the students to claim a positive educational opportunity.

Non-Afrocentric researchers also have conducted research on African American identity. Oyserman, et al. (1995) proposed a three-pronged model of African American identity. This model encompasses an integration of awareness of racism, connectedness with one's own culture, and the "individual effort" that is characteristic of the work ethic and individualistic nature of American society. This approach could bring about persistence in the face of racism and will prevent disconnection from the African American culture. Oyserman (1995) concluded that successful identity development occurs when African American students maintain a sense of connectedness to their own culture, while pursuing mainstream values. This was exhibited when the effect of identity on persistence was tested by giving urban middle school students specific math tasks and exploring the students' affective responses to the math tasks. The researchers noted that the students finding out racism exists actually helped to protect their sense of self-worth because as a result, students tended to discount the idea that their difficulty in math was present just because they were African American.

African American racial identity has been a source of topical conversation over the past three decades. Cross (1971; 1991) captured the essence of being Black within the Cross Model when looking at stages of development (i.e., Nigrescence) and as also defined by him as the Negro-to-Black conversion experience (1971; 1991). Sellers et al. (1997) defined racial identity as "the extent to which one's Blackness or race is central to one's sense of self" (p.811). Some racial identity theorists have labeled certain racial identity profiles as either psychologically healthy or reflective of Black self-hatred (Cross, 1971, 1991; Millones,

1980; Nobles, 1976). These theorists would characterize an African American who does not consider race an important component of identity as “psychologically unhealthy”.

Goodstein and Ponterotto (1997) noted that ethnic identity development consists of movement from unawareness of ethnic difference and self-identification to awareness. The process of gaining ethnic identity involves integration of knowledge about oneself and the environment. Thus, as the literature suggests, there are multiple factors that could potentially impact academic development and achievement of undergraduate, African American students at the higher education level, when examining the multiple identities of a person.

Family Involvement of African Americans in Higher Education

In reviewing past research studies dating back to the 1930s, African American families, as noted by E. Franklin Frazier (1939), in *The Negro Family in the United States*, were described as female-centered, with no male consistently present in the household. Past research also suggested that many children during this decade and the decades to follow were born out of wedlock, which was translated as reflecting disorganization in the family. Over time, the outlook on “family” has evolved. The terminology of “traditional families” is far from the current norm, which includes many family types and a variety of compositions.

Brown (2008) reported that African American families relied heavily on the supports provided by their respective church homes and receiving this kind of support contributes to the psychoeducational development of their children and offers families role models to follow. Brown (2008) noted that the church serves as a place for “socialization, inspiration, communication, training and healing” (p. 43). Overall, the research suggests that African American community support networks may provide African Americans with additional resources for coping, which may promote resiliency. In addition, research has shown links

between racial socialization and social support networks and their impact on African American outcomes related to goals, careers, and school ambitions.

Family influences also continue to have a significant effect on African American students' beliefs about education. Ford (1993) researched familial beliefs regarding education as seen by black young adults. Specifically, Ford focused on the extent to which family demographic variables and family achievement influenced Black students' perceptions on achievement. It was proposed that social, psychological, and cultural variables are directly linked to both gifted and non-gifted Blacks students' achievement. An example given by McLoyd (1998) was that when Black family values conflict with those of the majority culture, some Black parents teach their children how to compete with those of the majority culture given the reality of racism and discrimination. Research findings, in general, highlight the impact of messages that Black parents communicate to their children on students' achievement.

In a study conducted by Stevenson, et al. (1990), researchers interviewed students' parents who were of diverse backgrounds and had children in middle school about their beliefs regarding higher education. They found that Black and Latino mothers placed greater emphasis on attainment in education than did White mothers and believed that their education would provide opportunities for their children. Moreover, parents of color were also positive about their children's ability to succeed and generally remained positive about their future. Overall, parental concerns were found to play a vital role in shaping students' perceptions on education at an early age. Although such studies support parental and family involvement, these studies did not address the impact of parental beliefs on students' choice to pursue higher education. Thus, even when knowledge is being shared and transmitted by

parents who have attended and completed college, this concern is not addressed fully in the current literature.

Studies researching family status provide important insights into factors that influence students' academic achievements; they often fall short, however, by offering inconclusive findings. For example, there have been studies conducted (Adams et al., 2007; Robles-Cota & Gamble, 2006; Schaefer, 2008) that concluded that African American students raised in single-parent, female headed households are at a greater risk for academic difficulties at the collegiate level than are those from two-parent homes (Seaton & Taylor, 2003). Other research linking family variables to student achievement include parents' aspirations and expectations, educational stimulation in the home, guidance and support with school work, and the degree of routine in the home (Fang, 2006). The research on Black students and their families suggests the need to consider student achievement in the total context in which students develop beliefs, aspirations, and expectations. In addition, by parents providing strong and positive parental ideologies, the family unit can help to buffer and filter the harsher or more problematic aspects of the external world stressors.

As reflected in the current literature, parental influence plays a key role in students' experiences at the collegiate level when attending a PWI. The relationship between parents and their students greatly impacts students' racial beliefs (the acceptance or denial of present day racism), when exploring their overall educational opportunities. To date, there is an increasingly growing number of researchers who are studying the racial socialization of parents and how this impacts Black students who are enrolled at a PWI. Stevenson (2002) developed a broad conceptual framework and found that students who are enrolled at PWIs gravitated to both protective and proactive racial socialization messages. The proactive

messages provided by parents and students related to racial pride, egalitarian values, and self development. In addition, both parents and students identified with protective messages that related to racial barriers and the promotion of mistrust. Therefore, in reviewing the literature, students who attend PWI are exposed to messages such as, “Being Black is one strike against you and therefore you must work harder” (protective racial socialization – racial barrier message); “this country is very racist” (promotion of mistrust); “be proud of being black and learn your heritage” (proactive racial socialization-racial pride); “don’t judge someone based on their skin color” (egalitarian); “you must work hard as others in another race to become a well- adjusted person” (self development). Therefore, when examining the college experiences of Black students at PWIs, Stevenson (1995) stated that Black students reported that strong protective racial socialization beliefs were related to fewer pre-encounter racial identity attitudes (the denial of race in their personal lives).

Research continues to add to the growing discussion on racial socialization / racial beliefs from African American parents and students, who are enrolled at a PWI. Racial identity, racial socialization, and external racial beliefs are clearly linked to each other. In addition, based on research by Barr & Neville (2008), protective racial socialization has a unique association with racial beliefs in African Americans. Their study also suggested that parents who are aware of institutional racism are more likely to promote mistrust of the mainstream in their youth. Lastly, young adults whose parents address the realities of racism directly tend to have a more critical understanding of modern day racism. Therefore, the experiences of college students at a PWI may be heavily influenced by parents’ personal experiences.

Moreover, as suggested by Thorton (1998), individuals outside one's family may have a pivotal role in the resiliency of African American young adults. Thus, it may be important to encourage African American parents to seek out the support of their communities when raising their children. Utilizing resources that have historically assisted African Americans, including the community and the church, in the socialization of African Americans has proven useful for overcoming adversity.

When examining the research and the relevant topics surrounding racial identity and academic success, it is important to note key theories that focus on the topics that were a part of this study's relevant literature review. Thus the following section describes the conceptual framework for this study and provides an explanation of why the following theories were selected to be a key component of this study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrated the following four theories / models: the five-stage Nigrescence Model, critical theory/critical race theory, family systems theory, and a phenomenological approach for collecting and analyzing interview data. The rationale for choosing these theories / models are as follows: 1. this study seeks to understand how undergraduate, African American college students at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) of higher education (the University of New Mexico), which is also categorized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), find meaning to their experiences in higher education and develop a belief system that affects their view of higher education; 2. family is a key component within the African American culture and heritage, thus when looking at systems theory, the family and community are very much a part of the equation when examining academic achievement for Black students specifically; and 3. how one views the world is

based on perception, therefore, critical theory / critical race theory and the five-stage Nigrescence model provide a different lens for exploring the issues of identity for African American college students who attend a PWI and how the identities of being an African American and a student impact academic success. For those reasons, as suggested by the literature, it is critical to examine how family systems factor into racial/ethnic identity of African American students who attend a PWI. Lastly, using a phenomenological approach is necessary to understand how African American undergraduate students at a PWI provide meaning to life events and how they develop their belief system that will affect their higher education journey. As Fordham and Ogbu (1986) stated, “motivation and success could go hand in hand, depending on resources and accessibility” (pp.186-187).

The self in all of its complexity, especially when examining one’s racial and academic identity, is difficult to capture and classify for research. As such, further research and investigation are needed in order to unveil the global picture of one’s experiences. One’s individual identity develops as a result of interactions with others and their interpretation of and response to these interactions. Racial identity is developed by the meanings that people assign to race and ethnicity, including times of discrimination (Cross, 1991). Sellers, et al. (1998) stated that racial identity research has not distinguished whether or not the individual identifies being African American with the individual’s attitudes and beliefs regarding what it means to be African American. The following section further defines each theory and discusses how each theory is connected to the current study.

1. Cross’ 5 stage Nigrescence Model

In Cross’ (1978) Nigrescence model racial identity development refers to the “process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a

particular racial group” (Tatum, 1997, p. 16). Cross expanded on his original work from four stages of racial identity to five, all of which are important. The stages of Cross’ model are:

1. Pre-encounter
2. Encounter
3. Immersion-emersion
4. Internalization
5. Internalization-commitment.

Briefly, during the pre-encounter stage, individuals view the world from a White frame of reference, knowing by or unknowingly holding pro-White and anti-Black attitudes. The second stage, the encounter, deals with individuals beginning to change these attitudes. An event or series of events can cause individuals to recognize that they can’t fully assimilate into White society and will not be fully accepted into it. The next stage, Immersion-emersion, represents a behavioral change in reaction to the encounter stage; individuals become more interested in their Black identity and also show increased awareness of racism. Some within the literature (Cross, 1978; 1985;1991) characterize this stage by anti-White attitudes. The final stage in the four-stage model, internalization, occurs as individuals become secure with their Black racial identities and move toward a more holistic and pluralistic perspective. African Americans then represent the primary reference group, but individuals’ attitudes are not necessarily anti-White (Cross 1978).

As noted earlier, Cross expanded his original work to include a fifth stage known as internalization-commitment, which represents a more consistent internalization stage. Cross’ work at that time (Cross, 1991) also included bicultural identities.

The Nigrescence framework first focused on adults. However, over time Cross (1978; 1991) modified his theory to incorporate a more dynamic and flexible view of racial identity within human development. Therefore, the stages of the Nigrescence framework have evolved to also correspond to the racial identities of adolescents and young adults, respectively. In short, the pre-encounter stage represents Eurocentrism, the encounter stage represents a transition; and the immersion-emersion stage represents reactive Afrocentrism. Depending on one's own lens of previous experiences, Black adolescents and young adults may show greater or lesser attributes of the various stages. Thus, when examining how identities are affected when Black students attend a PWI, the Nigrescence framework could provide different perspectives on how and why students shape their beliefs as they relate to succeeding at the higher education level.

The academic literature, when examining self-identity and educational matriculation, have coined the phrase "acting white" from the early work of Ogbu in the 1960s. Ogbu (1985) has become increasingly popular within this realm of scholarly research. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have consistently researched these issues throughout their careers, including examining the validity of academic matriculation and the notion of "acting white" in order to gain success as it relates to African Americans within the realm of higher education. However, there have been controversial views regarding their research and interpretation of acting white within the realm of educational attainment, and in a general sense, it appears that the academic literature is split regarding the notion of "acting white". Hence, when examining the racial identity of Black students enrolled at a HSI/PWI and how this may impact one's academic achievement, their research is considered a reference point to examine

the notion of “acting white” in order for students to gain academic success, recognizing that different lens that focus on this issue which also should be explored.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) focus on the “castelike” minority groups, specifically African Americans, to examine their claim of the relationship between these groups and the dominant culture group (for example, White ‘Anglo’ Americans). They have used Cross’ 5 Stage Nigrescence Model to support their position on this issue. In addition, Ogbu (1985) reflected on his previous work and noted, “parental emphasis teaches children that formal education is but one alternative survival strategy and inculcates children in the value of manipulative skills in dealing with people and situations” (p.60). By using Cross’ model in their work many issues arise as to why students of African American / Black descent have such a diverse outlook at it pertains to education. By examining the treatment of African Americans in America, including, but not limited to, political and economic oppression, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) indicate that there should be no disagreement as to why African Americans develop a sense of identity in opposition to the social identity of Whites. They proceeded to suggest that in order to promote Black identity, as well as have the ability to maintain a sense of accomplishment through achievement, boundaries between Blacks and the dominant culture are created. According to Ogbu (1994), these phenomena of oppositional cultural identity and oppositional frame of reference create a unique relationship between Black and White Americans.

2. Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory

Critical Theory suggests that research is conducted with an agenda in mind and always benefits a specific, pre-determined group. This is why research conducted on ethnic groups (e.g., African Americans) must not be approached from a deficit perspective. Hence,

when utilizing this theory, the goals should be 1. social justice, 2. Liberation, and 3. changing the power dynamic that exists between the mainstream and marginalized groups (Rector, 2002). Critical theorists conduct research that departs from traditional research, which does point out differences. However, it often is limited when examining changing dynamics, which may create inaccuracies. Critical theorists address the ways in which social values are reproduced and how people produce their choices in society (Weiler, 1988).

The extension of Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT) underscores the idea that racism and discrimination are the norm and not the exception and influences society by subtle and overt means. Thus, by including the foundational framework from Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory, Critical Race Theory suggests that one's *reality* is socially constructed (Delgado, 1995). Therefore, these theories support their usage within this study by providing a framework from which to understand the participants' reality of the meaning of being a Black student at a HSI / PWI.

3. Family Systems Theory

Family Systems Theory provides this study with a connection that encompasses one's environment and culture, as reflected by critical race theory when examining one's own reality from their individual lens. As noted in Sanchez (2008), "family system, intrafamily processes can be understand more clearly by examining family functioning, family communication, cohesion and integration"(p.15). Boss, LaRossa, Schumm, and Steinmetz (1993) described family systems as a compilation of other smaller systems that are unique to the family. Therefore, Family Systems Theory is used to examine the reciprocal dynamic interactions within the family and how the home environment (i.e. family background, structure) impacts African American, undergraduate students' academic success while

attending a PWI and how this affects racial identity. In addition, Family Systems Theory enables the researcher to explore various interactions between the family system and other institutions, in this case, an institution of higher education, to determine how these impact academic success of African American students.

4. Phenomenological Approach

In addition, this study utilized a phenomenological approach which provided a more in-depth method to better understand how African American undergraduate students at a Hispanic Serving / predominantly White institution assign meaning to life events and create a belief system that affects their view of higher education. Creswell (2007) noted that a phenomenological approach first describes personal experiences of the phenomenon. Thus, the phenomenological approach is appropriate to capture the overall experience of each participant. In addition, the essence of a phenomenological study describes meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Thus, those students selected for the interview portion of this study would share the phenomenon of having all self-identified as Black, undergraduate students, enrolled in the same HSI / PWI in pursuit of a bachelor's degree. The explicit phenomenon is the meaning by which each participant describes his or her lived experiences of being a Black, undergraduate student, enrolled at a HSI/PWI.

The combination of the above four theoretical frameworks allows the researcher to explore the research questions utilizing the five-stage Nigrescence model, Critical Theory/Critical Race Theory, Family Systems Theory and the Phenomenological approach to better understand the journey of African American, undergraduate students who are enrolled at a HSI/PWI. In addition, the framework of Critical Theory/Critical Race Theory, as applied

to educational research, attempts to uncover the ways in which underrepresented groups have been systematically marginalized and their “realities” viewed as unimportant to those who self-identify with the mainstream majority culture and / or race. Using quantitative methods (such as the on-line Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity), joined with qualitative methods (such as the individualized interviews) creates a forum in which the voices of the underrepresented and marginalized groups can be heard (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

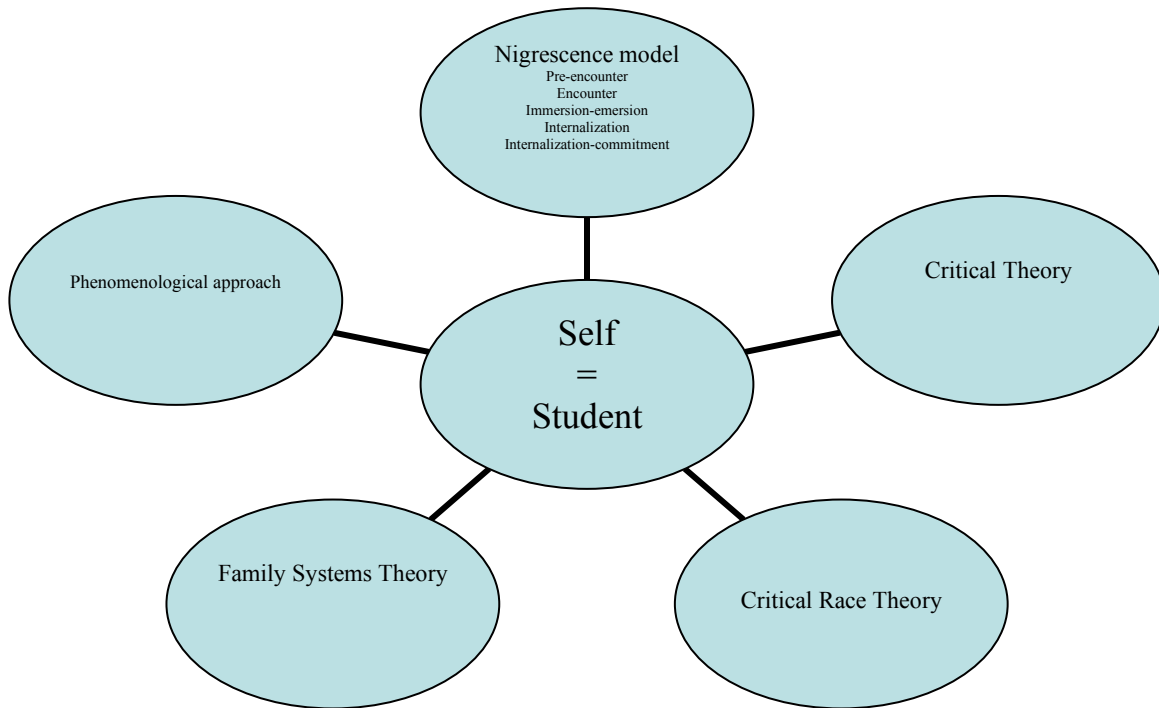


Figure 1. Theoretical framework for this mixed methods research study.

Summary

In summary, Merullo (2002) noted that going to college represents a significant departure from one's own culture when the majority of new attendees are of African American descent. According to Merullo (2002), it has been suggested that African American college students (many of whom are first-generation students) differ from continuing-generation students as they are often burdened by feelings of cultural dislocation (engaging in a culturally inappropriate act), a need to contribute to family income, and the inability to look to relatives for guidance about college. Moreover, Orbe (2004) asserted that African American college students must negotiate issues of marginalization on both ends as they work to bridge the worlds of their homes, families, neighborhoods, and college life.

While the transition from high school to college involves some adaptation for all students, African American students are not afforded the same level of experience and understanding regarding college as those whose parents had some college experience (Orbe, 2004). Researchers have suggested that African American college students differ from their counterparts, in the number and magnitude of challenges to obtaining a post-secondary education. The challenges that have been noted by past researchers from their respective studies (e.g., Dennis et al., 2005; Orbe, 2004) dealing with academic under-preparation, feelings of cultural dislocation, a lack of knowledge about the university environment, financial struggles, an inability to make meaningful connections at the university level and a lack of family support for college may conspire to prevent a capable student from achieving.

Thus, when examining the main research questions, the extent to which racial identity of African American, undergraduate students at a Hispanic Serving/Predominately White institution shapes their expectations and beliefs about higher education and the relationship between racial identity, the university environment, and student's home environment and their academic achievement while matriculating towards a bachelor's degree, this review of the relevant literature builds the foundation to assist with exploring the many variables that may help, hinder, or neutralize a Black student's journey towards obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Based on the literature reviewed, there are multiple factors that impact the academic success of Black, undergraduate students who are enrolled a HSI/PWI. These factors could also be compounded by the university environment and lack of support from one's support circle (i.e., family, mentors, professors and peers). Family support, the campus environment and overall opportunities to grow and experience a rich collegiate experience are key

variables in looking at the impact of an undergraduate, African American's racial and academic identities as they relate to academic success at a HSI/PWI.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the data. The sampling procedures, measures used, and the data collection and analysis procedures are described separately for each approach. The primary purpose of this research was to examine the extent to which the racial identity of African American, undergraduate students shape their expectations and beliefs about succeeding at the higher education level while enrolled at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) / Predominately White Institution (PWI). The second research question addressed the relationship between racial identity, selected aspects of the university environment, and students' interactions with prior environments, including their home environment (i.e., family structure and background) with their academic achievement while matriculating towards a bachelor's degree.

Research Design

This study used mixed methodological approaches for analyzing the data by using both quantitative and qualitative procedures. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) was used to provide data for the quantitative analyses. In addition, descriptive statistics and estimated correlations examined the relationship of participants' academic success (as measured by their cumulative grade point average) to demographic characteristics, such as their university student classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), age, and gender (male or female); home environment, such as home town (from NM or other state or country), family composition (single-parent home, two-parent home, or other

type home), first-generation college attendee, perceived high school preparation; university environment such as services used in the African American Student Services (academic support or other services), involvement in student organizations, student-athlete, work status (employed or not), student- parent; and submeasures of the MIBI (centrality, private regard, public regard, assimilation, humanist, minority, and nationalist). Qualitative analyses used the data from individual, semi-structured, open-ended interviews to discuss the phenomena of being an African American, undergraduate student at a HSI/PWI. It was hoped that using data from both the survey and the interview would provide a more in-depth depiction of the experiences of African American, undergraduate students at a HSI/PWI.

Rationale for Methodology

An exploration of issues of racial and academic identities within the realm of higher education reveals powerful dynamics that undergraduate students have to face on a daily basis. Subtleties of interaction and one's interpretations cannot be understood solely through quantitative research; nor can qualitative individual statements be generalized to an entire population. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative procedures were used in this study. As the literature reflects, students in the 21st century are entering the "tower of higher education" with beliefs defined and developed by interactions with their diverse environments, by their family's connections, and by the community's social and political views. Thus, students remain optimistic about their aspirations and these thoughts are at the forefront of their collegiate experiences (Tatum, 1997).

African American students, similar to others, enroll in institutions of higher education with a goal in mind, which is, to obtain a degree. Yet, what it takes to succeed as an African American in higher education that may influence this purpose may differ. One of the factors

for success may come from how one perceives oneself in society. Using a mixed methods research approach increased the likelihood that there would be richness in the data to assist in addressing the research questions. Both the online survey (MIBI) and interview were designed to capture how identity for African American undergraduates impacts academic success at a Hispanic Serving and Predominately White institution. Since two methodological approaches were used, the following descriptions of the methods used are presented in two parts, Phase I and Phase II.

Description of Population

Setting. The University of New Mexico (UNM) main campus was used as the research setting. This setting was selected for the convenience of the researcher. The University of New Mexico is known for its diversity as addressed in the university's vision statement:

We aspire to a future in which we are known for strength through diversity, we lift up our cultural and ethnic diversity as the unique strategic advantage it is, providing the environment in which our students learn with one another to generate new knowledge that helps the world's people leverage and celebrate the value of difference.
(University of New Mexico Catalog, 2009-10, p. 9)

In addition, the university is known as a flagship institution and the only Research (I) university within the state of New Mexico. UNM is also a nationally recognized Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), defined by the undergraduate student population being over 25% of students who self-identify as Latino/a. However, although a HSI, the institution is also categorized as a Predominately White Institution (PWI), as the total student population that identifies as White-Non Hispanic is 43.51%. This is the largest population at UNM (see definition of terms for HSI and PWI in Chapter 1). Due to the African American, undergraduate student population being so few in number (647 undergraduate students who

self-identified as African American or 3.50 % of the undergraduate population of 2010, it is easy to overlook this population. However, it is still important to examine how this population is doing when looking at matriculation towards a bachelor's degree.

Recruitment. After approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher promoted the study by visiting selected classes and venues that contained relatively large numbers of African American, undergraduate students (See Appendix D). These classes/venues included but were not limited to, classes in Africana Studies and locations such as Johnson Gym, African American Student Services, the Student Union Building, Student Success Center and Zimmerman Library. In addition, a flyer (See Appendix E) was created and posted in the common areas. After getting approval from the Africana Studies instructors, class announcements were made about the upcoming study. A week prior to the survey, a reminder email was sent out to all students who met the criteria of this study (See Appendix F) encouraging them to be a part of the study. The system had the ability to send out multiple reminders, encouraging students who met the specified criteria to partake in the online MIBI survey (see Appendix G).

All undergraduate students who were enrolled at the University of New Mexico and self-identified as African American / Black, were offered an opportunity to take part in this study. At the time of data collection, there were 647 undergraduate, Black students enrolled at UNM, according to the UNM Spring 2010 Enrollment Management Report. From this list of student emails that was provided following approval by the UNM Institutional Review Board (IRB) and with support from the Office of Student Affairs and the Registrar's Office, these UNM email accounts were uploaded into the Student Voice System, which was the operational mechanism that captured all data collected for the quantitative portion of this

study. Pre-qualifying questions were used to ensure the population of potential participants was being targeted correctly for the purpose of this study. The criteria used for eligibility to participate in the study were as follows: 18 years of age or older, self-identity as Black / African American, and enrolled at UNM main campus in at least 12 credit hours (See Appendix H). If the student answered “yes” to all of the pre-qualifying questions, the student was provided the Demographics Data Sheet (Appendix I) to complete, followed by the MIBI online survey (Appendices A & B).

Phase I

Data Collection Procedures

The students who elected to participate in this study and met the eligibility criteria were given instructions about answering the questions prior to beginning the online survey. In addition, for those students participating in the online survey, each had to electronically “sign off” on an informed consent form (see Appendix J) prior to being able to complete the online survey. The participants were not under any time constraints. Once each participant completed the online survey, all results were logged in the Student Voices System in a systematic way set forth by the researcher. There was a mechanism in place to ensure that once a student (having met the specified criteria) elected to take the MIBI, he/she would not be allowed to take it again. The participants were informed that the survey was estimated to take about fifteen minutes to complete. Included in the initial email was an explanation of the study, risks associated with the study, and the website link containing the MIBI survey. The Student Voices system was secured for which only the researcher had access. Also, all information was maintained on a secure computer system that was password protected. Materials related to the study were stored in the office of the researcher in a locked drawer.

Students were given approximately three weeks to complete the online inventory. The timeframe of three weeks was suggested by Ipathia (2009). After two weeks during the data collection timeframe, a reminder email was set up within the Student Voices system (Appendices K & L) and sent out to students to encourage them to participate in the study if they had not already done so. Due to low responses from students, the overall timeframe was adjusted to afford students the opportunity to participate in the study. Two days prior to the survey data collection deadline, a second email reminder was sent out to students, affording them a final opportunity to participate in the study.

Variables and Measures

Demographic Information. A Demographic Data Sheet (DDS) was developed by the researcher to collect background information from each participant via the on-line portion of the study. The DDS included questions that provided data for statistics describing the study sample as well as indices of the students' family background and current university activities to be included in the correlation analyses. It also provided the descriptive data for potential participants for the qualitative portion of the study. The demographic data that was collected was based on a previous study conducted by Carson (2003). Prior to administration, the researcher piloted the DDS to ensure that the questions captured the information that was being sought after for the purposes of the study. The informed consent form was electronically *signed off* on by each participant within the Student Voice software. Once the informed consent was approved, the DDS form was then available for the participant to fill out online.

Black Identity. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) was created by Sellers, et al. (1997) to operationalize the Multidimensional Model of Racial

Identity (MMRI) and is a sub-measure of this instrument as well. The MMRI, as does the MIBI, assumes that African Americans have hierarchically ordered identities, of which ethnicity is merely one, and does not attempt to identify which identities are most relevant and salient. It also considers that ethnic identity may have stable, as well as situational-specific properties (Sellers, et al., 1997). The authors have stated, "The MIBI was created as a measure of the three stable dimensions (centrality, regard, ideology) of the MMRI" (Sellers et al., 1997, p. 807). Moreover, they stated, "the MMRI focuses on African Americans' beliefs regarding the significance of race in (a) how they define themselves and (b) the qualitative meanings that they ascribe to membership in that racial group" (p. 812).

Sellers et al. (1997) delineated four dimensions to describe the significance and meaning of race in the self-concepts of African Americans: (a) identity salience; (b) the centrality of identity; (c) the ideology associated with the identity; and (d) the regard in which the person holds African American people. According to Sellers et al. (1997), "Salience and centrality refer to the significance of race, whereas ideology and regard refer to the qualitative meaning that individuals ascribe to their membership in the Black community" (p. 806). Shelton and Sellers (2000) stated that salience is influenced by in the moment experiences, versus the other dimensions which have been proven to be relatively stable across situations.

Sellers and his team utilized several research studies to examine issues of reliability and validity. In the development of the MIBI, a sample of 474 African American college students from two universities (one predominantly White and one predominantly African American) was used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the MIBI. Initially, the MIBI began as a 71-item task. As noted in Sellers et al. (1997), they "used exploratory factor

analysis with promax rotation for each scale because the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value ([less than] .60) indicated that a factor solution for all three scales would not be adequate. Items with pattern coefficients below .30 were dropped from each scale” (pp. 810-811).

As Sellers, (1997; 1998) has noted, the MIBI examines the strength of an individual’s racial identity at a particular moment in time rather than its gradual development. It is assumed that African Americans have several identities, of which ethnicity is one and does not attempt to identify which identity is most important. This instrument has been utilized in several studies (Carson, 2003; Sellers et al., 1997), including those measuring situational identity, which is the notion that’s one’s ethnic identity is more or less important in a particular situation. Shelton and Sellers (2000) have suggested that racial identity could influence perceptions of vague events. Thus, those for whom race is a central part of their identity are more likely to focus on race as a factor to interpret events as race related. This measure, according to Sellers, takes a phenomenological approach, which assists individuals in determining for themselves the way they identify ethnically. This researcher employed a pilot study using the MIBI to ensure that the instrument would measure what it was supposed to measure and to note any challenges that students might encounter if they elected to take the online MIBI survey.

The current version of the MIBI asks participants to provide answers to 56 items on a 7- point Likert- type scale, and takes an estimated time of fifteen minutes, on average, to complete. The MIBI is readable and uses simplistic vocabulary that is understandable and direct. Based on previous research done by Sellers et al. (1997; 1998), the MIBI consists of three dimensions of racial identity reflected in the following three scales (centrality, regard,

ideology) in which two (regard and ideology) have submeasures which account for a total of seven scores. These scores are as follows.

Centrality: The extent to which a person defines herself or himself with regard to race. **Regard:** One's public and private regard for their race. **Ideology:** The meaning one ascribes to being African American. **Assimilation:** the emphasis placed on similarities between African Americans and the rest of American society. **Oppressed Minority:** the emphasis placed on the similarities between oppression of African Americans and other groups. **Humanist:** the emphasis placed on the similarities of humans. **Nationalist:** the stress placed on the uniqueness of being black. See Appendix B for a copy of the MIBI. The items comprising each measure are indicated as well as those requiring reverse scoring. The researcher of this current study had received written permission from the originator of the MIBI survey, Dr. Robert Sellers, accompanied by a statement of support for the researcher's efforts to conduct this study utilizing his instrument (See Appendix M).

Data Processing and Analysis

Data Processing. To examine the students' perspectives on racial identity and academic achievement, it was first necessary to enter the data collected from the MIBI (stored with the Student Voices System) into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), which was the main statistical program used in this study. Thus, the data was exported from the Student Voices System and imported into the SPSS system. The purpose of this process was to examine the responses of the MIBI and to ensure that the sample who took the MIBI was sufficient to perform the designated statistical procedures. In addition, it was important to use SPSS to examine the level of significance held by the MIBI score as stated in the MIBI

Instruction Manual by Sellers, et al. (1997). In this study, variables were assessed on the DDS that provided demographic information on the participants such as age and sex; as well as home environment (i.e., family structure and background) such as single-parent home, two-parent home or other type home such as foster or relative's home; hometown (NM or other state or country), first-generation college attendee (yes or no), perceived adequacy of high school preparation (1-really prepared me to 4 – Did not prepare me at all), and university environment activities such as academic classification (upper or lower division), use of African American Student Services, and participation in student organizations. The MIBI provided 7 submeasure scores which comprised the average rating received on a 7-point Likert type scale for the items within comparing each submeasure.

For the purpose of this study, an analytical data set was developed that was comprised of all usable data from the DDS and the MIBI. Descriptive statistics from the Demographics Data Sheet (DDS) were examined as well as the MIBI scores. The researcher followed the instructional manual provided by Sellers, et al. (1997) to appropriately score each MIBI survey.

Data Analyses. *Descriptive analyses.* For the total group, data from the descriptive analyses are provided that specify means, standard deviations, frequency counts, and percentages, as appropriate, for every variable identified, as well as inter-correlations when appropriate. The MIBI measure delineates three dimensions of racial identity: centrality, regard, and ideology. Mean scores and standard deviations for the 7 submeasures of these dimensions of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity were obtained and are presented in chapter 4. (See Appendix N for item mean scores). Because the MIBI is based

on a multidimensional conceptualization of racial identity, a composite score from the entire scale is inappropriate as noted within the scoring manual.

Study Questions

An estimated partial correlation matrix was used to examine the relationship of the continuous dependent variable academic success, as measured by the participant's self-reported cumulative grade point average, with the independent variables which comprised three main categories, Black / African American identity, university environment, and student's home environment and family background. The background and university variables included a student's hometown (NM or other states and countries), sex (male or female), work (employed or not), kind of job (off campus or on campus), family background (single-parent family, two-parent family or other type family), services used in African American Student Services (academic support or other), university student classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), involvement in student groups / organizations, student-athlete, first-generation college attendee, student-parent, and perceived high school preparation. The scores from the MIBI comprised measures of centrality, private regard, public regard, assimilation, humanist, minority and nationalist.

After the data output was completed, the researcher then examined the relationship between cumulative grade point average (academic success) and the variables previously noted to determine if there were significant positive or negative relationships between these variables. The analyses were run for the total group and then separately by gender.

Phase 2

Phenomenological Research Approach

Phenomenological research is a qualitative design methodology used in human science research. Moustakas (1994) stated that human science research has the following characteristics: 1. Recognizes the value of qualitative designs and methodologies; 2. Evaluates studies of human experiences that are not approachable through quantitative approaches; 3. Focuses on wholeness of experience rather than solely on its objects or parts; 4. Searches for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations; 5. Obtains descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews; 6. Regards the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behavior and as evidence for scientific investigations; and 7. Views experiences and behavior as an integrated and inseparable relationship of subject and object, of parts and whole (pp. 84-86).

The phenomenological research methodology seeks to explore and examine lived experiences. It insists on careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life (Schwandt, 1997). As suggested by Moustakas (1994), the empirical phenomenological approach is “seen as revisiting one’s overall experience and one’s own reality from their own worldview in hopes of gaining a comprehensive vantage point when examining one’s descriptions” (pp.103- 110). These descriptions provide the basis for reflective analysis, which portrays the essence and spirit of the experience itself. This study employed a phenomenological approach that sought to understand how African American undergraduate students at PWIs (predominately White institutions) assign meaning to life events and formulate a belief system that impacts their view of higher education.

In summary, by using this methodology, researchers are examining the essence of understanding the experiences individuals have encountered. In addition, researchers are examining the meanings that people have created, and how people make sense of their world from their respective lenses (Guba, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1998). From a qualitative perspective, the “data” are people’s interpretations of what happened to them in a given situation, similarly within an institution and/or organization. As noted by Creswell (1994), “The purpose of utilizing qualitative methods is discovery and understanding, not generalization across groups or settings” (p.94). Personal contact through interviews and focus groups are vital, because surveys and other quantitative methods may not reflect the actual experiences of the participants in great depth and breadth (Attinasi, 1989). As suggested by the works of Miles and Huberman (1994), quantitative data are in the form of numbers and statistics and in using qualitative data the researcher is attempting to remain objective and, to an extent, apart from the subjects. Therefore, it can be inferred that quantitative research does not fully examine the stories and experience of the participants; hence, a mixed methods approach was employed in this study.

Description of Sample

Recruitment. The sample for the qualitative research study was selected from those students who participated in the quantitative online survey (MIBI-Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity) and indicated that they would be willing to participate in the one-on-one, semi-structured, open-ended interview with the researcher. Once these names had been gathered and systematically entered into an Excel spreadsheet, the researcher used a simple random sampling procedure to afford all potential participants the same opportunity to be involved in the qualitative portion of the study. Each participant was assigned a number

from 1 to n, based on the random selector within the Excel program. Once each potential participant had been assigned a number, the researcher called every nth participant on the Excel spreadsheet list. It was the goal of the researcher to have a representative sub-sample in order to capture a deeper meaning of the responses provided from the online survey. Once the researcher had 25 interview participants selected from the overall population, the researcher contacted the first participant by phone and re-familiarized him/her with the study. The researcher explained to the participant that he/she would participate in an individual interview with the researcher. If at that time, the participant was willing to participate in the interview, a time and location was arranged. If the potential participant wished to not participate in the study interview, the researcher went back to the original list of potential participants and began the process over again. This process was repeated until 15 interviews had been scheduled. At the time of the interview, each participant was given an interview informed consent form (Appendix O) explaining the interview process, risks of participation, and benefits regarding the study. If the participant agreed to the informed consent form, the participant signed the form, received a copy for his or her individual record, and the interview began.

Variables and Measures

Interview. For this phase of the study, a one-on-one, semi-structured, open ended, in-depth interview was conducted. Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry through the use of language. The goal of in-depth interviewing is to have the participant reconstruct the experience of the topic under study (Seidman, 1998). This involves an informal, interactive process and uses open-ended comments and questions (Moustakas, 1994). The interview questions that were used were adopted from Carson (2003). The duration of each interview

took an average of forty minutes; however, the interviewer (the researcher) and each participant were under no time constraints.

Reliability in phenomenological research focuses on how the principles that support the study relate to the meaning of the experience revealed in the data (Tuchman, 1993). Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to the terms “credibility and transferability” in qualitative research in describing internal and external validity. In this study, credibility was assessed through the use of triangulation of methods. The MIBI (online survey), individual interviews, and member checks were used to connect experiences within and between participants. In addition, the researcher employed observational notes and a researcher’s journal to connect with the experiences of the participants. Therefore, based on studies that are similar to this one (i.e., Carson, 2003), the interviews were administered to undergraduate, African American students who had already voluntarily taken the MIBI and had agreed to participate in the individual interview with the researcher.

Data Collection Procedures

In phenomenological research, interviews are used to explore, examine and gather a practical narrative that may serve as a resource for developing and organizing a richer understanding of a human phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). Given approval from the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), participants were asked seven semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. These questions were designed to draw out information pertaining to parents’ and students’ educational history, influences on students’ attitudes, the purpose of higher education (from family, peers, media, community, etc.), ethnicity, current college success, and post-college aspirations. Some of the questions used were: How strongly do you identify with the African American community here at this university?, If you had to

describe what it's like to be an African American college student at a HSI / PWI (as UNM), what would you say?

The interview guide that the researcher used was adopted from the study described by Carson (2003), which is similar to the one that this researcher conducted. In addition, the researcher conducted pilot interviews to assess whether the data collected would readily address the research questions. Based on the feedback from the pilot study, the researcher made note of the comments and modified interview questions as needed. The interview questions were asked systematically, but, the researcher chose, at her discretion, to follow up on participants' responses with additional questions for clarification.

The interviews took place at a location that was comfortable for the participant and that ensured the participant's privacy. When each participant arrived, the researcher welcomed the participant and invited the participant to sit where comfortable. The participant was re-informed that the study was dealing with issues of racial identity and academic achievement. The participant was given an informed consent form and the researcher reviewed the form in detail. A paper copy was given to the participant for his/her records. The researcher explained that the interview would be audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. In addition, the researcher re-emphasized that at the conclusion of the study all audio tapes would be destroyed by the researcher and transcripts would not contain the participant's identity. After the informed consent form was reviewed, each participant was asked if he/she had any questions for the researcher. Participants were informed that participating in the study would contribute to scholarly research for the general population. Lastly, participants were asked to complete a paper copy of the DDS so that the researcher could obtain descriptive statistics for the interview participants. This would allow the

researcher to compare the data gathered from interview participants with the data from the online participants and to potentially make generalizations to the collective group who participated in the online survey portion of the study. Once the DDS was completed, the interview began and the participant was asked to verbally respond to the interview questions. Once the interview was completed, each participant was thanked and escorted out of the designated interview location.

The Olympus WS-400 S series was utilized for recording the interviews. It is a well-known and reputable device that is often used in qualitative data collection. This device was recommended by the transcription service company to ensure high quality voice recording. Each audio-taped transcription was assigned a number which corresponded with the order of the interview to ensure that the researcher was able to match interview notes at a later date. Each interview was transcribed verbatim by the Integrity Court Reporting transcription service. The transcribed data were then coded and analyzed by the researcher.

Data Processing and Analysis Procedures

Data Processing. Procedural thoroughness was captured through verification, validation and validity (Meadows & Morse, 2001). The first step in this process focuses on verification, which is the first step in achieving validity in any research study. This step was accomplished by thoroughly examining the literature, paying close attention to the process of reading through text and making notes in the margins, forming initial codes, describing the essence of the phenomena, developing significant statements, grouping statements into meaningful subsets, keeping field notes within the researcher's journal, and using an adequate sample (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 120- 124). The next step was the process of validation. This was achieved by studying the interviews and observations, and coding and

analyzing the data. The final step in this process was ensuring validity. According to Creswell (2007), the meaning of validity is an outcome goal of research and is based on external reviews to share findings and to check on the accuracy of the findings. The external reviews were conducted by checking in with those who had participated in the interviews. The researcher took this step to inquire with participants if the interpretations of findings were accurate for what the participants reported. By ensuring all the steps were followed, this analysis was critical in order to bring order to the data, and to organize what is gathered into categories and basic descriptive themes. For the purpose of this study, the above analysis was used by the researcher to ensure that the data were being interpreted correctly. Thus, the researcher organized notes and placed key information into various categories, which then resulted in themes which emerged from this process.

In this study, individual, semi-structured interviews were one of three primary tools used to assess how racial and academic identities impact academic success at a HSI/PWI. Research suggests that using multiple tools will assist with understanding the data more accurately and succinctly. Thus, the tools for this study were the Demographic Data Sheet, the MIBI on-line survey, individual interviews, observations, the researcher's journal and participant (members) check in.

Data Analyses. The interview transcript data, coding, and additional analysis of other items within the interview findings fostered by the MIBI were carried out to capture a phenomenological approach. The researcher identified themes by reading the transcribed interviews repeatedly (line by line) and exploring the various levels of the data. From each interview transcript, significant statements, phrases, or sentences that pertained directly to the experiences of being an African American, undergraduate student at a Hispanic

Serving/Predominately White institution were identified. The formulated meanings were clustered into themes, thereby allowing for the emergence of themes common to all of the participants' transcripts. The results were integrated into an in-depth, exhaustive description of the phenomenon. Once the descriptions and themes were obtained, the researcher approached participants a second time to validate the findings. This technique is referred to by the researchers within this field as member checks. As new relevant data emerged, it was included in the final description.

Specific attention was paid to anticipated themes dealing with parents' and students' educational history, influences on students' attitudes about the purpose of higher education (from family, peers, media, community, etc.), ethnicity, current college success, and post-college aspirations. However, it was possible that other themes would emerge as well. In such cases the researcher made notes in the margin of the transcript. A combination of the responses on the MIBI and answers to the interview questions provided the data for the extended analysis of racial identity and academic achievement.

As noted by Miles and Huberman (1994), this data analysis procedure incorporated three processes described as: 1. data reduction, 2. data display, and 3. conclusion drawing and verification. For the purposes of this study, the researcher also employed a process derived from Moustakas (1994) which provided a sequence of "phenomenological data reduction", which was a modification of the Van Kaam Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. The method consists of seven systematic steps for reducing the data to determine the meaning associated with the experience. These methodological steps include: horizontalization, clusters of meaning, creation of themes, creation of textural descriptions, creation of structural description, concluding with developing the overall essence of the lived

experiences of the participants. For this study, an adaptation of these methodological procedures was implemented. This was the process used to continually reduce the data that was gathered from each participant. Upon completion of this study the researcher will destroy all transcribed data.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

This research was a mixed methods study that utilized self reporting and was a phenomenological study examining the collegiate experiences of African American students and their academic achievement. The focus was on the experience of being an African American, undergraduate student enrolled at a HSI/PWI and examined how factors such as racial identity, the university environment, and a student's home environment (i.e., family background, structure and community) impacted academic achievement. This study had the restrictions of a convenience sample. All undergraduate students who self identified as African American were afforded an opportunity to be involved in this study via a variety of communication methods if specific criteria were met via an email invitation. Nevertheless, the African American population may not have been fully represented in the sample, although a relatively "acceptable" number of students did participate in the study as it relates to response rate. In addition, since a small number of interview participants were selected for the purpose of this study (due to time constraints of analyzing the interview transcripts), the researcher advises caution in generalizing the transcriptions of the themes that emerged. However, due to the fact that these 15 interviewees were not only very verbal and provided detailed answers, they appeared highly motivated to provide clear and accurate information that would further understanding of the issues being examined. Thus they may have well

represented the voices of those unable and / or unwilling to participate who may have found a one-on-one interview stressful.

Also, this study used self-reporting as a data collection method which is dependent on participants being honest. In addition, assumptions were made that the participants were able to read and understand the survey instrument. The participants who were a part of this study may or may not have been completely honest about some of the information asked and/or they may not have accurately recalled the information that was asked of them to answer or answered what they thought the researcher wanted or sounded best. This is a common limitation as noted in most research that involves questionnaires, surveys, and checklists. Of course, it also affects interview responses, but is usually easier to detect. Interviews, however, also are affected by an interviewees verbal ability and ease in talking in general and about one's self in particular.

Researcher's Bias

Due to the researcher's past work experience as a school counselor and her current position at the University of New Mexico as a staff member and doctoral candidate, it is to be noted that there may be some researcher bias in this study. However, the researcher was mindful of these issues (such as knowing the students personally, advising students, participating in school events, etc.) prior to collecting data. Thus, the researcher provided mechanisms to ensure the authenticity of the study. These mechanisms included:

1. advertising the online survey (MIBI) portion of the study to all undergraduate, Black students enrolled at the university, and
2. the utilization of a random selection process. By implementing these mechanisms, the researcher decreased the likelihood of collecting flawed data. In addition, due to the researcher being a black woman and a doctoral candidate at this

university, the researcher was very cognizant of the researcher's own "personal reality" regarding this study. Therefore, in addition to the previous actions taken, the researcher included the following steps: 1. discussing collected data with other scholars on the researcher's dissertation committee experienced using qualitative methods of data analysis, 2. using a researcher's journal, 3. general observations of students in various social and academic settings (i.e., Student Union Building, African American Student Services, La Posada Cafeteria, Zimmerman Library), 4. member checks with students who were a part of this study, and 5. a consistent researcher check in, which ensured the researcher that the "voice" portion of the study were the collective and individual voices of the participants and not the voice of the researcher.

Summary

In this chapter, a description of the variables and measures that were used and the procedures for data collection, data processing, and analysis were explained. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to capture the rich descriptions of African American, undergraduate students' various experiences, beliefs, ideals and the impact they have on academic success. Using a phenomenological method offered a systematic approach to obtaining the meanings of these experiences. In-depth interviews enabled the voices of the participants to come alive and provided credibility to the findings. It has been noted that there are specific potentially limiting factors that should be considered when interpreting, reviewing and studying the findings. The following chapter provides a detailed description of the research results.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected in the examination of African American, undergraduate students enrolled at a Hispanic-serving and predominately White institution of higher education. This study addressed two main research questions:

1. To what extent does the racial identity of African American, undergraduate students shape their academic identity, their expectations and beliefs about succeeding at the higher education level?
2. What is the relationship between students' racial identity, university environment, and their home environment (i.e., family background and structure) with their academic achievement (cumulative grade-point average) while matriculating towards a bachelor's degree?

The first section in this chapter describes the findings from Phase 1 of the study that used quantitative measures. Included are responses given by the participants who initially completed an electronic Demographics Data Sheet that asked for information such as sex, age, and academic classification, as well as selected variables assessing their family background and university environment. Within this section, the findings from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (1998) also are discussed.

The second section describes data gathered in Phase 2 from in-depth, qualitative interviews with a sub-sample of the initial participants.

Phase 1

Descriptive Analyses

Description of Sample

The research sample consisted of Black / African American students at the University of New Mexico main campus who elected to complete the electronic administration of the MIBI questionnaire and were eighteen years of age or older and had enrolled in at least 12 credit hours. The total number of undergraduate students (647) that had self-identified as African American for the spring 2010 Enrollment Management Report was recruited to complete the online survey. From this population, 135 students initially responded to taking the online survey, but of these, 10 students completed only the Demographics Data Sheet. Thus, the resulting study sample consisted of the 125 participants who continued online to complete the MIBI. (See Appendix P for an explanation of the construction of the analytic data set.)

The following paragraphs describe the participants by sex, age, academic classification, hometown, employment status, family structure, African American Student Services usage, student involvement in university groups/organizations, student-athlete participation, cumulative grade point average, students as parents, perceived adequacy of high school preparation, first-generation college attendee status, and member of volunteer interview pool. The descriptive statistics for these demographic variables for the 125 undergraduate students are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics for the demographic (D), family background (F) and university environment (U) for African American/Black undergraduates at the University of New Mexico who responded to the MIBI (N=125).

Students' Demographic Information	Total Number	Percent
Total Undergraduate Students Who Participated in the Online MIBI Survey	125/647	19
Gender (D)		
Male	52	41.60
Female	72	57.60
Academic Status at the Time of the Study (D)		
Freshman	13	10.40
Sophomore	24	19.20
Junior	42	33.60
Senior	46	36.80
Hometown (F)		
New Mexico	51	40.80
Other of State/Countries	73	58.40
<i>The states that were represented were:</i>		
Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Wyoming.		
<i>The countries that were represented were:</i>		
Canada, Japan, Kenya, St. Thomas, Tobago, Trinidad, and US Virgin Islands		
Employment Status (U)		
Not-Employed	41	32.80
Employed	84	67.20
On Campus	30	24.00
Off Campus	43	34.40

Table 3 Continued

Students' Demographic Information	Total Number	Percent
Family Structure During High School (D)		
Single-Parent Home	48	38.40
Two-Parent Home	67	53.60
Relative's Home	3	2.40
Other (Foster Care)	3	2.40
Use of African American Student Services Center (U)		
Academic (Services used) – homework, studying, tutoring, computer lab, advising	53	42.40
Other purposes – social, student group meeting, other	72	57.60
Involvement in University Student Organizations/Groups(U)		
Yes– fraternities, sororities, student senate, black student union, black men in motion, other	47	37.60
No	78	62.40
Student Athlete at the University (U)		
Yes– (Football and Men's Basketball)	20	16.00
No	104	83.20
Grade Point Average (D)		
	Mean	SD
	3.10	1.76
Student as Parent (D)		
	Total Number	Percent
Yes	28	22.40
No	97	77.60
Perceived High School Preparation for College (F)		
Really Prepared Me	13	10.40
Somewhat Prepared Me	30	24.00
Prepared Me A Little Bit	44	35.20
Did Not Prepare Me at All	38	30.40
First Generation (in immediate family to attend college) (F)		
Yes	30	24.00
No	95	76.00
Volunteered for Interview Participation (D)		
Yes	77	61.60
No	48	38.40
Age (D)		
	Mean	SD
18-52	22.87	1.56

Key: Variables are classified as Demographic (D), Family environment and family composition (F) or University environment (U).

Sex. During the spring 2010 semester, there were 647 Black, undergraduate students enrolled at the University of New Mexico main campus in a bachelor's degree seeking program (UNM, 2010). In this group there were 292 males (45.1%) and 355 females (54.8%). Of the 125 African American/Black students that completed both the Demographic Data Sheet, as well as the MIBI, 52 (41.6%) were male; 72 (57.6%) were female and 1 student did not respond. Thus, the study sample also showed a higher percentage of females, but to a somewhat greater degree.

Age. The mean age of the 125 participants that provided information on this variable was 22.7 years (SD=1.56; median age was 21 years). The youngest respondent was 18 and the oldest was 52, representing a range of 34 years.

Academic classification. The respondents were predominantly upper division students with 33.6% juniors and 36.8% seniors.

Hometown residence. Forty percent of the sample (n=51) indicated that they were from the state of New Mexico; 58% (n=73) indicated that they had come to UNM from another state or country. The 26 other states that were represented included: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming, as well as Washington, D.C. Canada, Japan, Kenya, St. Thomas, Tobago, Trinidad, and the US Virgin Islands made up the list of participants' other home countries.

Employment status. There were 84 students (67.2%) that reported some form of employment. Of these 84 students, 30 students (24.0%) worked on campus and 43 students

(34.4%) worked elsewhere. The students with jobs noted that they had to work in order to pay for school, whereas the rest worked primarily to meet other living expenses, such as clothes and extra food and snacks.

Home Environment. A slight majority of students in this study (67 or 53.6%) were raised in a two-parent home with 48 or 38.3% in a single-parent home. Three students indicated that they were raised in a relative's home and another three reported being raised in foster care, with a family friend, or with someone else. There were 4 students who did not respond to this item.

African American Student Services Usage. All 125 students indicated that they utilize African American Student Services, but there was a fair amount of variation in the reasons for their visits there. Fifty-three students (42.4%) reported accessing specific academic services (homework, study time, tutoring, computer lab and advisement). The main reason reported by 72 (57.6%) for going to African American Student Services, however, was for social activities and events.

Student Group/Organization Involvement. The majority of the students who participated in the study (78 or 62.4%) reported that they were involved in student groups/organizations, but a significant number (47 or 37.6%) reported that they were not involved. Those students participating in groups or organizations reported their involvement as follows: 12.2% in fraternities and sororities, 1.0% in the student senate, 14.1% in the Black Student Union, 2.0% in Black Men in Motion, and 19.2% in other student organizations such as the Afro Latino Caribbean Circle; American Institute of Chemical Engineers; Amnesty International Community; College Enrichment Program; Developing, Intelligent, Vigilant, Ambitious Students; Invisible Children; McNair; National Society of

Black Engineers; Mortar Board Senior Honor Society; Powerful Movement of Educated Sisters; Student Athletic Advisement Council; Student Letterman Association; Queer, Straight Alliance; Sidekicks; Student Support Services; and UNM Wilderness Alliance.

Student-Athlete. Twenty of these respondents (16.0%) were student scholarship athletes. The sports teams involved were Football and Men's Basketball.

Cumulative Grade Point Average. Of the 125 participants, 123 provided this information. Their average cumulative GPA was 3.10, SD= 1.56; with a range from 1.8 to 3.91 and a median of 3.00.

Student As Parent Status. Although 28 students (22.4%) reported that they were a parent of at least one child, as expected, most (n=97) indicated that they did not have children.

Perceived High School Preparation for College. Students were asked to evaluate the extent to which their high school had prepared them for college from 1 – “really prepared me” to 4 – “did not prepare me at all.” The majority (44 or 35.2%) reported that their high school had prepared them “only a little bit” or “not at all” (38 or 30.4%). Only 13 students (10.4%) reported that their high school “really prepared” them for college, 30 students (24.0%) another who indicated that their high school “somewhat prepared” them for college.

First-Generation College Students. Thirty of the study students (24.0%) were first-generation college student attendees; out of their immediate family members, these participants were the first to attend college. The majority of the study sample, however, (95 or 76.0%) were not first-generation college students, as someone else in their immediate family had attended or was attending college.

Volunteer for interview participation. Survey participants also were asked if they would like to be considered for individual interviews with the researcher. Out of the 125 participants, 77 students (61.6%) stated that they wanted to be considered, whereas 48 students (38.4%) indicated that they were not interested.

Racial Identity: MIBI Scores

As noted earlier, The MIBI is comprised of 56 Likert-type scale items ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (7). The 56 items are distributed across seven submeasures of Black identity: *centrality*, *private regard*, *public regard*, *assimilation*, *humanist*, *minority*, and *nationalist*. A score for each sub-measure was calculated for the 125 participants who responded to this measure via the Student Voice online survey system. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the submeasure scores for the total group. Given increasing evidence of sex differences favoring girls in academic achievement by African American students' dropout rates, (e.g., lower high enrollments), it was also subsequently decided to perform an independent T-test that examined how male and female participants responded to the MIBI. Since no statistically significant differences in the subscores of male and female participants in examining the seven MIBI subscores were found, only the data for the overall sample are presented here.

Table 4

MIBI Descriptive Statistics for the Total Sample (N =125)

Sub-measure	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Min.	Max.	25th	50th	75th
Centrality	1.65	.67	-.50	3.38	1.25	1.63	2.13
Private Regard	4.08	.65	1.66	4.83	3.83	4.17	4.66
Public Regard	1.24	.67	-1.66	2.66	.83	1.16	1.66
Assimilation	5.27	.89	1.55	6.88	4.55	5.22	6.00
Humanist	5.47	.5269	2.66	7.00	4.88	5.55	6.11
Oppressed Minority	5.09	.8449	3.11	6.88	4.44	5.11	5.74
Nationalist	3.64	.9872	1.00	6.66	3.00	3.66	4.33

As Table 4 shows, when measuring *centrality*, *private regard*, *public regard*, *assimilation*, *humanist*, *minority*, and *nationalist views*, the collective student sample provided a wide array of scores. The mean score of *centrality* was 1.65 on a scale of 1 – 7. Therefore, for these students, being African American reportedly was not perceived as a central focal point to their definition of self when responding to this survey. *Public regard* (the extent to which other groups are viewed as having positive feelings towards African Americans) also was reportedly low. The other measures: *private regard* (reported positive feelings towards African Americans in general); *assimilation* (overall positive perceived relationship between African Americans and mainstream America), *humanist* (perceived similarities among individuals in all races); and *minority* (perceived similarities between African Americans and other minority groups) were in general reported as *agree* or *strongly*

agree. High scores in these areas suggest that these measures are a part of the participants' perceived Black identity as a collective group.

Centrality. Of the questions focused on *centrality*, responses to items 1, 6 and 19 shared a moderate to strong sense of centrality among the participants who completed the online survey. For question number 1, 48% of students disagreed with the statement, "Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself." For question number 6, "In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image," 80% of participants agreed with this statement. Lastly, 71% of participants agreed with the statement for this question 19, "I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people".

Private Regard. For *private regard* item 7, "I am happy that I am Black," and for question 54, "I am proud to be Black, 89% and 91% of participants, respectively, strongly agreed with this statement, whereas for question 24, "I regret that I am Black," 90% strongly disagreed with this statement. (It should be noted, however, that five participants reported that they felt this way).

Public Regard. Forty-eight percent of the participants responded that they agreed with the statement in item 5, "Overall, Blacks are considered good by others." For question 15, "In general, others respect Black people," the responses were more in the neutral realm with 43% agreeing and 31% disagreeing with this statement and 26% responding in the neutral category.

Assimilation. Among responses to the items that focused on *assimilation*, items 44 and 46 indicated further identity differentiation. For question 44, "Blacks should view themselves as being American first and foremost," 73% reported that they strongly agreed. However, 27% did not agree and/or were neutral to this statement. For item 46, "The plight

of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions within the system,” 63% of the participants agreed with this statement and fewer than half disagreed.

Humanist. In responding to the items focused on *humanism*, 60% reportedly agreed with item 30, “Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black,” and 88% said that they agreed with item 35, “People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations”.

Oppressed Minority. In responding to items focused on minority issues, participants revealed a strong in their answers to items 34 and 50. For item 34, 60% reported they agreed with the statement, “The struggle for Black liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups,” and 27% said they were neutral. Similarly, 60% of the students agreed with the statement in item 50, “The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented,” and less than 1% did not agree.

Nationalist. Nationalism items 11 and 16 provided insightful statistics. The majority of participants (55%) said that they felt neutral and 45% said that they did not agree with the statement in item 11, “Blacks would be better off if they adopted Afrocentric values”. However, for item 16, “Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses,” 60% of the participants reportedly agreed.

Overall, when examining the data from the MIBI, participants showed a wide array of perspectives regarding Black identity. As noted in the literature review in Chapter 3, Sellers (2006), Tatum (1987), Fordham (1988) and Helm (1996) have pointed out that identity has multiple layers within mainstream America, therefore, throughout one’s lifespan, development is fluid and experiences evidenced can influence one’s perception of self within a particular moment and space. As is later in this chapter, the qualitative portion of this study

provides additional information, which provides a deeper and richer perspective about what it means to some of these participants to be a Black, undergraduate student at a HSI / PWI.

Reliability of MIBI Submeasures

The forthcoming section provides the estimated Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the grouping of the survey questions. A value of .7 or higher indicates moderate to high consistency of responses to the items within submeasure for this particular group of participants. A number below .7 indicates that the set of questions do not work as well as intended and additional data may need to be collected.

Examination of the estimates of Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to assess the inter-item correlations for assessing the reliability of the 7 submeasures. In contrast to previously reported data for these measures, several of the present measures showed low coefficient alphas, thereby evidencing low consistency of response for this study sample. Further examination indicated that these measures were ones containing items requiring reverse scoring. Tables 5-11, provides the Cronbach's Alpha obtained for each measure with and without inclusion of negatively worded items. As can be seen, the measures minus the reverse scored items showed moderate to high coefficient alphas. Thus it appears that a number of students did not take into account the changes in direction of wording for some items, thereby reducing the level of agreement in responding to items for the measure being assessed.

In sum, when examining correlations for centrality with all eight items, a low reliability for grouping was obtained (.151). However, when the reverse-scored items were omitted, the reliability of the remaining five items was much higher at .796. This was a common theme for the measure of private regard as once the items that were reverse scored

were omitted, the estimated Cronbach's Alpha of reliability was higher with six items it was .519, but when the reverse-scored item was omitted, the reliability was .739 for five items. In examining public regard with all six items, the reliability score was low, at .187. However, when the items that were reverse scored were omitted, the reliability statistic for 4 items was higher at .827. Finally, the measures for the ideology dimension (assimilation, humanist, minority oppressed and nationalist) reflected an acceptable reliability score for the grouping of items in each submeasure. It should be noted that none of the ideology submeasures used reverse scoring.

Centrality. The first stable measure examined was *centrality*. *Centrality* describes whether or not race is an important part of a person's self-concept - either on an individual level or a collective (group) level. Following are the MIBI questions that focused on centrality exclusively. Please note that (R) denotes reverse scoring as indicated in the MIBI scoring manual.

Table 5

Centrality Items.

Question #	Survey Question
1 R	Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
6	In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.
9	My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.
13 R	Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
19	I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.
33	I have a strong attachment to other Black people.
48	Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.
51 R	Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.

Cronbach's Alpha for Centrality with and without reverse scored items (N=125)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.796	5
.151	8

Regard (private/public). Regard is defined as an individual's affective and evaluative judgment of his or her race in terms of positive and negative behaviors. Within the MIBI, *regard* is divided into two sub measures, *private* and *public regard*.

Private regard is the extent to which an individual feels positively or negatively toward African Americans and about being African American. In the MIBI, the following questions focused on private regard.

Table 6

Private Regard Items.

Question #	Survey Question
4	I feel good about Black people.
7	I am happy that I am Black.
8	I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements.
24R	I often regret that I am Black.
54	I am proud to be Black.
55	I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society.

Cronbach's Alpha for Private Regard with and without reverse scored items (N=125)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.739	5
.151	6

Public regard refers to the extent to which individuals feel that others view African Americans positively/negatively. In the MIBI, the following questions focused on public regard.

Table 7

Public Regard.

Question #	Survey Question
5	Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.
15	In general, other groups respect Black people.
17R	Most people consider Blacks, on average, to be more effective than other racial groups.
52R	Blacks are not respected by the broader society.
53	In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.
56	Society views Black people as an asset.

Cronbach's Alpha for Public Regard with and without reverse scored items (N=125)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.827	4
.187	6

Ideology. Ideology reflects an individual's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes with respect to the way he or she feels that members of the race should act. There were four ideology sub-measures within the MIBI. These four scales were: *assimilation*, *humanist*, *minority oppressed* and *nationalist*. *Assimilation* describes the similarities between Blacks and the rest of American society and the extent to which individuals view themselves as American and try to enter into the mainstream culture. In the MIBI, the following questions focused on *assimilation*.

Table 8

Assimilation Items.

Question #	Survey Question
10	Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as White people who also espouse separatism.
18	A sign of progress is that Blacks are in the mainstream of America more than ever before.
37	Because America is predominately White, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.
39	Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system.
40	Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals.
41	Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated.
43	Blacks should feel free to interact socially with White people.
44	Blacks should view themselves as being Americans first and foremost.
46	The plight of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions within the system.

The Cronbach's Alpha was .743 for this measure; none of the 9 assimilation items used reverse scoring.

Humanist. The idea of *humanist* emphasizes the similarities among all humans to the extent that one does not think in terms of race. The following MIBI questions focused on this sub-measure.

Table 9

Humanist Items.

Question #	Survey Question
23	Black values should not be inconsistent with human values.
26	Blacks should have the choice to marry interracially.
27	Blacks and Whites have more commonalities than differences.
28	Black people should not consider race when buying art or selecting a book to read.
29	Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues.
30	Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black.
31	We are all children of a higher being; therefore, we should love people of all races.
32	Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race.
35	People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations.

The Cronbach's Alpha was .756 for this measure; none of the 9 Humanist items used reverse scoring.

Minority oppressed. The *Minority oppressed measure* emphasizes similarities between the oppression that Blacks and other groups face. The following MIBI questions pertained to this sub-measure.

Table 10

Minority Oppressed Items.

Question #	Survey Question
20	The same forces which have led to the oppression of Blacks have also led to the oppression of other groups.
34	The struggle for Black's liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups.
36	Blacks should learn about the oppression of other groups.
38	Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies.
42	The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups.
45	There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans.
47	Blacks will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other oppressed groups.
49	Blacks should try to become friends with people from other oppressed groups.
50	The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented.

The Cronbach's Alpha for this measure was .715; none of the 9 minority oppressed items used reverse scoring.

Nationalist. The *nationalist* sub-measure gauges perceptions about the uniqueness of being Black and the extent that African Americans should be in control of their destiny with minimal input from other groups. The following MIBI questions focused on this definition.

Table 11

Nationalist.

Question #	Survey Question
2	It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music and literature.
3	Black people should not marry interracially.
11	Blacks would be better off if they adopted Afrocentric values.
12	Blacks would be better off going to schools that are controlled and organized by Blacks.
14	Black people must organize themselves into a separate political force.
16	Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses.
21	A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today.
22	Blacks and Whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences.
25	White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned.

The Cronbach's Alpha for this measure was .817; none of these 9 Nationalist items used reverse scoring.

Estimated Correlation Analysis

When examining their academic success as indicated by degree of relationship to students' cumulative grade point average (GPA), a correlation matrix was created with the demographic, family environment and university environment variables described earlier in the description. The following paragraphs of the sample, however, offer a description of the

nine variables that were significantly correlated with GPA. Table 12 provides a complete description of the correlations that were obtained.

Table 12

Partial estimated correlation matrix for the dependent variable GPA with predictors (N=125).

Predictors	Cumulative GPA
From New Mexico	.090
Sex (recoded)	-.379***
Employed (recoded)	.230**
Kind of Job (recoded)	.080
Single- Parent Home	-.169~
Two- Parent Home	.160~
Relative's Home	-.020
Other Family Structure	.092
Services used in AA Center	.094
Upper or Lower Division	.011
Involved in Student Groups	.097
On an Athletic Scholarship	-.342***

Table 12 Continued

Predictors	Cumulative GPA
First Generation College Students (recoded)	-.149~
Student also parent (recoded)	-.046
High School Prepared for College	.218*

MIBI Centrality Measure	-.211*
MIBI Private Regard Measure	.025
MIBI Public Regard Measure	-.185
MIBI Assimilation Measure	.057
MIBI Humanist Measure	.130
MIBI Minority Measure	-.025
MIBI Nationalist Measure	-.167~

Key: < .001 ***; < .01**; <.05 *; <.10 ~

Significant Correlations with Students' GPA

There was a low to moderate negative relationship between self-reported GPA and the student's sex (-.379***). This association is statistically significant and suggests that the female students who were a part of this study tended to have higher GPAs than did the male students.

The data also indicated a low positive relationship (.230) between self-reported GPA and being employed. In comparing the correlation between student self-reported GPA and being raised in a single-parent or two- parent family home, a weak negative correlation was found (-.169~) with the former, whereas a weak positive correlation was found for the latter (.160~). These associations are statistically significant and suggest that higher GPAs are associated with being raised in a two-parent home. These data are consistent with findings for students in elementary and high school, but of smaller magnitude probably due to a varied range in academic achievement performance given that all participants graduated from high school and are attending college.

A weak to moderate negative relationship was observed between self-reported GPA and status as a student athlete (-.342***), which suggests that the GPAs of participating student athletes are lower than that of students who are not athletes. However, it should be noted that the student athletes in the study sample were members of 2 major group sports, football and men's basketball, suggesting that the heavy emphasis on these particular sports and their demands on students' time may need to be examined further.

A weak negative relationship between self-reported GPA and being a first-generation college attendee (-.149~) also was observed and not surprisingly indicates that first-generation students have a somewhat lower GPA than non-first generation students. However, there is a weak to moderate relationship between self-reported students' GPA and perceived adequacy of their high school preparation (.218*). This association is statistically significant and suggests that the more prepared a student feels by his or her high school experience, the higher their college GPA. Both findings are consistent with the research literature indicating that children and youth raised in academically enriched home and school environments show higher academic achievement in school.

In examining the relationship of the MIBI subscores with the students' reported cumulative grade point average, only two dimensions (the submeasures of centrality and nationalist) showed a weak negative relationship with the students' cumulative grade point average. In examining the correlation between students' self-reported GPA and their centrality score, there was a weak relationship (-.211*), which suggests that the less centrality in Black identity a student may report, the higher may be his or her GPA, possibly depending on many other factors affecting academic achievement. Similarly in examining the relationship between self-reported GPA and the ideology nationalist subscore, a weak

negative relationship (-.167~) was found and suggests that the lower the level of nationalism perceived by the student, the higher the GPA reported by the student. It also should be noted in reviewing the correlations of the MIBI scores with students GPA that some measures on the MIBI survey included items with a reversed scoring, as directed by the MIBI scoring manual. The level of the Cronbach's Alpha was at .7 or higher (which, according to Pallant 2006, is an acceptable reliability) when the reversed scoring items were removed, indicating that by using submeasure scores that included apparently incorrectly rated items, correlations are likely to have been markedly reduced.

Summary of Section I

The students who were a part of this study appeared to be focused and self motivated and did not rely heavily on outside resources such as other minority group support as well as academic resources provided by African American Student Services. The results suggested that of the 125 participants involved in this study, the majority of them were not first-generation students and had an average self-reported cumulative grade point average of 3.10. Also, the majority of these participants (n=73) were from a state other than New Mexico or from another country. Within the DDS variables that were examined and then collapsed into various indices related to identity, university environment and home environment (i.e., family background and structure), a statistically significant through weak negative relationship indicated that students who were raised in a single-parent home were more likely to have lower GPAs than students who were raised in a two-parent home. The results also noted that there was a weak to moderate relationship between self-reported GPA and the participant's gender, indicating that the Black female students who were a part of this study had higher self-reported GPAs than the male students. Finally, in examining Black identity, there were 2

dimensions from the MIBI survey that showed a weak relationship to the students' GPA. When examining these participants' rating of centrality, the less centrality in Black identity a student reported, the higher his or her GPA. The findings also suggested that the lower the level of nationalism reported by students, the higher the GPA they obtained.

As the above findings indicate, the students in this study have a wide array of thoughts and feelings as they relate to their racial identity and academic success at a HSI / PWI. Thus when examining their resiliency, as reflected in their current academic progress, their background information showed an array of diverse experiences that have apparently placed them on their educational path. These resources, as well as the activities provided by the Student Activities office, as well as African American Student Services in their current university environment are important supports to students in their collective academic experience at this institution of higher education. The next section of this chapter will further examine these and other findings from the qualitative analyses conducted.

Phase 2

Qualitative Analyses

Description of Procedures

The purpose of this phase of the study was to examine in greater depth how African American, undergraduate students, enrolled at a Hispanic Serving / Predominately White Institution of higher education, are affected by their racial and academic identities as they relate to academic achievement. In addition, the findings provided further information about other variables from the students' university environment and home environment that may impact academic success.

The phenomenon under investigation was how racial identity and academic success was perceived by Black undergraduate students enrolled in the same institution of higher education inside and outside the classroom. Phenomenological methods were used to analyze the data for this part of the study. Chavez (2002) and Moustakas (1994) had noted that this methodology was best for gathering in-depth descriptions of life experiences. In addition, Moustakas noted that transcendental phenomenology is focused less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of the participants. Thus, in order to gain meaning from the transcripts of each individual interview, the data were analyzed by examining and categorizing the clustering of responses. In addition, the data were subjected to multiple readings of the data transcriptions in order to delve deeper into the evidence presented to address the study's primary questions.

The data collected in the interviews of the 15 participants was analyzed using systematic steps. The researcher followed these steps to streamline and reduce the descriptions given by each participant into general essences of the experiences described. In

reviewing the common steps used to analyze qualitative data, the researcher wanted to ensure the application of the bracketing was achieved. Thus, in this first step of the analysis, the researcher, in order to achieve bracketing, had to put aside preconceptions, previous judgments, and personal viewpoints prior to examining the essence of the experience of each participant. The interview process, observations and member check, supported the implementation of the bracketing. By the researcher meeting with the interview participants, this step reassured the researcher that accurate and clear responses were being gathered. Moreover, by reviewing the verbatim transcript of each participant, the goal of bracketing and isolating the essence of the experience appeared to be obtained.

The next goal of qualitative analysis is to capture the essence of the experience shared by participants. This process involves establishing meaning and common themes among all participants. By doing this, core themes of the experience can evolve, creating a textural description for each participant. The horizontalization process is a common and unique way to sift through the data collected. The objective of this process is to highlight “noteworthy statements”, sentences or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, from each completed transcript of each participant, relevant statements emerged.

Findings

The first portion of this section provides a description of some of the demographic characteristics of the 15 participants, followed by a brief profile of each one to enable the reader to have a better idea of the student participants. Following this section, descriptions of the major themes that evolved from the analysis of the fifteen interview transcripts are presented.

Description of Sample

Table 13 provides data on the sex, age, permanent residence and academic classification of each of the 15 interview participants. As it can be seen similar to the total study sample there are more females than males represented (9 to 6 respectively) and more upper division students than lower division ones (8 to 7), and fewer from New Mexico (4 to 11). Their mean age was 22.8 with a range from 18 to 29. Followed by the summary overview, is a description of each of the participants involved in the interview process. This description is provided to offer a better idea of the interview participants involved in this study.

Table 13

Sex, Age, Home State and Academic Classification of Interview Participants.

Name	Sex	Age	Home State	Academic Classification
Jerome	M	19	New York	Freshman
Traychell	F	19	Texas	Freshman
Coley	F	29	California	Sophomore
Charlie	F	18	California	Freshman
Emmanuel	M	23	Colorado	Senior
Lloyd	M	19	Louisiana	Freshman
Clifton	M	29	South Dakota	Sophomore
De'Shaun	F	21	California	Senior

Table 13 Continued

Name	Sex	Age	Home State	Academic Classification
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Nicole	F	19	Colorado	Junior
Rashad	M	26	New Mexico	Junior
Zahra	F	20	Hawaii	Junior
Adaobi	F	23	New Mexico	Senior
Ariel	M	28	New York	Sophomore
Theresa	F	27	New Mexico	Junior
Marie	F	22	New Mexico	Senior

Interview Findings

The participants involved in the qualitative portion of this study were quite candid with the researcher during their individual interviews. Most participants expressed a need to have more Black/African American professors, activities, and events held on campus to assist with the general climate and provide a sense of being welcomed to the UNM campus. In examining the data from the transcriptions of the 15 interview participants, all noted in their own way, that being at the University of New Mexico is its own ‘reality’ when looking at academic success. The following descriptions, using pseudonyms, introduce the participants who participated in these interviews.

Jerome, a freshman, was very quiet at first. His demeanor during the interview was initially shy and very reserved, but after thinking about the interview questions and how he was feeling, he opened up to the researcher. He did not appear upset by the questions, but the reality appeared to increasingly hit him that being a Black male on a white campus is really tough.

Traychell, also a freshman, was very vocal in her responses to the interview questions. She had a lot to say and was very candid with her responses. She expressed herself very passionately and her southern drawl appeared to add to the depth and breadth of the meaning of her answers. She noted that “code-switching” is a way of life here at UNM for Black students in order to succeed. “If not, you get what you get and it may not be a degree!”

Coley, a sophomore student, was a bright and engaging young lady who expressed her goals clearly and with great insight. She was very engaging during the interview and wanted to share her experiences. She was a mom and was preparing herself to provide for her children’s future. She spoke maturely about her educational aspirations and the challenges that she faces at this university.

Charlie, a freshman student, showed a gentle spirit. She was also quite bubbly! All was well with the world from her lens. She was eager to begin the interview and had a lot to share. She expressed connection with her family as it relates to her Black heritage.

Emmanuel, a senior, was very upbeat and bubbly. He continually laughed a lot during the interview, but this apparently came from being nervous, as he so stated to the researcher. He views trials and tribulations as a Black male student to have shaped the person who he is today and during the interview, he was very candid with his responses.

Lloyd was a very laidback young freshman and a student athlete at the university. Hailing from the southern region of the United States, he spoke with a country drawl, but that just added to his personality. On the outside, one can see a tall and big Black young man, but on the inside, Lloyd had a lot of things to share that added great depth and breadth to his interview.

Clifton, a 29-year old sophomore and a non-traditional student with a military background, appeared to the researcher to be a gentle giant. He reported that many individuals noted that he couldn't "make it" in college, and to a certain extent, he believed that message. However, once he saw a Black engineer doing things that he had only dreamed of doing, he changed his tune. His pursuit of a bachelor's degree has not been easy, but he looks at his heritage of a great many Black scholars and tells himself, "how can't I get a degree, with such a lineage of success behind me?"

De'Shaun, a graduating senior, is looking forward to graduation. A seasoned senior is how she referred to herself with pride. She was an attractive, fashionably attired young lady with an approachable spirit, which has made her very popular on campus. She hails from an urban area, which adds to her engaging personality.

Nicole, a junior student, appeared bright and capable of being whatever she puts her mind to be in line with her self-reported grade point average. She is very goal oriented and focused on reaching her goals. She appeared to be a bit shy at the beginning of the interview, but once she got started, she had a lot to share with the researcher. She reported an interesting childhood, not having been raised by the traditional biological family, but this apparently has only added to her personality.

Rashad, a junior student, had a gentle demeanor that came with a lot of wisdom beyond his years. Although a somewhat older student, as compared to the other interviewees, Rashad was very engaging during the interview and answered questions without having to be probed. He wanted to share with the researcher as much as he could about his experiences.

Zahra, a junior student, was a very goal-oriented young lady. She had a personality that commanded presence. She pondered each question to ensure that her responses were clear and succinct, and that the meaning came across exactly the way she intended.

Adaobi, a senior student, was clear about what she wanted to say about her experiences at the university. Born and raised in New Mexico, her lens was very unique, however, as she addressed the issues of racial identity, diversity and inclusiveness from her lens as a Black female student. She too was candid in her responses.

Ariel, a sophomore student, appeared to hail from a different cloth, as compared to the rest of the interview participants. He was a military, non-traditional student, who had years of experience dealing with being a minority. He had a great deal to share regarding his life experiences. Although joking from time to time during the interview, his words added a richness to the overall interview.

Theresa, a junior, was serious about her responses and made it clear that she did not care who heard her transcription or if her “real” name would be used. Her opinions about being Black on campus were voiced with a lot of passion, and she spoke about some solutions as well.

Marie, a senior student, also looked forward to graduation! She had a gentle demeanor, but, she brought a lot of passion and insight to her experiences as a Black, undergraduate student at UNM. Hailing from the New Mexico area did not silence her frustrations and irritations that she felt towards UNM. She took offense to being called an “Oreo” by others.

Emergent Themes

The perceptions of these African American students are presented here using their voices. The direct quotes that support each theme are excerpts from the participants' transcribed interviews. The themes that evolved from the fifteen interview participants are noted as follows: 1) Experiencing racism: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me"; 2) Leaving it all at the door: Identity and all!; 3) Messages from home: ...failure, NOT an option!; 4) Connections are "us": Are you my brothers' keeper?; 5) University barriers: An uneasy road to walk; and 6) Nobody is listening, but,—Does racial identity and academic success really matter at UNM?

Theme One: Experiencing racism: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

Diversity could be defined in multiple ways. Often times, the meaning stems from the beholder. Some may suggest that diversity within the university campus is quite diverse. However, diversity joined with segregation speaks to "separate but equal", which in looking back in history was when it had been stated as a myth. In examining its deeper meaning, both diversity and segregation relate to the marginalization of African American students pursuing a bachelor's degree in higher education. With students experiencing some prejudicial experiences, no matter how subtle the experiences have been, the students who were interviewed recognized that some of these practices that take place at this university are just the way things are and have become a fundamental reality. The students in these interviews said they realized that it's easier to roll with the punches and move forward, rather than suffer with it daily, as a constant reminder of the challenges. Thus, to accept this reality, simply put, makes life at this university bearable.

Traychell, Charlie and Theresa acknowledged that the undergraduate community is strong, but that there needs to be more events exclusively for Black students, in order for the campus to realize that Black students are present on campus. They underscored the importance of having Black events, as being a huge necessity for this university so that Black students can be recognized and serve in key roles (such as a separate homecoming event where Black students could be king or queen, or a part of the court).

Often issues of discrimination and segregation are presented to students on a daily basis. However, from reviewing the data, it appears that more often than not, students elect to self-segregate, so as to not have to deal with the sense of isolation or alienation by majority students at the university. Some of the participants have chosen not to build relationships with students outside of their race. However, students who were a part of this study noted that they did relate closely to the African American faculty and staff within the university, as they expressed the same sense of comradery as did fellow peers in their social events and living spaces.

Jerome described diversity and the notion of separate but equal as it relates to diversity and the university culture as: “Pretty hard and not welcoming”. He continued: “We are only like two or three percent Black here. And I don’t know. The professors don’t really like reach out and try and help you too much unless you go to like Africana Studies or you’re like in a small classroom. I mean, it’s a good school, don’ get me wrong. However, for a Black student, it’s tough and diversity and being included doesn’t exist. I probably just haven’t had any teachers here. That’s probably the reason”. Nicole continued on this line of thinking and shared:

Since I have come here, I have been open to all. However, we need services too....the Black students. I am part Mexican and part Black, so depending on what the scholarship is and how many boxes I can mark, will guide what I check. Diversity is quite interesting on this campus. In the 'Afro., things are cool. However, you have the athletes and then the regular students. What is that all about? But, that's just the way it is. My feeling, with all that goes on with this campus to exclude us and keep us involved on the campus, we must stick together. Diversity on this campus is very limited and the meaning varies depending on who is giving the definition. It is hard being Black at UNM.

Clifton voiced some similar thoughts:

This university is big, but the Black folks are small in number. Period...point blank. The system is challenging and not really built for Black students to succeed. Just trying to get one straight answer is a challenge! The run around is always given to Black students, in my opinion. When I am thinking about the Black experience as a student here, it's been tough. You have to search to find connections with staff and faculty and everything is a struggle. But if I were at a Black school, whoever you run into is open to helping you out. Thank God I am about to graduate soon!

Charlie described the interaction and relationship with other races on campus as “chill – it is what it is—I love the people here”, speaking to the overall climate on campus.

De'Shaun explained her view of the relationships of the races as cordial, to an extent:

I—I do involve myself. I'm still an individual, but at the same time we're just alike when it comes down to it. So, yes, I do have Caucasian friends, Hispanic friends, Indian friends, and African American. When it comes down to it, when I have a situation being racial, I will go to an African American student before I'll go to a Caucasian friend, because the Caucasian may have been the one that said that racial comment. So, like people get along. But, it's sorta like a cordial type of relationship between, like races. Some people are open-minded, like, I kind of like to meet people from all over, like, the different races, but a lot of people are closed minded for as like not wanting to speak to anyone of different races. It's complicated.

Nicole gave a very rich, but somewhat disturbing description of the social climate and how it is reflected in the student's desire to speak to one another:

I think the unity is nonexistent. There is like a division amongst African American students. There is the African American students who are here on academic scholarship or paying out of their pocket who are more involved in activities pertaining to Black students. They utilized the 'Afro. Then there are the groupies, who love the student athletes, and then the athletes themselves who forget that they

are Black. You don't really see them, unless it is a sporting event, and then you see them because they are promoting themselves. So you would think because there is such a small population of us on campus, speaking would be automatic, regardless if you knew the person all like that or not. Nope. Not at all. It's a mentality that you keep your head down and keep moving. If you attempt to speak or wave, or whatever, the other person looks at you like you're crazy! People don't speak to one another. The standard is that you are not to speak.

The students varied in their knowledge levels, and developmentally were on a continuum regarding their ability to identify and classify racism. When the students spoke about experiencing racism at UNM, there were varied levels of awareness. Four students claimed not to have experienced racism, three others were not sure if they had actually experienced a racist act, and the remainder of the students interviewed experienced various kinds of acts minimal and very overt. Clifton offered his experience with racism:

Me and these students (Hispanic) had the same class together all semester. I knew I was having challenges in this class, so I made every attempt to meet with the teacher, send emails and try to attempt to understand the work. At the end of the semester, the students who were Hispanic had the same comments I had on my papers and earned a C. However, when I got my final grade it was a D. When I approached the teacher's assistant about it, the girl said I wasn't approachable and I need to learn how to handle situations and go to CAPS. (Long pause). I mean like, 'really?' So, I didn't understand her explanation and she said, "that's why your grade is what it is because you can't comprehend this level of work". That was messed up! She took time to speak with the Hispanic students a few times, but here is a Black man, just trying to get a better explanation and the brother gets told a racial comment and a D...welcome to UNM!

The students learn about racism from their home and upbringing. Some of the lessons learned also stemmed from past high school and middle-school experiences. Rashad noted, "I think about the stories of racism that my grandmother told me; I know her generation dealt with these acts in a completely different way than my generation. I can't say what her parents did about it; or what my parents have done about it {racism}, and at the same time,

it's through these experiences that I have gotten to where I am today. So I continue to remember the past from the present. I think it all comes together".

The students described examples in which they suspected racism, but it was not blatant. Nicole said:

I mean, there have been a few encounters that I've had with some sort of racial discrimination. Living on campus, of course, you can't control what happens on campus. But there have been some incidents where me and my friends have been called the "N" word by other non-Black students who were in a crowd. So when approached, of course no one said it, so you can't put your finger on it...but it did happen. We were delusional! Or teachers, for example, like—I don't know. It's like this thing that African American students have, where teachers expect for them not to be excelling in their classes. So I've ran into a couple of teachers who were like that.

Emmanuel added:

I am a firm believer that you gotta do what you gotta do. Clearly, different strokes for different folks (laughing). Folks are ignorant on this campus, period. But at the same time, you'll find cool people, open-minded and the whole nine. I have run into this crap from time to time. I personally have problems with White people who are closed-minded, like that.

Charlie was uncertain about her experiences with racism. She wasn't sure if people were treating her "differently", just because, or if it was racism. She noted, Like I don't know how good of a grasp I have on it. But up until this point here at UNM, things have been pretty good...the majority of students from all over talk to me and treat me nice. But sometimes, like when sororities are rushing, I don't know if they are talking to me because I am me, or talking to me to fill their quota for the black girl in the group. I don't know, but so far so good...I guess.

Traychell and Rashad had opposing opinions about how racism evolves in an individual. Traychell's thought on the issue is that it is the lack of knowledge from the other person displaying the act. Her fellow peer, Rashad, believes that racism is an intentional act from the other person. Rashad further went on to explain his perspective:

Many people of this culture in the U.S. really don't know how to deal with their thoughts about racism and black people. I am talking about the American culture, everybody that is over here and living and breathing and doing work right here in our

own culture has serious issues. The ignorance is self-consciously happening. The motivation to me, is to never link up and unify. The motivation is to “get yours”, is to get your piece of the pie, to get wealthy, to gain power. The bottomline, African traditions are more rounded vs. Eurocentric culture thinking which is a pyramid.

Marie, Coley, and Jerome touched on their feelings about racism in education, but didn't expound on it too much, because African Americans were allowed to attend school wherever they decided to go. Rashad and Nicole described events regarding racism in higher education and at the university. When Rashad described what it is like to be an African American student at UNM, he looked at the situation of racism from the 60s until the present day.

Well, have things changed? It is now 2010, have things changed for Black people in the United States? I know things have gotten better, I am assuming that from the 60s era and during the days of my grand- and great-grand parents. As far as I know, I mean, I am sure racism was like I don't know if its' as bad, because like people just hiding now, whereas back in the day, it was very much in your face. I mean, like today, it is still there, but people are not allowed to do it socially. I mean, the reality is that in the earlier years, Black people couldn't attend universities like UNM. So, until that time, our people weren't even allowed to be here, getting an education. I know it hasn't died out that fast. I'm sure it, it's still there, basically.

Racism is a term that describes a strong persistent bias towards people based on their perceived race. Racism also incorporates the belief that race determines one's capabilities. A third tier of racism involves the difference of treatment of an individual based on their perceived race. During the time of these interviews for this study, one main incident took place at UNM. This incident involved the Head Football Coach of UNM, Michael Locksley. Jerome, Coley, Nicole, Traychell and Rashad all described the incident where an alleged student at UNM used offensive language and described African Americans in a very demeaning way. This information was posted on an online UNM Daily Lobo website. This incident and the institution's response to the incident influenced the perceptions of racism

and racial issues. The following is a collective snapshot of some of the interviewees' responses to the University President's and the Vice President of Equity and Inclusion's email about the racial incident:

The response was timely and that's all fine and well. But then the reality sets in, like, who do you complain to? It is fine to complain to the President, and we did as a Black community. And so, he sent out the political email, but what is the next step? My opinion, since it was on the internet Daily Lobo, you can go back and find out who actually did it, because we are very much in an advanced technology age where that can be done. Is this being done...not at all...let's be real! This is UNM and the 1st head football coach is a black man, an authentic black man from the east coast! The stance is that emails will be sent out until this dies down. A tap on the wrist will be sent out to students warning all that this behavior is unacceptable. The big question, how many more taps on the wrist do THEY get? If the coach were white, would the actions of the university be different? Survey says, without a doubt or hesitation...YES!

Some participants explained that the feelings of isolation were a product of persons not approaching them and their not seeking opportunities to socialize. De' Shaun made the following comments, "I mean, I have friends of all races that I talk to. I mean, I'll talk to anyone who will talk to me". Students expressed their concerns about feeling distant and not feeling included in groups when White students outnumbered them. In this regard the students interviewed did not hesitate to share their surprise as to the number of White students who appeared to have their first encounter with a Black person at UNM. Traychell noticed: "I never met so many folk who go to this university that had never seen Black people before. You know, I mean, man".

The collective opinion of the Black students at UNM who were interviewed voiced that the behavior of their White peers in the classroom setting left them feeling like outsiders, as if they weren't "good enough" to belong or to even be in college. All students interviewed expressed some sense of being alone or of being the only Black student in a setting on

campus at a time. However, in the same light, all students interviewed noted that this “gives them the fire and push” to succeed and work that much harder to get through college! Nicole shared her experience:

It’s like, you go into a classroom, in Dane Smith or Woodward Hall and you’re like the only Black person there, they going to look at you like, wow...what is she doing here?!?! She’s really in this class with me? Or like, look at you, as if to say, you’re not really supposed to be in here. You know. So, its crazy, if you go in there cool and open, it’s like....you know of really setting yourself up for failure, because others make it known that they don’t want you there, especially in higher level courses. What I do, I go in there cool and say to myself, whatever, I am going to get it done and keep moving forward.

When others described what it’s like to be the one and only student in a class, Zahra said, “Sometimes it can be challenging because you are aware of the fact that you might be, you look around and going, oh, same ole thing, I am the only Black girl in the classroom.” For most students who were involved in the interviews, UNM was their first experience as a minority in an academic setting. Twelve out of the fifteen students interviewed had attended urban high schools in which African Americans were the majority. At UNM, they experienced ‘culture shock’. They were now not only members of a minority, but also a curiosity to their White peers. Three of the participants expressed that if they never hung out with White people before, why would they be expected to do so in college? Theresa noted, “.....the point is clear, if you were raised not to really hang out or roll with White people all of your life, why in the heck would you flip the script, and come to college and hang around them...for what?” Marie stated during her interview:

But, it all depends on where you grow up. Some Black kids grew up around White people or all races of people. Or they do have friends who are white. If you are raised around that, that’s how you will be in college. But if you are raised around all Black kids, you most definitely aren’t going to come to college to find your long lost White friends.

Theme Two: Leaving it all at the door: Identity and all

This theme describes how the Black students interviewed feel about their identity and academic success. For the most part, this was a telling theme, and the majority of students who were interviewed had a common theme of doing what needed to be done to complete the bachelor's degree at UNM. Marie shared her thoughts:

To me, identity means my heritage; identity means who I am in my own skin. However, at times, I am a chameleon. That is tough. In one sense, I get the game and it is one I guess I have to play here at UNM. But trying to fit in can get difficult, and very complicated. I pride myself in being close with my Black community and if I do that, I can deal with the rest, no matter what level of accolades I get...because I am intelligent.

The students who were interviewed had strong words to describe their individual plight to attaining a bachelor's degree at UNM. Some words used to describe this plight were: selling out, code switching, white washed, survival of the fittest, and acting white, to name a few. These words to these participants are words that describe the challenges felt as they pursue their bachelor's degree. In addition, these were the words that the participants who were a part of this study used to assign meaning to the experiences of obtaining a bachelor's degree at a HSI / PWI.

Nicole shared her thoughts:

I feel like depending on –sometimes there are times—where you must “act white” in class. But, I don't see that as selling out per se. But once you get to the college level, there are some things that you have to do differently than when you were in high school or in grades under and stuff like that. But, I feel that there is no selling out involved in your striving for success. Like, you get to a point that you'll do anything—well no, necessarily anything. You'll stay within your morals to do something, and make sacrifices along the way.

Traychell shared:

Simply put, you gotta do what you gotta do and move on. Being polite and code switching and all that song and dance are ways that will get you through. I know

people don't want to hear that, but it's true. At least to me, that is my reality. Being ghetto-fab doesn't work here at UNM. Not at all".

Other students believed that one didn't need to leave it all at the door, identity and all. Jerome noted, As long as you stay focused and know how to use the resources around you, like the Afro., and read your emails, you will be fine. I mean, you have to polite, but selling out, I don't agree.

Charlie had a different take on leaving it at the door. She shared:

I don't give up who I am to obtain academic success here at UNM or whatever! I mean, I made the choice myself, you know, for myself to come, you know, to gain academic success. So, why should I think I have to give up my own personal identity and my true heritage in order to, you know, gain academic success? 'Cause I mean, that wouldn't be right. I mean...that wouldn't be—that wouldn't be just at all, whatsoever, that would contradict my whole focus for coming to college. I mean my family tells me to come to college to grow, learn and share and so...that's what I am here to do.

Theme Three: Messages from home – failure NOT an option!

As noted by researchers Cabrera, Nora Terenzini, Pascarella, and Hagedorn, (1999), and Hendricks, Smith, Caplow, & Donaldson, (1996), family support is a strong predictor of persistence for students of color who are enrolled at PWIs. The research suggested that although the participants who were involved in these studies did not specify what kinds of supports are keys to their success in college, there is evidence suggesting that close relationships to home can hinder minority student's academic matriculation (Guiffrida, 2005b). As noted in Terenzini et al. (1994), African American students' family life and community affect their participation and persistence in college. In this same study, it was found that minority students perceived their parents as having a challenging time letting them go as they transitioned into college. Hence this kind of reaction from the parents added undue stress and anxiety to the minority students' overall transition. In sum, the participants

were concerned about their home communities and how their advancement into higher education was going to be impacted. Rashad stated,

My grandmother told me when education was not attainable to achieve, back in her days of school. So, with me here at UNM, I work that much harder to get it, because some people who don't look like me say I can't get it. So, this pushes me harder to do so. Quitting is not an option.

Moreover, many Black families realize that high academic performance serves as a tool for mobility and economic status. Therefore, many of the participants put education and perseverance hand in hand.

I love when White or Hispanic students doubt me! This makes me try harder and push myself to be better! My parents didn't raise a quitter. I don't have any quitters in my family! This kind of thinking pushes me to be successful. (Adaobi)

My linkage is rich with history from my ancestors and those role models in my life who continue to tell me to get going and don't give up. By learning my history and having a deep understanding of the eras of slavery have enhanced my desire to get my education and be proud of my blackness. I have too many role models not to succeed and for my son as well. I feel like I owe it to my community here at UNM to fight and to continue to make this situation better by using my voice in the classroom to make things right. (Theresa)

Lloyd stated,

Coming to UNM hasn't been easy. There is a lot of drama around athletics and athletes, especially Black athletes. It aint perfect...we know that. But with everything said and done, UNM is a good place to learn things—for me, things that I wouldn't get back at home. In growing up in White schools and being called the “N” word and dealing with all that, and knowing the history of my heritage, I know-I know I gotta be better, you know?

Some of the participants noted that they rely a lot on the programs on campus that keep them grounded. A few participants stated that African American Student Services has helped them to deal with the events of campus life. In addition, some participants noted that African American Student Services is a “safe haven; a home away from home”, especially for those participants whose family members are out of state. A few of the general sentiments

shared were: “Afro keeps me in the loop of what is going on – on this crazy campus; The Afro gives me time to hang out and do my work, I love ‘fro! The Afro can get crazy at times, with the drama of who is dating who and what happened on facebook and all that drama, but I can still hang out, my work may not get done, but oh well, I tried.

Zahra stated,

My family actually motivates me and that’s the bottom line. I come from a family of education. When I graduated high school, the question wasn’t do you want to go, the question was, where are you going to school? That is my driving force, the example I have seen every day of my life. This keeps me going. When I am in an honor’s class and I get those looks as if I don’t belong or I must have the wrong class, I smile to myself and make sure I answer all questions...that lets them know, I am here to stay.

Guiffrida (2005b) suggested that other researchers have disputed the notion that close family and friend relationships may hinder students’ college matriculation, and bring to a close that family support is a strong predictor of African American students’ success at the university level. Traychell stated,

My family is my core. My mother and sister keep me going and at the core of this is the Lord. So, even though my family has tough times, I keep my eyes on the prize and do what I gotta do. That is the name of the game...to get a degree! So, in order to help my family get out from those rough times, I must do well here in school. Period. There is no choice. I’ve made it this far and it would let all down, if I don’t complete my education. Quitting is not an option.

The sentiment shared by Traychell was the global sentiment of participants when looking at motivators and messages from home. The participants and their respective families had a strong understanding of the importance of a college degree. Ariel stated, My personal reason to remain in college, although I have taken the non-traditional route, is to just better myself. I come from a family where education is seen in many lights, but there is an understanding that it is key. So, just to follow those that I am around and those who have done it, is my key to keep on this trail.

Theme Four: Connections are “Us”: Are you my brothers’ keeper?

Are you my brothers’ keeper is a key sentiment to how these students reported feeling about having Black professors, staff and peers who look like them assisting them through their undergraduate degree here at UNM. This is a vital aspect of the African American students’ perceptions of the impact of getting through UNM to degree completion at a Hispanic Serving / Predominately White institution. Kezar (2006) suggested that engagement occurs when there is a “level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interaction with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and a supportive campus environment” (p.94). When discussing the Black community at UNM, participants felt strongly about the support and overall presence of both faculty and staff. Due to the campus setting, lacking Black students within the student body in general, the participants of this study were in search of individuals who share a racial / cultural identity to connect with, as noted by Conway-Jones (2006). Clifton stated, “It is tough to find a Black professor on this campus. Clearly, none are in my major, which is unfortunate. But things that have kept me going are professors and staff who assist with events in the center. Otherwise, I think I would have been outta here a long time ago”. Coley noted, “there needs to be more diversity in the professors, but Black professors (more than just in Africana Studies) are needed, period. I just feel more comfortable around a Black professor”. In looking at participants’ overall plight at this university, it was shared that Black professors and staff have supported students a lot, with looking at retention, and matriculation to an undergraduate degree. As Theresa noted,

I think the Black professors and staff are here for a reason and they take that reason to help us succeed, both inside and outside the classroom. The unity level is good. They always support our events and social stuff. I am thankful that they are involved.

There are a handful who forget ‘who they are’, but as a collective group, I am appreciative for all that they do for the students.

By participants having a unique relationship with professors and staff alike, this motivating factor has helped participants to hang in there and push through the challenging times. Clifton noted,

I’m thankful for the professors I know. Although it is not right to have ALL the professors or the majority of professors housed in Africana Studies. That’s not right. But all the faculty and staff are I know, the majority of them are vested to helping us {the undergrads.} to succeed. There are too many examples of scholarly greatness within the Black campus that we as students can’t give up, we have a lot of support.

However, there are some participants who don’t share in the outwardly enthusiasm about faculty, and believe that they could do better. Ariel noted,

I think there needs to be more support from faculty....if there is an issue of concern for the campus, which there mostly likely is, I think that it has to start from the top and then move down and put it out there. It could be fixed maybe by throwing money at the issue. But I think if Scholes Hall would have that responsibility just as much as students would have as well, to have their actual jobs on this campus affected if they do not support the Black student, things would change for the better.

Marie concluded and shared her thoughts and stated,

I think we need more minority (Black) faculty. It takes more than five or 6 professors in Africana Studies. We need more Black faculty. Of course we deal with White and Hispanic and Asian professors daily, however, it’s just a difference when a Black professor is teaching the class. There is a difference. I would say that sometimes we, as students, like to approach someone who may just understand that difference and knows what its like to be the only Black student in the class full of White and Hispanic students. You have to be on top of your game, fo’ sho’ at all times...because you are being watched. You must be mindful of the stereotypes that will be coming. Every day I am reminded that I am a Black female. That cross is heavy and tiresome to bear sometimes.

The majority of the participants who were a part of the interviews agreed that relationships with their peers were one of the major factors that assisted them with staying at UNM. Some participants noted that it is “tough” being a black student here at UNM and peer

support meant everything when looking at staying or leaving UNM. The literature related to African American student experiences at PWIs suggested that students perform better academically and cope better if they can “feel comfortable with the sense of connection with the Black community on campus” (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001, p. 420). Marie stated, “It just helps you build relationships between each other and it helps to create a better environment when you know one another and build relationships...this is why I love the ‘fro! But there is a sense of lack of unity too! I mean, if you hang in the ‘fro, you’ll get it....which is great. But for the Black students who don’t hang in the ‘fro, then they’re not as open to lean on the supports”. Zahra noted,

I think most students hang to the group that they have something in common with, which is why there are different programs and things to do here, like in the ‘fro and this is why we sit together in the SUB and places like that. So having a place like the ‘fro is good.....although there are cliques in the ‘fro as well. I think this affects students because you find yourself hanging with folks you want to hang with.

Guiffrida (2003) supported this sentiment of African-American students needing that sense of connectiveness on a university campus. In a qualitative study it was found that although students could find their way around the university environment, there was a strong sense of exhaustion by being the “only” one and the necessity of having an all Black environment which they saw as being more comfortable in, such as HBCUs. In reviewing what the participants said, the majority of them agreed that having seasoned students to help them out with the overall dynamics of UNM made it easier to transition to the campus environment and settle in. Charlie stated,

Thank God I know students who have been here longer than me! They truly take you under their wing, until you find your niche. It is kinda like a rite of passage. They will let you know what’s up with professors, easy classes and stuff like that. They make sure you know all about the ‘fro!

Overall, the participants agreed that relationships with fellow peers is a key to academic success here at UNM! It is a true lifeline for Black students. All inferred that having each other on a White campus is truly a factor that is needed. For the first-year students to senior students, the relationships with peers have kept students from transferring to another institution of higher education. Traychell noted,

As Black students on this campus, we do stick together. We are our own family. Through good or bad, we stick together. We hang out at the SRCs or someone's room, like little Harlem or our ghetto..keepin it real-- by the tennis courts. We make it a good time. We are family away from 'our' family, since a lot of us are not from here. We keep each other going, like, I help some of the student athletes with their work and make sure everyone is doing their work and get it in on time and it's a good thing.

Theme Five: University barriers: An uneasy road to walk?

Throughout the interviews, some participants noted that they are uneasy about the university's intentions to having them succeed towards undergraduate degree completion. In sum, some participants noted that the university was being perceived as less than honest about actual programs, services and the overall recruitment process in order to assist with the diversity issues of the campus. Coley stated,

The campus climate isn't good at all. When the Coach Mike incident hit, I think we all were on pins and needles...messy! This campus pacifies the Black population but really isn't about the business of making moves to making things happen for the betterment of all students...particularly, we Black students. They speak about being for diversity, but at every turn the center is getting budget cuts. Does that even make sense? I mean, we're already the smallest population on this campus, or very close to it.

Tinto (1993) suggested that, we must avoid the tendency to assume that all members of a particular group have the same interests or needs. Though it is sometimes necessary for institutions to develop programs targeted to the needs of distinct groups of students, it is always the case that program action must be guided by assessment of individual needs.

In sum, Theresa stated,

If the university really wants to be a part of this movement to improve campus climate for Black students, hire more black faculty and staff. Also, the university needs to stop cutting the budget for places like the center. This is a key resource. I mean, I know not all Black students use it and it can be cliquish at times, but the staff does good work and it's a home away from home. I mean, there is the Office of Inclusion, but what does that really mean for Black folks...I don't see things changing at all. At the basic level, hire more Black staff and faculty and begin starting within to have candid conversations with bold actions.

Theme Six: Nobody is listening--Does racial identity and academic success really matter at UNM?

Does racial identity and academic achievement go hand in hand? Is there an issue or is the race card being overplayed at UNM? The environment at PWIs and how Black students get involved in this kind of environment have a huge impact on their overall experiences, thoughts and beliefs (Patton, 2006). But as the research suggests that was reviewed, one's perceptions are construed by the beholder. Therefore, pardon the interruption of one's learning and exploring the world of academia to become a global citizen, but does racial identity and academic success go hand in hand?

From the participants' lens, there is a major issue concerning racial identity and academic success that is shared by the participants. From their perspective, there is a common sense of pacification that the university is making towards these students and no real eagerness to find a solution to this ongoing challenge of equity at UNM. Some participants clearly see the institution as less than honest about how they recruit students and use terminology in the brochures of this institution as "diverse". If students are to feel like they are a part of the fabric of this community of this institution of higher education, they must be made to feel that their perspective can not only be heard, but listened to without

judgment. The students want the administrators to take an active role in the recruitment and retention of quality faculty and staff in key roles on this campus.

Student participants were authentically concerned about their home and communities and how their academic success will impact future students. The majority of participants interviewed were not first-generation college students. However, there was a strong sense of community amongst them all, and championing for services that will assist all students with getting through the journey of UNM via programs and via African American Student Services. A few of the participants who were interviewed were motivated because their families are currently in challenging situations and they want to do better, so they won't have to remain in that situation. Lastly, the majority of the participants stated the importance of education to them and their families as a major motivator to persist and keep going towards their undergraduate degree.

In summary, the majority of participants felt strongly about looking at the issue of racial identity and academic achievement at this university. Their solutions ranged from very complex to very basic from a solution-focused vantage point. Thus, to the question of whether this issue was a challenge on UNM's campus, the answer would be a resounding YES!

Conclusion

In examining the collective data from both the MIBI and the individual interviews, it is clear that the students who were a part of this study are very self motivated, regardless of the challenging situation they perceived around them within the academic institution. One common theme that is clear is their belief that support from all aspects of academia is a vital and important aspect to the students' collective success in higher education, especially at the

University of New Mexico. When looking at the overall relationship between academic success, as defined as a student's cumulative grade-point average, and their perceived overall racial identity, the quantitative data as a whole displayed no strong significant correlations between the two. However, there were some findings that were associated with academic success and identity, such as the sex of the participant, employment and student's home environment (i.e., family structure and background). Joined with these findings, there was an underlying theme focused on in the narratives of males and female participants when examining the messages of academic success at the higher education level and being a productive member of society. This underlying theme will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In sum, these students clearly expressed their wish to be respected and acknowledged within the institution of higher education. Also, they indicated that they rely heavily on family support and the pull from the historical journey of education within African American communities. Moreover, regardless of the environment, the students suggested that the Black community (faculty, staff, university and general community) is very important to them and having these resources throughout their academic journey off-sets the other challenges that present themselves on a daily basis. Various underlying themes that spoke to diverse cultural implications and attitudes also were revealed throughout the interviews. Furthermore, the cultural implications of where these students were raised (the southwest region vs. the east coast region vs. the west coast region), became quite pertinent in this study, especially when the stories shared were about traveling to different parts of the country or having different experiences by visiting a friend at a HBCU or family members in a heavily populated black area.

Finally, in reviewing these findings in the context of the literature reviewed by the researcher, there are similar themes that arise when examining racial identity and academic success of African American students in pursuit of higher education at a HSI / PWI. Some of those common themes are related to collective support from faculty and staff; collective support from senior level administrators; more substantive resources provided to ensure that the needs of Black students are being met (campus events / activities catered to Black students; increased resources in the resource center); and recognition provided for individual and collective achievement by students of color.

Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter of the dissertation presents a brief description of the study and the findings. This chapter also presents an overview of the study and is followed by findings which are integrated and synthesized into practical application of the used conceptual frameworks within this study. This chapter of this mix methods approach dissertation concludes with the summary, emergent themes, limitations, conclusions and recommendations for future research. The primary purpose of this study was to examine how racial identity shapes Black students' academic achievements and their expectations and beliefs about succeeding, as undergraduate students enrolled in a Hispanic Serving / Predominately White Institution of higher education and examine to what extent are students' racial and academic identities, university environment and family background, related to students overall academic achievement.

The study was offered to the total Black undergraduate population of 647 students enrolled at the University of New Mexico during the spring 2010 semester. In total, 125 students, of which males 52 were classified as male and 72 as female, participated by responding to both the demographic questions and the MIBI survey online. Of these 125 participants, 77 participants volunteered to be a part of the interview pool, of which 15 participants, (6 males and 9 females) were randomly selected to be interviewed by the researcher. Using partial estimated correlations, significant positive correlations were obtained between academic achievement (self- reported cumulative grade point average) and being female, an upper division student, having been raised in a parent family, from a

different state or country, usage of African American Student Services for academic purposes, involvement in student groups and organizations and a significant negative correlation with being a first-generation college attendee, coming from a high school students rated as providing inadequate preparation for college, and being a student scholarship athlete. In addition, in examining the collective submeasures of the MIBI online survey, the 125 participants in general scored in the mid to high range on the three dimensions of centrality, regard and ideology.

From the qualitative analysis of the responses of the 15 participants to the interview questions, the notable themes emerged: Leaving it all at the door: Identity and all; Connections are us: Are you my brothers' keeper?; Messages from home—failure Not an option; Experiencing racism: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me; University barriers: An uneasy road to walk; and Nobody is listening, but,-Does racial identity and academic success really matter at UNM? The researcher had to be insightful and delicate in interpreting these experiences voiced by students, due to the fact that these experiences often had multiple meanings. Consequently, the researcher believed it to be important to utilize other research tools such as observations, a researcher's journal and member checks to ensure the researcher was capturing the correct meaning of the narratives in order to gain insight into Black students' perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards racial identity and academic success.

From analyzing the demographic information, MIBI online survey responses, the partial estimated correlations obtained between this information and the students' cumulative GPA, and the interview transcripts, the Black students who participated in this study appeared highly motivated and held in a high regard a perceived strong sense of self. They

gave candid and often emotionally charged responses as they shared in the interviews various events on campus and their overall experiences as a student. Joined with these experiences, there was noted strong connection with home and for some students, the connection to the historical journey of Blacks in education was a motivator to continue on the journey of achieving a bachelor's degree.

Convergence of Findings with Selected Conceptual Framework

Five conceptual theories / models were used in designing the data collection and analysis procedures for this study: Cross' 5 Stage Nigrescence Model, Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, Family Systems Theory and the Phenomenological Approach. These frameworks were used because each incorporated the student as a person and built on the experiences shared by an individual within the realm of his / her environment and personal reality. Due to the study's focus on racial identity and academic success, these theories helped to integrate one's identity development from various lenses. As noted by Sellers, et al. (1998), racial identity is developed by meanings that people assign to race and discrimination. Therefore, the results provided important insights into the various phases these participants were going through, as well as their own reality as it relates to perceived discrimination, racism and marginalization.

By examining the participants' deep connection to family (both positive and negative), family systems theory proved to play a significant role in the understanding and steadfastness of the participants who were a part of this study. Boss, et al. (1993) described family systems as a compilation of subsystems that are unique to a family. Therefore, this theory was used to examine the dynamics of family within these participants' lives. In examining the data, family members and fictive kinship members appeared to play an

integral part in the success of Black undergraduates at this university. In addition, in examining the data gathered and the statistical findings, racial identity was found to be very fluid as was noted by (Sellers, 1997; 1998). Thus, when examining the other conceptual frameworks such as Critical Theory / Critical Race Theory and the Phenomenological approach, these findings speak directly to the fluidity of identity over a period of time and how the study participants assigned meanings to their lived experiences and as the Nigrescence model describes, these assigned meanings were seen as influential in their stages of development.

Moreover, the phenomenological approach proved to be a key asset to the richness of the findings obtained in this study. The researcher focused on the phenomena to understand how African American, undergraduate students at the same HSI / PWI assigned meaning to life events and created a belief system that affected their view of higher education. Thus, by the researcher examining in-depth meanings these participants ascribed to higher education, racial identity and academic success, the data also indicated that these participants are strong individuals who are focused and ready to succeed no matter what obstacles or handicaps confront them.

Discussion

The main points to be discussed from the data collected and reported in Chapter 4 are centered on the students' collegiate experiences at a HSI / PWI and the factors that have contributed to academic achievement when examining a student's effort to maintain his or her racial and academic identities. These points of discussion were derived from the information presented in Chapters 2 and 4. The main points from this study, have been emergent concepts and themes stemming from the literature review, especially ideas from

notable authors such as Ogbu (2003), Tatum (1997) and Ibarra (2001), to note a few.

Therefore, in examining the data and tying into what the literature suggests to be variables that impact racial identity and academic success, the main points that will be discussed are the following: 1. the key resources of an ideal campus and how this campus is viewed from the perspective of the students; 2. the general perceptions of the institution from the perspective of the participants within this study; and 3. sex and racial influences as they relate to academic success. As was noted in the literature review, Tatum (1997) and Sellers (1998) have discussed how these factors influence and impact a student's racial identity and overall development within their worldview.

Key Resources

When reviewing the literature and the data that was collected for this study, many key resources and themes emerged when examining the essence of this research study and understanding its findings for further interpretation. One of the most confirming findings in this study was the need voiced by the students to have viable and key resources on campus. As suggested by notable scholars within this area of study, there are several resources that influence a student's success within the realm of higher education. Some of those noted were: being connected to peers; being able to know where resources are located; being able to know where support systems are located; having support from Black staff and faculty; and having support from extended family, traditional family and fictive kin supports (Ogbu, 2003). Therefore, these factors are critical to highlight and discuss when examining the extent to which racial identity of Black students at a HSI / PWI shape their expectations and beliefs about higher education.

General Perceptions

In examining responses to the MIBI and the participant interviews, the overall themes were heavily focused on the perceptions from the participants' worldviews. These in-depth interviews provided information that is joined together with participants' perceived learning styles and supports. It was evident that they perceived that learning takes place both inside and outside of the classrooms. Due to these perceptions and evolving attitudes that are being taken in by the students in many different spaces such as the Student Union Building, the cafeteria, the library and within other social spaces on campus, African American students on this campus have internalized these situations and now are examining them on personal and collective levels to figure out what it means to be a Black, undergraduate student on this campus. From the researcher's standpoint, and as it has been discussed by Ford (1993), perception is a key link to academic success and the overall notion of persistence is critical and heavily based on others' attitudes and beliefs and what one sees and hears from an outside perspective. In addition, along with these general perceptions, there are multiple factors (some of which could be based on a given situation) that could have been heavily influenced by other variables as noted by Sellers (1997) in describing responses to the MIBI as being fluid, situational and providing a snapshot at a particular moment versus over a gradual period of time.

Sex Role, Identity and Academic Success

One's sex role, identity and academic success are powerful underlying themes when examining the concept of racial identity as it connects to this study. Within this worldview of sex role perceptions, there appeared a glaring issue derived from the general narrative that has been given to Black students prior to entry at the University of New Mexico. These

narratives, which participants reportedly have heard repeatedly from preschool thru high school, came long before their quest for a bachelor's degree.

The message of “being successful in higher education” for male participants was heard and interpreted very differently from that of the female participants who were a part of this study. As an example, for some male participants, coming to college was “a way out of a bad situation,” or coming to college was seen as “an escape” from the students’ current living situation back in their respective hometowns. For the female participants, coming to college was “expected”; coming to college “was not a choice, nor was being successful in college”. These notions were already expected according to the female participants. Tatum (1997) examined the reality of racial identity and explored the differences for male and female students. In sum, due to lived and shared experiences before entry into an institution of higher education, the differences are viewed as very profound and having a major impact on their future lives. Thus, in examining the responses of the participants and separating the perceptions of higher education according to their sex, this theme emerged as worthy of future research and examination amongst African American collegiate students enrolled in a HSI / PWI.

Coupled with these themes are the underlying issues of “ideal institutions”, as it relates to the question, “if things could change, what would be different?” In reviewing the interview data, the researcher noted that most of the participants voiced that if things were to get better and change, the following would be noticed: 1. the institution as a whole would be ready for minority students, specifically, Black students when looking at campus-related activities; and 2. the institution’s top administrators would be focused on supporting all minority students, specifically Black students, both inside and outside the classroom, as

well as actually being committed to the needs of Black students in higher education. From the worldview of the participants who were a part of this study, this would be evident if the administrators supported programs and initiatives purposefully designed solely for those students self identifying as Black / African American were not always attempting to cater informally to all minority students.

In general, the students who participated in this study echoed that they would want this campus to be their *true* “home away from home”, a place that is vested and truly interested in Black students’ academic and personal success. However, as their responses indicated, these students did not feel that the university’s collective environment was vested in their overall well-being as needed to create a true individualized “home away from home” type of environment.

The Black students who were a part of this study indicated that their successes within academia derive from multiple places and through these successes these students have acquired many skills that have supported their academic success at a Hispanic-Serving / predominately White institution. Sedlacek (1987) suggested that having the needed coping skills when dealing with an adverse environment creates a stimulus of drive and persistence to “achieving one’s goal”. This researcher noted the following skills that these students have mastered through their collegiate experiences:

1. their abilities to exist and excel (and not in the shadows) within the university community where it is clear that they are the minority within a minority;
2. their abilities to effectively and efficiently handle racist events that have taken place at this HSI / PWI within the common areas where the students live and the ability to handle these incidents with maturity;

3. their abilities to seek out support systems, which assisted them to be persistent within academia and ultimately able to create their own academic success within the university setting;
4. their abilities to hold leadership positions and learn from their leadership positions and the ability to engage other non-African Americans about various cultural issues and be comfortable with expressing who they are as individuals and as a race.

This development of leadership abilities and confidence was created by students getting involved in various student groups and student organizations that provided these participants a space to grow and build a solid base of confidence and self esteem. These spaces were provided by the ethnic center and other student resources where the participants felt comfortable to voice their opinions and make a difference. By having a grasp of the theories that pertain to this topic (e.g., Family Systems Theory; Critical Race Theory and the Nigrescence model), as noted in Chapter two, could play a critical role in having discussions related to various policies on campus.

However, practical application of these theories into common practice is absolutely necessary if a sustainable change is going to occur as it relates to helping students be accepted and achieve as African American students who are enrolled in a HSI / PWI. To understand Black students from this study requires opening up the conversations to how important it is to being connected to one's community, as well as how important it is for family and fictive kin to get involved within the educational journey of higher education.

By having studies such as this one taking place within academia endless meaningful conversations to transpire and provides the opportunity to articulate changes that are needed.

Thus, the next section of this discussion has been geared towards the research questions which drove this study by the researcher. The answers and general themes that have been provided by the participants from the MIBI and the interviews are imperfect, as the sample was an adequate, but small representation of African American, undergraduate students enrolled in a HSI / PWI.

Research Question 1:

To what extent does the racial identity of African American, undergraduate students enrolled in a Hispanic serving / Predominately White institution shape their expectations and beliefs about succeeding at the higher education level?

In reviewing the collective data, when examining expectations and beliefs about higher education, participants noted several factors that were important to Black students who were enrolled in a HSI / PWI, Some of those factors included:

1. Community influences on and off campus
2. Support systems (parents, fictive kin, church members, peers, faculty and staff)
3. Family obligations (especially to siblings) is important – “paying it forward”
4. Historical attributes (from when education was not possible to today when it is possible to obtain)

In summary, when the students who participated in this study examined individual expectations and beliefs about higher education, the above components were identified as vital in shaping their expectations and beliefs. Community was a key point that participants noted. This notion is focused on what is seen and what messages were given about obtaining higher education which shaped their expectations / beliefs. The support systems surrounding these participants were another key notion that was heavily mentioned amongst these

participants. What was said or not said about higher education by those participants trusted and respected shaped participants' expectations / beliefs about his / her ability to complete a bachelor's degree program. A key theme that was mentioned within Chapter four was family obligation. This was a theme that was mentioned in chapter four regarding the messages received from home. In addition, messages received from immediate family members about higher education were critical to these participants. Many of the participants had younger siblings at home, and the concept of "paying it forward" was important to them. Therefore, the expectations and beliefs about higher education were ones of success and persistence. Lastly, the historical attributes of higher education appeared to have the most impact for these participants in regards to shaping their beliefs and expectations about higher education. Looking back to when education wasn't afforded to Blacks has fueled a fire of success in these participants that failure can't be an option due to so many others who sacrificed in the past for "them" in this generation to be in college today.

If HSI / PWIs want to effectively retain Black / African American students and support their academic success within the classroom arena and within an institution, administrators and policy makers alike must ask Black students to voice their expectations, beliefs and barriers towards academic success, but also, administrators and policy makers must be willing to not only engage in the conversations, but must adapt the university community and various programs to meet the needs of a dynamic and forever evolving, diverse student population.

Research Question 2:

What is the relationship between racial identity, the university environment, and student's home environment (i.e., family structure and background) with their academic achievement while matriculating towards a bachelor's degree?

By examining the participants' responses within this study, the factors previously noted have been shown to have significant impact on participants' overall academic achievement. When delving into the issues of identity negotiations, when examining racial identity and academic identity which is the intriguing core of this study, it becomes clear that there are many variables such as university environment, classroom support and overall inclusiveness, that factor into academic success (Tatum, 1997). Throughout the responses to the MIBI and interviews, there emerged very interesting and thought-provoking findings which focused on the negotiations of identities from a Black, undergraduate student's worldview. As students enter into the world of academia, one may look at their role as a student in pursuit of a degree. However, the data suggested that when a Black student assumes the role of "a student at a HSI / PWI", the role becomes more complex, and the participants noted that it is now a way of life, of coping, and therefore, behaviors, attitudes and beliefs change in turn, because now the role of "student" is linked with one's academic success and achievement.

The participants who were a part of this study had stories to tell about their overall experiences as a college student at a HSI / PWI. It was noted by the researcher that the participants' overall identities when examining race and academics were "intact", which was interpreted from this researcher's perspective, that these students had an *honest* grasp of their heritage, and were rooted in the scope of being successful by individual support systems, upon acceptance at the university. However, by being in the university environment,

participants were quick to note that the academic identity trumped the racial identity in order to gain academic success. Thus, in essence, the term “acting white” emerged several times from various participants. When the researcher delved more deeply into this concept in order to gain a better understanding as voiced by the participants, it was simply put.[in order to succeed at *this university* one has to leave it, “one’s black identity”, at the door, if success is to be achieved]. Thus, acting white, from the perspective of these participants was a clear formula to being academically successful and if one were to dare to show authenticity as to who he or she was, this would equate to immediate failure, a.k.a. “more hoops to jump through” in order to achieve success.

In addition, participants in this study noted how their academic identity impacted their performance within the classroom setting, which contributed to the overall isolation experienced by these participants. W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) coined the term “double consciousness” which lends itself to understanding the challenges of being in the mainstream and having to deal with the mainstream culture and how to deal with the mainstream culture as a minority student. He looked specifically at being Black and being an American at the same time.

In sum, in examining the crux of this research study, one common thought comes to this researcher’s mind and that is that when these participants were faced with challenging times within and outside the classroom when dealing with issues of racial identity and academic success, choices were brought forth which had to be made. For some, the choice was clear, either to remain in this environment of higher education or to go home. Overall, when these participants were presented trials which could have stifled the dream of earning a

bachelor's degree, the participants of this study told their stories and remained to stay, struggle, and press on.

Cautions in Interpreting Study Findings

As generally noted within research studies, all research studies present limitations and this study was not an exception. Although this study unveiled information that captures how African American undergraduate students view themselves when examining racial and academic identities at a HSI / PWI, the study was conducted in the geographical area of the southwest (Albuquerque, New Mexico) where the African American population is just 2% of the total state population. Thus, the researcher was careful not to make broad generalizations based upon the findings of this study. Policymakers and researchers should be cautious in applying these findings to institutions of higher education located in different geographical areas.

The results of this study can, however, be applied with caution by noting similarities and differences of findings with other racial identity and academic achievement studies of African American undergraduate students at Hispanic Serving / Predominately White institutions of higher education to serve as questions for future research studies. Furthermore, the overall limitations of this study were duly noted and acknowledged by the researcher and the collective limitations are listed below.

1. Data from this study sample may not represent the perceptions of all African American students. Diversity exists among and within all students, and African American students are not an exception. When drawing conclusions the following are some of the factors that must be considered: geographical origin, socio-economic status, gender, first-generation vs. second-or-third generation college educated, and

parental / family support. These personal characteristics may have an impact on how African American students perceive the phenomena at the university where this study was conducted. In addition, the overall sample was small, however informative and rich the data that was drawn from the participants in this study. Nevertheless, although a small sample, there were diverse components which contributed to our understanding in examining variables of educational background, family supports and age.

2. The total sample was not balanced from a gender perspective as there were more female participants than male participants and as noted, experiences, expectations and beliefs differ by gender.
3. All data collected for both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study came from self reports by the student participants. Therefore, the overall nature of self-reporting creates the possibility of participants responding less than truthfully for various reasons. Due to this possibility, the collective results of the study related to participants' responses may be at risk of skewed, inflated or invalid responses.
4. The study utilized a survey for the quantitative methodological section of the study. This method for data collection is limited when examining the overall response rate, which was lower than the researcher had expected (Ipathia, 2009). The researcher was expecting at least 300 participants, but the actual number of respondents was 135. Thus, although the survey was open to all undergraduate students who self identified as African American, and were enrolled in 12 credits at the main campus, it appears safe to express that survey research is challenging for students to pursue for timely completion.

5. There were some noted challenges using the MIBI survey instrument regarding capturing correct information on the submeasures (specifically when examining the reduction in inter-correlations of items within a measure that included items using reverse scoring. Nevertheless, given these challenges, the researcher was able to make sense of the results by detailed review of item responses.
6. The MIBI used three dimensions (centrality, regard, ideology) to examine identity. Within these three areas were grouped questions focusing on the same concept, but asked in different ways. Therefore, when participants answered the questions, there were some apparent inconsistencies in participants' responses (i.e., answering with the same response within a specific grouping of questions) without apparently reading the question for specific meaning. This could have been due to unconscious motivators that the participants were unaware of that affected how they interpreted the question. Thus, differential attention to specific detail may have influenced the results; however, Sellers (1997/1998) has noted that the MIBI survey assesses racial identity which is considered situational determined.
7. Although the sample interviewed was randomly selected from the original study sample, the responses provided by the 15 participants may or may not represent the general views of the initial group of participants who were involved in responding to the MIBI.
8. The researcher was an insider, being a member of the UNM staff, a doctoral candidate at this university and student advocate. Therefore, the researcher had to utilize other research methods (semi-structured questions with clarification as needed, observations, member checks, and the researcher's journal) to help ensure that the

researcher was capturing the narratives for the qualitative portion of the study through the lenses of the participants, and not through the lens of the researcher. This could be seen as a help, but possibly a hindrance as well.

Implications and Recommendations

Identity is a powerful notion, as was evident within this study from by students sharing their expectations, beliefs and personal narratives about the essence of their experiences being a Black, undergraduate student enrolled at a HSI / PWI. It is critical to note that collective experiences of Black undergraduate students who are enrolled at a HSI / PWI are of great importance and do matter. By examining the data collected in this study, there appear to be more questions which may need to be explored than answers. Some of the questions that are paramount at the conclusion of this study are: how committed is this university towards a minority group's success, specifically looking at African American / Black students' success? Are there policies specifically related to minority / Black enrollment at a HSI / PWI? Could this study help begin candid and on-going conversations with senior level administrators of the university to possibly take actions to answer these questions? How are policies related to minority enrollment carried out by this HSI/ PWI? It is evident that in order to answer these questions, further research is needed.

Research studies within the past and the current literature continue to indicate that the definition of racial identity stimulates a very complex debate. As pointed out by notable scholars such as Sellers, Carter, Parham, and Helms, the foundational structure of theories and the global research agendas focusing on racial identities has expanded over the decades. However, other research studies have suggested that there are challenges with trying to use an instrument to highlight racial identity components. To date, implications for racial identity

research are being discussed in a wide variety of forums. As was stated by Helms (1996), “there is no clear conceptualization of what constitutes the “measurement of racial or ethnic identity” (p. 144).

Thus, in examining what the literature suggests about this very complex idea of “one’s racial identity” and in order to enhance and enrich the collective experiences of Black students, this university may want to take notice, re-evaluate, as well as create and / or re-examine existing programs, along with services that will assist with enriching African Americans academic and global experiences of being a scholar at an institution of higher education. Various programs currently exist that operate within African American Student Services and Africana Studies, however, due to limited resources, there is just so much one center and one Black-centered program can do. The administrators also may want to evaluate other programs, such as the College Enrichment Program, and examine to what extent this program promotes servicing underrepresented students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, incorporating the “multicultural” spirit of servicing all minority students.

By conducting this study, the participants who were involved, along with those who were aware of the study and provided anecdotal feedback, have a new found appreciation for senior administrators and other key officials who are vested in the success and overall retention of Black students at HSIs/ PWIs. Students who were a part of this study felt reenergized that administrators who could promote change were committed to their overall academic success and retention at this university. Students as a collective group were encouraged that this study may provide a platform from which to have various conversations and action plans related to purposefully recruiting Black faculty and staff; purposefully recruiting in heavy populated areas where African American high school seniors live; and

purposefully utilizing a communication vehicle such as the diversity office to move the agenda forward, and allowing the Black student population to share their voices on this critical topic.

Based on the information shared within this study, it is the recommendation of this researcher that the senior level administrators, as well as other key stakeholders, may want to host a series of meetings with viable action plans to meet the needs of the global student population. On a very basic level, the needs expressed within this study are the needs of all students, which are: to be valued; to feel and be included; and to be provided an environment where all are comfortable and free to express who they are as individuals. Since each institution in the country is different, senior level administrators and key stakeholders of this institution must cautiously examine the suggestions and recommendations provided and take into account current programs and services of the university that already exist and then utilize all forms of data to make an informed decision regarding the next steps of action related to this unique challenge and opportunity to expand and further develop this institution of higher education.

As suggested in the work of Cross' Nigrescence Model (1978), Black students could potentially experience the 5 stages of Black identity development from now until adulthood. The stages noted by Cross are: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment. Due to the uniqueness of diversity within the African American community as a collective race, there is considerable caution that needs to be taken when attempting to utilize this model with every Black, undergraduate student. In addition, along with Cross (1978), Tatum (1997), Ford (1993) and others who examine social identity theories and issues within this realm of study, note that caution needs to be

taken when utilizing these theories as it was never intended to develop a “one size fits all” theory. Instead, the intent was to offer information on the multiple layers and experiences of multicultural and multiethnic individuals (Song, 2009). Therefore, in looking at this study, the researcher has attempted to speak about these students as individuals, but, when looking at racial identity and academic success of “Black” students who are enrolled in a HSI / PWI, one also must examine the collective *group*, with a balanced group dynamic outlook and then make cautious evaluations from that view. It is to be stressed by the researcher that generalizations of the entire Black, undergraduate population cannot or should not be made; however, the collective insight is a step in the right direction when assessing needs.

Administrators, faculty and staff at a HSI/ PWI need to carefully analyze the goals and objectives of current programs and services catered to undergraduate, Black students. They must be willing to adjust and / or modify programs as needed. However, this should be a campus-wide initiative and may not be viable if solely left to the duty of an ethnic center. In addition, the reviewing of programs, assessment tools and policies for minority enrollment, recruitment and retention also could be helpful when evaluating existing programs / services being offered to students. There also needs to be an intentional effort to create a warm, inclusive and inviting campus. Lastly, key senior officials should begin to make a financial line(s) investment within current programs and services to enhance these current programs / services that are geared towards Black students’ overall success.

Therefore, given this information, some of the key recommendations would be:

1. Provide social support (continuous mentoring programs freshman year thru graduation) specifically geared toward Black, undergraduate students.

2. Provide Academic assistance that truly works with students and uses various teaching styles and methods to ensure Black students understand the materials.
3. Financial support is needed for Black students on an on-going basis. Various scholarships, grants and other financial avenues should be provided solely for Black students. Although there are “minority” scholarships, financial assistance is a huge issue for students who are non-athletes who are attending this university.
4. Evaluate fully the multicultural model at this university. Often times this university is given such accolades as: one of the premiere institutions within the state of New Mexico; a flagship university; a ‘diverse’ university’; a model university for others follow. However, in examining diversity, the researcher has found that the state of New Mexico is a ‘tri-cultural’ state which encompasses Anglo-American, Native American and Hispanic / Latino/a Americans. Therefore, various programs which proclaim to be “for minority students” may need to be re-examined to determine how “diverse” are some of these minority student support programs / initiatives (e.g., Title V, College Enrichment Program, The Mentoring Institute, and Research Opportunity Programs) for including and servicing all minority student populations. In addition, the university may want to examine the investment in which recruitment and hiring of Black faculty and staff is made and possibly be intentional with this focus in hopes of being able to engage the limited number of Black, undergraduate students at this university. This could help with providing mentorship and role model opportunities to better support the small population of students enrolled.

In summary, to ensure that the needs of all minority students are met with genuineness, care and respect, there needs to be positive communications among all parties involved to collectively develop solutions and viable action items in order to promote a more inclusive campus environment for students both inside and outside of the classroom.

Suggestions for Future Research

There has been a lot of research provided on this topic from a global stance. However, when examining Black, undergraduate students who are enrolled in a Hispanic Serving / predominately White Institution, the research is limited, due to the small number of HSIs in the country, 225 in 13 states and Puerto Rico (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, October 18, 2010). Thus, key stakeholders need to explore and research the relationship between minority student status and academic success for this specific group of students. The collective literature on racial identity, persistence, academic success and retention are noteworthy and has been consistent over the past three decades as it relates to Black students within higher education. However, HSI / PWI institutions offers a new dimension to the overall research on this topic and should be further examined, as the literature suggests that the dynamic of a minority within a minority offers a different lens to examine racial identity, motivation, self esteem and the overall persistence it takes to earn a bachelor's degree as a minority student. Other areas that call for additional investigation and examination are:

1. Why do Black, undergraduate students continue to choose HSIs / PWIs if they perceive “less than adequate services and academic programs”?

2. Do recent graduates from HSIs / PWIs think the university environment, campus climate, classroom instruction and programs / services fostered their college persistence to obtaining a bachelor's degree? If yes, how?; if not, why not?
3. Why do Black undergraduate students continue to choose HSIs / PWIs as an option for a bachelor's degree if they don't feel "accepted / welcomed" on campus?
4. If The University of New Mexico continues to receive accolades on being a diverse university and prides itself on being a majority-minority institution of higher education, then might further examination of this study be geared towards other minority groups to capture other cultural groups' experiences as undergraduate students, to fully examine the extent to which this university is affording the majority-minority, undergraduate population opportunities to succeed by looking at services and supportive programs and initiatives offered?

Conclusion

The future is bright, although challenging for Black students who are in search of obtaining a bachelor's degree at a HSI / PWI. It is clear that there are many challenges within the realm of higher education and no one challenge of this complexity is going to get resolved overnight. However, a better job of addressing the challenge and focusing attention on the issues is warranted (Melendez, 2004). In utilizing the data collected in this study, the research implores stakeholders, administrators and the like to consider the recommendations provided when reviewing various policies and looking to enhance, enrich and create an environment where Black undergraduate students are encouraged and motivated to journey on the road to obtaining a bachelor's degree.

The objective of this study was to examine how racial identity impacted a Black undergraduate's academic success at a HSI / PWI. It should be noted that the foundational structure was set by utilizing various conceptual theoretical frameworks, and the MIBI survey. The MIBI survey has been used to measure situational identity - which delves into someone's identity being fluid, given a particular situation / setting. Shelton and Sellers (2000) suggested that racial identity could influence perceptions of uncertain situations. Those for whom race is a key part of their identity are more likely to interpret events as race related than those for whom race is not a central factor.

This being said, this lends itself to the variation in the findings obtained which displayed various thoughts on how students perceived their black identity versus how students' experienced their individualized shared and lived experiences of being a Black undergraduate student enrolled at a HSI / PWI. From this researcher's perspective these findings highlight one of the more challenging issues with which these students grapple with in having to juggle W.E.B. DuBois' notion of "double consciousness". Examining the data on how these students conveyed their message about identity was very thought- provoking as data collected from the quantitative portion of the study revealed some very different results than did the data collected from the qualitative portion of the study. Thus, the core of the researcher's dissertation was to display the collective experiences voiced by the participants who were a part of this study by way of their individual interviews. Although the richness of the study was derived in part from the MIBI, the study came to life from the individual interviews, which created narratives from students about their experiences being a Black, undergraduate student enrolled at a HSI / PWI.

The testimonies collected varied across regional backgrounds, socioeconomic status, diverse family compositions, first to third generation college-bound students, and the like. However, one common theme was that being Black was a good thing and education is a must and a necessity. In essence, participants of this study wanted a space to be heard and to be taken seriously. In short, from this researcher's interpretation of the data, they (the participants of this study) are not looking to "be fixed", but they are seeking to be supported. It is clear to the researcher that these participants are not broken. Finally, it is up to key stakeholders, including students, to take action on the above-noted recommendations and to create a viable plan so that services, programs and initiatives such as the actions that are currently taking place in African American Student Services, or creating a new initiative such as a Center for Black Excellence Institute, where students are exposed to Black faculty and staff forums to prepare them for current academic scholarships as well as preparing Black students for future aspirations) are enriching to students in order for them to achieve academic success, while maintaining individual identity, without comprising either one.

Reflections from the Researcher

In reflecting on this journey of completing this research study, I need to take a step back to examine the essence of the meaning of being a minority within a majority- minority institution of higher education. In this research, many challenges were presented as when participants grappled with serious cases of development, black pride, racial identity and academic success. On one hand, the researcher noted that for the study participants, racial identity was powerful, but examining data from the quantitative portion of the study, the data did not reflect that dominance. However, as noted by Sellers (1998), the survey used in this study is a situational instrument and therefore captures racial identity within a snapshot

versus over a period of time of gradual development and evolution. On the other hand, the researcher discovered from the qualitative portion of the study that these participants had narratives and experiences to share that shaped their current beliefs and expectations about higher education. These beliefs stem from family members, past and current environments, schooling and other experiences they have been had in their lives to date.

In short, Olsen (1997) discussed the notion of social margins and the quest for individuals “to find one’s place” within the arena of America. In addition, she spoke about race and class and how this all comes together or does not come together for high school students via interviews. The concepts and thoughts that Olsen presented are ones that are very paramount for this researcher. W.E.B. Dubois discussed the notion of double consciousness and this is in line with what Olsen discussed as well, as the literature discusses fitting in, without selling out one’s soul. The main challenge that this researcher sees from the literature and within this study is “who” sets the standards, the rules, and the overall game to win or achieve? The participants within this study highlighted some of the challenges and barriers presented to them within their quest for academic success. But racial categories and classism are very enmeshed within today’s society and within the personal realities of these participants. Thus, the researcher grapples with this topic, but has a better appreciation for this topic by way of lived experiences that the researcher offers to this study. Experiences where code switching was imperative and juggling the worlds of a black woman and scholar was paramount. Therefore, by sharing and connecting these experiences to this research study, offers a powerful prospective from which to launch future research studies in order to enlighten, discuss and enhance the literature within this research topic of study.

In summary, to delve into this study was particularly interesting for this researcher. As a black woman, a staff member at the university, a doctoral candidate at this university, and an active supporter of the Black students' collective activities sponsored by African American Student Services / Africana Studies, the ethical dilemmas were many and major. As the researcher for this study, it is the responsibility of the one in such a role to provide accurate and honest feedback to those who are involved and to those who are interested and vested in the topic. Therefore, as the researcher for this study, this responsibility was taken very seriously, to report the data from an unbiased lens to all parties.

However, this presented this researcher with ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas were centered on being mindful of and sensitive to the data that was gathered and being just as mindful to report it with these radars at the forefront. It was the researcher's obligation to report and share this study with the university's senior administrators, the stakeholders, and the general community. It was the researcher's obligation to discuss the data gathered as accurately as possible for the voices of the participants involved in this study and the researcher has fulfilled this obligation to the best of her ability. It was the end goal of this researcher to maintain the highest integrity and maintain the students' voices within this study to ensure their stories were told honestly and respectfully. Upon further reflection, this researcher believes that her duties were fulfilled and her responsibilities were handled professionally and with integrity. The future of this topic is bright and forever changing and this researcher is looking forward to delving deeper into this topic, from multiple lenses and from diverse perspectives for capturing the narratives and telling the stories.

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Appendix A

The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) Instructions

The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) was developed to measure the three stable dimensions of the MMRI – Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (centrality, ideology, and regard) in African Americans college students and adults (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). The MIBI examines the strength of an individual's racial identity at a particular moment in time rather than its' gradual development. Because of the situationally-dynamic nature of racial identity salience, attempting to measure it with a paper and pencil attitudes measure is inappropriate. As such, the 56-item inventory is comprised of three scales that measure the centrality, ideology, and regard dimensions. The ideology scale consists of four subscales (Nationalist, Assimilation, Minority, and Humanist), and the regard scale consists of two subscales (Private Regard and Public Regard). A 7-point Likert-type response scale is used with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree.

Scoring Instructions for the MIBI & MIBI INSTRUMENT

Reverse score all items that have a (R) next to them by subtracting 8 from each individuals' score on the item. Next, average the scores for each of the items within a particular subscale. DO NOT CREATE A SUM SCORE FOR THE ENTIRE SCALE. Because the MIBI is based on multidimensional conceptualization of racial identity, a composite score from the entire scale is inappropriate.

Question Scale Breakdown:

Centrality Items (C) (8): 1(R), 6, 9, 13 (R), 19, 33, 48, 51 (R)

Private Regard Items (PriR) (6): 4, 7, 8, 24 (R), 54, 55

Public Regard Items (PubR) (6): 5, 15, 17 (R), 52 (R), 53, 56

Assimilation Items (Assim)(9): 10, 18, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46

Humanist Items (Hum)(9): 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35

Minority Items (Min) (9): 20, 34, 36, 38, 42, 45, 47, 49, 50

Nationalist Items (Nat.) (9): 2, 3, 11, 12, 14, 16, 21, 22, 25

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)

All 56 questions are based on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 – 7; 1 being strongly disagree; 4 being neutral and 7 being strongly agree.

Example: Strongly Disagree
1 2 3

Neutral
4 5

Strongly Agree
6 7

Appendix B

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)

Directions: Please answer the questions below. You may choose from 1 – strongly disagree through 7 strongly agree. In addition, you may skip any questions at will. This survey is un-timed. All answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time.

1. Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself. (C)
2. It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music and literature. (Nat.)
3. Black people should not marry interracially.(Nat.)
4. I feel good about Black people. ((PriR)
5. Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.(PubR)
6. In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image. (C)
7. I am happy that I am Black. (PriR)
8. I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements. (PriR)
9. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people. (C)
10. Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as White people who also espouse separatism. (Assim)
11. Blacks would be better off if they adopted Afrocentric values.(Nat.)
12. Black students are better off going to schools that are controlled and organized by Blacks.(Nat.)
13. Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. (C)
14. Black people must organize themselves into a separate Black political force. (Nat.)
15. In general, others respect Black people. (PubR)
16. Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses.(Nat.)
17. Most people consider Blacks, on the average, to be more ineffective than other racial groups. (PubR)

18. A sign of progress is that Blacks are in the mainstream of America more than ever before. (Assim)
19. I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people. (C)
20. The same forces which have led to the oppression of Blacks have also led to the oppression of other groups. (Min.)
21. A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today. (Nat.)
22. Blacks and Whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences.(Nat.)
23. Black values should not be inconsistent with human values. (Hum)
24. I often regret that I am Black.(PriR)
25. White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned. (Nat.)
26. Blacks should have the choice to marry interracially.(Hum)
27. Blacks and White have more commonalities than differences. (Hum)
28. Black people should not consider race when buying art or selecting a book to read. (Hum)
29. Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues. (Hum)
30. Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black. (Hum)
31. We are all children of a higher being, therefore, we should love people of all races. (Hum)
32. Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race. (Hum)
33. I have a strong attachment to other Black people. (C)
34. The struggle for Black liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups. (Min)
35. People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations. (Hum)
36. Blacks should learn about the oppression of other groups. (Min)

37. Because America is predominantly White, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.(Assim)
38. Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies. (Min)
39. Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system. (Assim)
40. Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals. (Assim)
41. Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated. (Assim)
42. The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups. (Min)
43. Blacks should feel free to interact socially with White people. (Assim)
44. Blacks should view themselves as being American first and foremost.(Assim)
45. There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans. (Min)
46. The plight of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions within the system. (Assim)
47. Blacks will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other oppressed groups. (Min)
48. Being Black is an important reflection of who I am. (C)
49. Blacks should try to become friends with people from other oppressed groups.(Min)
50. The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented. (Min)
51. Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships. (C)
52. Blacks are not respected by the broader society. (PubR)
53. In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.(PubR)
54. I am proud to be Black. (PriR)
55. I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society. (PriR)
56. Society views Black people as an asset. (PubR)

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Participant _____
Location _____
Date _____

1. In what ways has being African American affected your desire for higher education and your success as a college student?
2. If you had to describe what it's like to be an African American college student at a Predominately White and Hispanic Serving university (as UNM), what would you say?
3. Do you believe that being an African American college student at a predominately White university / Hispanic Serving has had any impact on your academic success? How?
4. In what ways, if at all, have you encountered any racial/ ethnic discrimination at this university?
5. What observations can you make about the level of unity within the African American undergraduate population?
6. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement: Attaining academic success requires a denial of African American ethnicity? Why or why not?
7. How strongly do you identify with the African American community here at this university?

Note: Please note that the questions above were asked to participants. The researcher held the right to have follow-up questions, if needed. The above questions have been adopted from (Carson, 2003) and were the ones that were critical to ask in uncovering students' perceptions of racial identity and academic success.

Appendix D

Script for in-class and public presentations for soliciting students

to be involved in the research study

Researcher:

Good morning / Good Afternoon! My name is Marla Wyche-Hall, and I am a doctoral student here at UNM in the Family Studies Program. You may have seen my flyers or heard my presentation about my study. If not, my study is related to how African American, undergraduate students here at UNM (main campus) experience a predominately White institution as it relates to academic achievement and development and how these experiences impact academic success and development. I have flyers available for your review and I hope that you'll consider being a part of this research study. Next week, if you self identify as being African American / Black, enrolled here at UNM main campus fulltime, and are 18 years or older, you will be receiving an online survey about racial identity via your UNM email account. At that time, you can decide if you would like to participate in the research study or not. There will be an informed consent form for you to agree or not agree with before you begin the survey.

There are minimal risks to being involved in this study. If any discomfort arises during the survey, you may stop the survey without any penalty whatsoever or skip to the next question on the inventory. The benefits of the study are that your campus and others like yours will understand how racial identity and academic development / achievement impact students of color. In addition, this research could potentially provide data on how campuses can foster a dynamic university environment that will be beneficial to all, when looking at successful matriculation towards a bachelor's degree and retention rates of African American undergraduate students.

Again, your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and there is no compensation benefit. Again, I encourage you to strongly consider participating in this study. The survey will take no more than 20 minutes to complete. Lastly, there are a few demographic questions that will be asked of you in order to capture a generalization of who is

participating in the survey. While this research may not benefit you personally, it will help in identifying support systems and ways to better support African American students on campus. If by chance, you elect not to be a part of the survey either by choice or because you do not meet the specified criteria of being African American / Black, enrolled as a fulltime student here at UNM main campus or are under the age of 18 years of age, and you have concerns or have experienced a hardship based on these criteria, please contact me Marla Wyche-Hall, mwycheh1@unm.edu, my faculty supervisor, Dr. Pamela Olson, pamo@unm.edu, and / or the IRB office, irb@salud.unm.edu.

Thanks for your time. My contact information is on the flyer. Have a good day.

Appendix E

Promotional Flyer

Does your race matter?



Let me hear YOUR voice!

Take the online SURVEY TODAY!!!

What: My study is examining the experiences of undergraduate, African American students who attend UNM (main campus) and how have these experiences impacted students' academic success?

When: The MIBI (Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity) online survey

In your UNM email account from May - June 2010; August – September 2010

Action: Please consider being a part of this voluntary study and take the on-line survey.

Benefits: To continue to support African American undergraduate students

at UNM with their academic success!

Questions: Please contact Marla Wyche-Hall, Ph.D. Student, 505-277-8279, mwycheh1@unm.edu

Dr. Pamela Olson, 505-277-5550, pamo@unm.edu

Department of Individual, Family and Community Education

Family Studies Program

Thank You! ☺

IRB # 10-113

Appendix F

Initial Email to Participants – Save the Date

Dear Undergraduate Student:

My name is Marla Wyche-Hall and I am a doctoral student here at UNM, in the Family Studies Program. You may have seen my flyers or heard my presentation about my upcoming study. If not, my study is related to how African American, undergraduate students here at UNM (main campus) experience a Predominately White Institution as well as an Hispanic Serving Institution, as it relates to academic achievement, and how this experience impacts students' overall academic success and development.

In the near future, I will be sending you an email with a link to the on-line survey. The link to the survey will be addressed to your UNM email account. The purpose of the research is to capture various views about being an African American, undergraduate student here at the University of New Mexico (main campus) and how being an African American, undergraduate student, impacts racial/ethnic identity, along with academic development and achievement. Your participation involves reading and making a choice to be a part of my study or not via an online consent form, answering pre-qualifying questions, answering questions on the Demographic Data sheet, and taking an on-line survey called the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which should take no longer than 15 minutes. Upon completion, you may choose to be a potential participant to partake in an in-depth, open-ended interview with me, as the researcher of this study. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face, and will be scheduled at a time convenient to your schedule, if you elect to enter your name as a possible participant for the interview portion of the study.

There are minimal risks to being involved in this study. If any discomfort arises during the survey and / or the interview, you may stop the survey and / or interview without any penalty whatsoever or skip to the next question on the inventory or ask the researcher to skip to the next question during the interview. The benefits of the study are that your campus and others like yours will understand how racial /ethnic identity and academic development / achievement impact African American students. In addition, this research could potentially provide data on how campuses can foster a dynamic university environment that will be beneficial to all, when looking at successful matriculation towards a bachelor's degree and retention rates of African American undergraduate students.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and there are no compensations or benefits associated with this study. Again, I encourage you to strongly consider participating in this study. The total time to complete this process will take no more than 20 minutes to complete. While this research may not benefit you personally, it will help in identifying support systems and ways to better support African American students on campus. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, 505-277- 8279, mwycheh1@unm.edu, my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Pamela N. Olson, 505-277-5550, pamo@unm.edu or the University of New Mexico Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Take good care.

Best,

Marla

Appendix G

Invitation to undergraduate students to take the MIBI online survey

Dear Undergraduate Student:

Good day! My name is Marla Wyche-Hall and I am a doctoral student in the Family Studies program here at UNM! I am hoping that you remember my initial email about asking you to consider being a participant in my on-line survey, which will help with my research study. The purpose of the research study is to capture various views about being an African American, undergraduate student here at the University of New Mexico (main campus) and how being an African American, undergraduate student, impacts racial/ethnic identity, along with academic development and achievement. Your participation is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate, please click on the following link,

<https://www.studentvoice.com/app/ClientWeb/Project.aspx?ProjectId=27050>.

The online survey will take no longer than 20 minutes to complete and it is approximately 56 questions.

In advance, I thank you for taking the time out of your day to assist with my research study. If you have any questions, please contact me, mwycheh1@unm.edu.

Best success to you during your academic career here at UNM! Go Lobos.

Take good care.

Marla

Appendix H

Pre – Qualifying Questions

Directions: Please answer the questions below as accurately as possible, to ensure that the correct potential participants are being identified for this study. Thank you.

1. I am enrolled as an undergraduate student at the University of New Mexico (main campus)?
Yes or No
(radio button)

(if answer is no, system should not go forward and thank you message should appear).

2. I am enrolled in 12 credit hours or more at the University of New Mexico (main campus)?
Yes or No
(radio button)

(if answer is no, system should not go forward and thank you message will appear).

3. I self identify as being African American / Black?
Yes or No
(radio button)

(if answer is no, system should not go forward and thank you message will appear).

4. I am 18 years of age or older?
Yes or No
(radio button)

(if answer is no, system will not go forward and thank you message will appear).

Next Button -

Student MUST answer “yes” to all 4 questions above.

(to go to the next page)

If not, this message should appear: Thank you for taking the time to complete the MIBI survey. Unfortunately, based on your responses to the above questions, you do not meet the criteria for potential participants for this study. Thank you for your time. If you have additional questions / concerns, please contact Marla Wyche-Hall, mwycheh1@unm.edu. Take good care.

Appendix I

Demographic Data Sheet (DDS)

1. Are you from the state of New Mexico? Yes or No; If not, what is your home city and state?
2. Are you male or female?
3. What is your age?
4. Do you work? Yes or No
5. If you answered Yes to #4, do you work on campus or off campus? _____ and on average (please make an accurate guess), approximately how many hours do you work weekly? _____
6. Do you have to work in order to pay for school? Yes or No
7. Which would best describe your family composition during your high school years up until your enrollment here at UNM? (Drop box) raised in a single parent home, raised in a two-parent home, raised in a relative's home, other (specify)
8. How often do you utilize the African American Student Services Center? Drop down box
Once a week; more than 3 times a week; once a month; daily; none
9. If you answered that you use the African American Student Services Center, what purpose does it serve you? Check boxes (all that apply) studying, homework, tutoring services, computer lab usage, social, meeting others for a student group meeting, other (box to fill in)
10. What is your university classification? (Freshman – Senior) (drop box)

11. Are you involved in any student organization groups? (Frat./Soror., Student Senate, Black Student Union, Black Men in Motion, etc.) Yes or No; If yes, what are the names of the organizations?
12. Are you a part of a scholarship team sport here at UNM? Yes or No. If yes, what sport?
13. Are you the first person in your immediate family (folks who you currently live with) to attend college? Yes or No.
14. What is your cumulative grade point average (GPA)? (Please make an accurate guess) _____
15. Do you have any children? Yes or No. If yes, how many _____
(actual number)
16. Looking back on your high school years, how well do you think your high school years prepared you for college (UNM)? Drop box (Really Prepared Me; Somewhat prepared me; Prepared me a little bit; Did not prepare me at all)

Appendix J

Online Survey

The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB
Consent to Participate in Research Form

IRB#: 10-113

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EXPIRES 05/09/11

The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB

Dear Research Study Potential Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research study by Marla Wyche-Hall from the Department of Individual, Family, and Community Education at the University of New Mexico (main campus). Marla Wyche-Hall is a Ph.D. student within the department of Individual, Family and Community Education (Family Studies Program) and she is conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Pamela N. Olson, a professor in the department. If you decide to be a part of the study, you are choosing to participate of your own free will.

The purpose of the research is to capture various views about being an African American, undergraduate student here at the University of New Mexico (main campus) and how being an African American, undergraduate student, impacts racial/ethnic identity, along with academic development and achievement. Your participation involves an on-line survey called the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which should take no longer than 15 minutes. In addition, you will be asked to complete the Demographics Data Sheet, which should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

There are minimal risks to being involved in this study. If any discomfort arises during the survey, you may stop the survey without any penalty whatsoever or skip to the next question on the survey. The benefits of the study are that your campus and others like yours will understand how racial / ethnic identity and academic development / achievement impact African American, undergraduate students. In addition, this research could potentially provide data on how campuses can foster a dynamic university environment that will be beneficial to all, when looking at successful matriculation towards a bachelor's degree and retention rates of African American undergraduate students. By clicking the "I agree" selection below, you are giving your consent to participate in this study.

Your participation will be kept confidential. All data associated with the study will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. These materials will only be used for accurate data documentation. The results of the research may be published, but your name will be replaced with a pseudonym. All collected data will be stored on password-protected computer server. A secure login is required to access all data reports; information is exchanged via a SSL that uses 128-bit encryption; and information must pass through multiple hardware and software security firewalls. Presentations or publications of this study will be based on grouped data and will not reveal your identity.

Your responses in this study are completely voluntary; you can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still be in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Marla Wyche-Hall via email at mwycheh1@unm.edu, or Dr. Pamela N. Olson at pamo@unm.edu. If you have other concerns or complaints, please contact the University of New Mexico Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129, irb@salud.unm.edu.

Informed Consent

I certify that I am 18 years of age or older, and wish to voluntarily participate in this study as mentioned above.

I have read the informed consent information.

I, the student:

Click **"I agree"** to indicate your consent and begin the survey.

Click **"I do not agree"** to indicate you do not give your consent and will not be a part of this study.

Appendix K

Reminder Email to Participants

Dear Undergraduate Student:

My name is Marla Wyche-Hall, and I am a doctoral student here at UNM in the Family Studies Program. You may have seen my flyers or heard my presentation about my study. If not, my study is related to how African American, undergraduate students here at UNM (main campus) experience a Predominately White Institution as well as an Hispanic Serving Institution, as it relates to academic achievement and development and how have these experiences impacted academic success and development. This email is to let you know that there are only a few days left for you to partake in my study and I am hoping that you would consider doing so. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and there are no compensation benefits. There are minimal risks associated with this study. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you may opt to stop taking the survey and there will be no penalty to you whatsoever for doing so. If you have not taken the on-line survey, I ask that you strongly consider taking it. The link to the survey is <https://www.studentvoice.com/app/ClientWeb/Project.aspx?ProjectId=2705> .It has also been sent to your UNM email account.

Again, the purpose of the research is to capture various views about being an African American, undergraduate student here at the University of New Mexico (main campus) and how being an African American, undergraduate student, impacts racial identity, along with academic development and achievement. Your participation involves an on-line survey called the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which should take no longer than

15 minutes. In addition, you will be asked to complete the Demographics Data Sheet, which should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

While this research may not benefit you personally, it will help in identifying support systems and ways to better support African American students on campus. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, 505-277- 8279, [,mwycheh1@unm.edu](mailto:mwycheh1@unm.edu), my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Pamela N. Olson, 505-277-5550, pamo@unm.edu or the University of New Mexico Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Take good care.

Best,

Marla

Appendix L

2nd Reminder Email to Participants to take MIBI

Dear Undergraduate Student:

My name is Marla Wyche-Hall, and I am a doctoral student here at UNM in the Family Studies Program. Remember me?! You may have seen my flyers or heard my presentation about my study. If not, my study is related to how African American, undergraduate students here at UNM (main campus) experience a Predominately White Institution as well as, an Hispanic Serving Institution, as it relates to academic achievement and development and how have these experiences impacted academic success and development.

This email is to let you know that IT'S NOT TOO LATE to participate in my study! You still have an opportunity to participate and I am hoping that you would consider doing so. I ask that you strongly consider taking it the on line survey. The link to the survey is <https://www.studentvoice.com/app/ClientWeb/Project.aspx?ProjectId=27050>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, 505-277- 8279, mwycheh1@unm.edu, my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Pamela N. Olson, 505-277-5550, pamo@unm.edu or the University of New Mexico Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Take good care.

Best,

Marla

Appendix M

Permission Email from Dr. Sellers to Use MIBI in Research Study

From: Robert Sellers
<rsellers@umich.edu> Monday - January 26, 2009 7:01 PM
To: "Marla Wyche-Hall" <mwycheh1@unm.edu>
Subject: Re: MIBI instrument - Proposal Dissertation Topic - REQUESTING
PERMISSION- Univ. of New Mexico

Attachments: Mime.822 (14 KB) [\[View\]](#) [\[Save As\]](#)

Dear Marla,

You have my permission to use the MIBI for your dissertation study. Congratulations on your progress and it is always great to hear from a fellow HBCU grad and 2nd generation Bison. I hope that all is well in Albuquerque. (You are a long way from home.) Thank you for your kind words.

You can down load a copy of the MIBI and the scoring directions from our website listed below.

Please let me know how your research goes. I would love to receive an abstract from dissertation when you finish. Good luck with your research and continue the good work. I hope to have a chance to meet you someday.

Take care.

-robert sellers

Robert M. Sellers
Professor
Department of Psychology
University of Michigan
530 Church Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1223
734-647-3949 Voice
734-647-9440 Fax
Website: "http://sitemaker.umich.edu/aaril/home".

Appendix N

Descriptive Statistics Table

Table N1

Descriptive statistics for the sub-measure items on the MIBI (N = 125)

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
MIBI 1 – Centrality	3.59	4.00	1.96	1	7
MIBI 2 – Nationalist	5.50	6.00	1.56	1	7
MIBI 3 – Nationalist	1.81	1.00	1.40	1	7
MIBI 4 – Private Regard	5.58	6.00	1.56	1	7
MIBI 5 – Public Regard	3.49	4.00	1.46	1	7
MIBI 6 – Centrality	5.65	6.00	1.52	1	7
MIBI 7 – Private Regard	6.43	7.00	1.12	1	7
MIBI 8 – Private Regard	6.37	7.00	1.10	1	7
MIBI 9 – Centrality	4.51	5.00	1.90	1	7
MIBI 10 – Assimilation	5.01	5.00	1.77	1	7
MIBI 11 – Nationalist	3.35	4.00	1.50	1	7
MIBI 12 – Nationalist	3.12	3.00	1.57	1	7
MIBI 13 – Centrality	3.38	3.00	2.12	1	7
MIBI 14 – Nationalist	2.26	2.00	1.59	1	7
MIBI 15 – Public Regard	3.62	4.00	1.43	1	7
MIBI 16 – Nationalist	4.93	5.00	1.56	1	7
MIBI 17 – Public Regard	4.50	5.00	1.56	1	7
MIBI 18 – Assimilation	4.94	5.00	1.50	1	7
MIBI 19 – Centrality	5.26	5.00	1.54	1	7
MIBI 20 – Minority Oppressed	5.23	5.00	1.74	1	7
MIBI 21 – Nationalist	6.14	7.00	1.19	1	7
MIBI 22 – Nationalist	2.63	2.00	1.74	1	7
MIBI 23 – Humanist	5.36	6.00	1.77	1	7
MIBI 24 – Private Regard	1.50	1.00	1.08	1	7
MIBI 25 – Nationalist	2.72	2.00	1.69	1	7
MIBI 26 – Humanist	6.48	7.00	1.00	1	7
MIBI 27 – Humanist	4.75	5.00	1.65	1	7
MIBI 28 – Humanist	4.63	5.00	1.70	1	7
MIBI 29 – Humanist	4.50	4.00	1.64	1	7
MIBI 30 – Humanist	4.87	5.00	1.81	1	7
MIBI 31 – Humanist	6.39	7.00	1.25	1	7
MIBI 32 – Humanist	5.91	6.00	1.43	1	7
MIBI 33 – Centrality	5.17	5.00	1.66	1	7
MIBI 34 – Minority Oppressed	5.02	5.00	1.48	1	7

MIBI 35 – Humanist	6.38	7.00	1.22	1	7
MIBI 36 – Minority Oppressed	6.01	6.00	1.20	1	7
MIBI 37 – Assimilation	4.04	4.00	1.82	1	7
MIBI 38 – Minority Oppressed	4.66	5.00	1.66	1	7
MIBI 39 – Assimilation	5.99	7.00	1.35	1	7
MIBI 40 – Assimilation	5.90	6.00	1.30	1	7
MIBI 41 – Assimilation	5.65	6.00	1.48	1	7
MIBI 42 – Minority Oppressed	4.54	5.00	1.83	1	7
MIBI 43 – Assimilation	6.18	7.00	1.19	1	7
MIBI 44 – Assimilation	4.84	5.00	1.87	1	7
MIBI 45 – Minority Oppressed	5.39	6.00	1.54	1	7
MIBI 46 – Assimilation	4.89	5.00	1.62	1	7
MIBI 47 – Minority Oppressed	4.62	5.00	1.42	1	7
MIBI 48 – Centrality	5.59	6.00	1.43	1	7
MIBI 49 – Minority Oppressed	5.38	5.00	1.20	2	7
MIBI 50 – Minority Oppressed	5.00	5.00	1.58	1	7
MIBI 51 – Centrality	4.08	4.00	1.93	1	7
MIBI 52 – Public Regard	4.28	4.00	1.65	1	7
MIBI 53 – Public Regard	3.59	4.00	1.44	1	7
MIBI 54 – Private Regard	6.45	7.00	1.02	2	7
MIBI 55 – Private Regard	6.11	7.00	1.25	1	7
MIBI 56 – Public Regard	3.99	4.00	1.52	1	7

Appendix O

In person - Interview

The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB Consent to Participate in Interview Form

IRB#: 10-113

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

EXPIRES 05/09/11

The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB

Dear Research Study Interview Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research study by Marla Wyche-Hall from the Department of Individual, Family, and Community Education at the University of New Mexico. Marla Wyche-Hall is a Ph.D. student within the department of Individual, Family and Community Education (Family Studies Program) and she is conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Pamela N. Olson, a professor in the department. If you decide to be a part of the study, you are choosing to participate of your own free will.

The purpose of the research is to capture various views about being an African American, undergraduate student here at the University of New Mexico and how being an African American, undergraduate student, impacts racial identity, along with academic development and achievement. Your participation involves being a participant in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. This interview will be an in-depth, open-ended interview with me (Marla Wyche-Hall), as the researcher of this study. Each interview varies in duration, as this is solely dependent on your experiences as an African American undergraduate, student and the time it takes for you to relate that experience. The total interview time should take no longer than 50 minutes; however (you) as the participant is under no time constraint. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face, and will be scheduled at a time convenient to your schedule.

There are minimal risks to being involved in this study. If any discomfort arises during the interview, you may stop the interview without any penalty whatsoever or ask the researcher (me) to skip to the next question during the interview. The benefits of the study are that your campus and others like yours will understand how racial identity and academic development / achievement impact students of color. In addition, this research could potentially provide data on how campuses can foster a dynamic university environment that will be beneficial to all, when looking at successful matriculation towards a bachelor's degree and retention rates of African American undergraduate students.

Your participation will be kept confidential. All audio recordings and transcriptions of audio recordings will be destroyed via shredding and a hammer, at the conclusion of the study. These materials will only be used for accurate data documentation. Each interview will be outsourced to Elizabeth Hurst Waitz, CCR, RMR of Integrity Court Reporting who is legally bonded by the Albuquerque Court System; has fifteen years of experience with transcription services; and has been well trained within the legal realms of confidentiality concerns. Thus, Ms. Waitz will be providing all transcription services for the purpose of this study. Only she and I (the researcher) will have access to your audio tape recording and transcriptions. The

results of the research may be published, but your name will be replaced with a pseudonym. All identifying information will be deleted in the transcripts and in published materials.

Your responses in this study are completely voluntary; you can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still be in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Marla Wyche-Hall via email at mwycheh1@unm.edu, or Dr. Pamela N. Olson at pamo@unm.edu. If you have other concerns or complaints, please contact the University of New Mexico Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129 or irb@salud.unm.edu.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. I understand that my responses will be audio tape recorded. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been provided a copy of this form.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

In my judgment, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this study.

Marla Wyche-Hall

Date

Appendix P

Technical Write Up of Statistical Process (data construction)

Throughout the data collection process there were 135 records that were captured in the Student Voice System. After reviewing the data and removing records that were blank or displayed too few responses, there were 125 records remaining.

Of the 10 records that were removed, the reasons were as follows: the student answered few questions within the MIBI and / or only answered the demographic questions.

Preparing the Analytical Dataset

Missing Data On the MIBI

The MIBI consists of 56 Likert scaled items. Although 135 individuals completed the demographics portion of the survey, there were 10 participants who did not provide any responses to the MIBI items. Thus, the researcher removed these cases from the original data as a first step to creating the analytical dataset. This left a total of 125 cases.

The next step was to replace the missing values on the 56 items on the MIBI. The researcher presented the items on the MIBI, the number of missing values, and the variable mean that was used to replace the missing values.

Item Number	How Many Missing	Mean Variable
MIBI #4	2	6.00
MIBI #5	1	3.00
MIBI #8	2	6.00
MIBI#11	1	3.00
MIBI #12	1	3.00
MIBI #14	1	3.00
MIBI #16	1	5.00
MIBI #17	2	4.00
MIBI #20	1	5.00

Item Number	How Many Missing	Mean Variable
MIBI #23	2	5.00
MIBI #25	1	3.00
MIBI #31	1	6.00
MIBI #34	1	5.00
MIBI #37	1	4.00
MIBI #45	2	5.00
MIBI #49	1	5.00
MIBI #50	1	5.00
MIBI #52	1	4.00
MIBI #53	2	4.00
MIBI #54	1	6.00
MIBI #55	2	6.00
MIBI #56	1	4.00

Missing Data for Grade Point Average (GPA)

There were 16 questions asked on the Demographic Data Sheet that allowed the researcher to gather data related to the participants participating in the study. Of 125 participants from the analytic data set, there were four participants missing GPAs. The researcher presented the items on the Demographic Data Sheet, missing values and the variable mean that was used to replace the missing value, which was the mean.

ID Number	Missing GPA Data	Mean Variable
1405311	1	3.00
14069885	1	3.00
14108293	1	3.00
14469506	1	3.00

Appendix Q

Codebook for SPSS Analytic Data File

Variable Name	Variable Description	Measures / Values
RespondentIDSV	Respondent ID from Student Voice	Number
IDNumber	ID assigned by me	Number
CONSENTP	Consent form	1= Gave consent 2=Did not give consent
UGUNMainP	UNM Main Student	1=Yes 2=No
ENROLL12P	Enrolled in at least 12 credits	1= Yes 2=No
IDAABP	Self Identities as Black/ African American	1=Yes 2=No
AGE18P	At least 18 years of old	1=Yes 2=No
Q6FROMNMD	Are you from New Mexico	1=Yes 2=No
NMrc	From NM recoded	0=No 1=Yes
Q7GENDERD	Student Gender (Sex)	1=Male 2=Female
GenderRC	Gender recoded	0=Female 1=Male
Q8AGED	Age in years	Number
Q9Work	Does student have a job	1=Yes 2=No
Q9WorkRC	Work recoded	0=No 1=Yes
Q10JOB	What kind of job	1=Campus 2=Off Campus 3=Fellowship 4=Other
kindjobRC	Kind of job recoded	0=all other jobs 1=job on campus
Campjob	Has job on campus or not	0=no job or off 1=have a job on campus
Q10aHRSWK	Hours per week that student works	Number
Q11WorkSchoolD	Work to pay for school	1=Yes 2=No
Q12fmmkupD	What is the family	1=Single Parent Home

	composition	2=Two Parent Home 3=Relative's Home 4=Other
Singlepar	Single Parent	0=everyone else 1=single parent home
Twopar	Two Parent	0=everyone else 1=two parent home
Relative	Relative's family	0=everyone else 1= relative's family
Otherfam	Other Family Structure	0=everyone else 1=other family structure
Q13Use AASSD	What services used in AA center	1=studying 2=homework 3=tutoring 4=computer lab 5=social 6=student groups 7=other
servicesRC	Services used in AA center	0=other purposes 1=academic services
Q14sercenDstudy	Studying in the center	Number
Q14sercentDhw	Homework in the center	Number
Q14sercenttut	Tutoring in the center	Number
Q14_4Complab	Computer lab I the center	Number
Q`14_5socialD	To be social	Number
Q14_6MtgothersD	Meeting with others	Number
Q14_7othercenterD	Other	Number
Q15UNMClass	Classification	1=Freshman 2=Sophomore 3=Junior 4=Senior
Upperlower	Upper or lower classmen	0=Freshmen or Sophomore 1=Juniors or Seniors
Q16storggrpsD	Involved in student organizations	1=Yes 2=No
Stdgrpinvolv	Involved in students Groups	0=No 1=Yes
Q17_1FraternitySOD	Fraternity	1=Yes
Q17_2SororitySOD	Sorority	Number
Q17_3StudentSenate	Student senate	Number
Q17_4BlackStudentUnion	Black student union	Number
Q17_5BlackMenMotionSOD	Black Men in Motion	Number
Q17_6OtherSOD	Other	Number
Q18ScholarteamD	On a scholarship team	1=Yes 2=No

schteamRC	On a scholarship team RC	0=No 1=Yes
Q19firstgenD	First generation to attend college	1=Yes 2=No
FirstgenRC	First generation recoded	0=No 1=Yes
Q20CUMGPA	Cumulative GPA	Number
Q21havekidsD	Does the student have children	1=Yes 2=No
havekidsRC	Does student have kids recoded	0=No 1=Yes
Q23HSpreparedD	Did student's HS prepare for college	1=Really Prepared Me 2=Somewhat Prepared Me 3=Prepared Me a little bit 4=Did not prepare me at all
Hspreprev	High school prep reverse scoring	1=did not prepare me 2=prepared me a little bit 3=somewhat prepared me 4=really prepared me

Appendix R

Student Voice Information

<http://www.studentvoice.com/>

about StudentVoice

Student Voice is the software package that is being used to replicate the MIBI survey to all African American, undergraduate students who are enrolled at UNM (main campus), who are 18 years of age or older and are enrolled in no less than 12 credit hours at the time of data collection. Due to the Student Voice software being a leader provider, below is a detailed overview and history of the software package that will be used in this study.

Student Voice is one of the country's leading assessment providers to higher education professionals. Founded in 1999, Student Voice has built a reputation on the ability to combine assessment experience and innovative technology to build assessment programs that deliver world-class results for our member campuses. Whether we are working with VPs of Student Affairs, Assessment Professionals, or Unit Directors, Student Voice provides assessment services to support campuses required to gather quality, actionable data.

history

Student Voice began at the University at Buffalo, where founder Eric Reich saw unique opportunities for campus data collection. When appointed to join the President and Chairman on the University Council, Eric developed and communicated his vision of a comprehensive, collaborative assessment program that connected the datasets of divisional units and cooperating campuses. From that discussion, Student Voice was born.

Since 1999, Student Voice has empowered universities across North America to frequently conduct studies in program satisfaction, academic affairs, and student life. With Student Voice's tools and support, hundreds of campuses now have active programs that make assessment simple and cost-effective. For a list of member campuses with Student Voice, go to: <http://www.studentvoice.com/about1.htm>

Appendix S

Online Security Features for the Student Voice Software Program

Student Voice is committed to maintaining the highest standards in data security. To protect information used in internet transactions (i.e., online surveys, data reports) Student Voice uses the following security techniques and procedures:

- Secure login access (username and password) is required to access all data reports.
- Information is exchanged via Secure Socket Layer (SSL) that uses 128-bit encryption.
- Information requests must pass through multiple hardware and software security firewalls.
- Student Voice's data center is monitored 24/7 and access is restricted to authorized parties with validated key cards.
- Data backed up every hour internally.
- Data backed up every night to centralized backup system, with offsite backups in event of catastrophe.

Student Voice utilizes Verisign's Secure Site services for applications that process financial transactions.

Appendix T

Email to participants who have not been selected for the interview process

Dear Undergraduate Student:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview portion of my research study dealing with racial identity and academic achievement. The process for selecting interview participants was based on random selection, where all participants had an equal opportunity to participate. However, you were not selected as an interview participant. I appreciate your willingness to take the time to participate. If you would like updates about my study, please feel free to contact me via email, Marla Wyche-Hall, mwycheh1@unm.edu.

Wishing you best success in your academic career!

Take good care.

Marla

Appendix U

For students wanting to be a part of the interview pool

The second part of this study will include an interview with the researcher regarding your experiences as an African American, undergraduate student who is attending a predominately White institution (PWI), as well as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

How do you want me to contact you?

Your FIRST name only:

Please provide one of the following:

UNM email address: @unm.edu

Contact number (please include area code):

Preferred email address:

Thank you.