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AN EXAMINATION OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN STUDENT-TEACHER
INTERACTIONS AND ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT AMONG AFRICAN
AMERICAN MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in
Education in the College of
Education at the University of
Kentucky

By

Lauren Dionne Hargrave

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Kenneth Tyler, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology

Lexington, Kentucky

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS AND ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students generally spend more than ten years interacting with teachers in a classroom and thus, such interactions can have a positive or negative impact on students' academic self-concept and educational goals (Rosenthal, Folse, Allerman, Boudreaux, Soper, & Von Bergen, 2000). The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant relationship between student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept. Participants in the study include African American male high school students in an urban school district. The independent variable is the student-teacher interactions, as measured by the Student-Professor Interaction Scale (Cokley et al., 2004). The dependent variable is the students' academic-self-concept, which is measured by the Academic Self-Concept Scale (Reynolds, Ramirez, Magrina, & Allen, 1980). The data was analyzed by using Pearson's correlation and hierarchical multiple regression to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Findings, study limitations, and future research directions are also discussed.

KEYWORDS: Academic Self-Concept, Student-Teacher Interactions, African American Males

Lauren Dionne Hargrave

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Chapter One: Introduction

According to Jackson and Hilliard (2013), African American male students' are at-risk in relation to academic performance, being identified for special education, discipline, and dropping out, amongst other factors. Also, African American male students are worse off than any other ethnic student group in relation to academic performance. For example, the U.S. Department of Education (2009) showed that, even though the achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students has improved since the 1990s, African American students are still being outperformed on all assessments. In addition, the results showed that in reading and math since the 1990s, the achievement gap between African American male students and Caucasian males has always been greater than their African American female students and Caucasian female counterparts. Moreover, African American male students have a substantial amount of factors that potentially have an impact on their ability to succeed in formal schooling environments. Hudley and Daoud (2008), Komarraju, Musulkin, and Bhattacharya (2010), and Tyler (2014) believe that these factors include, but are not limited to, monocultural ethnocentrism, student-teacher interactions, classism, and individual, cultural, and institutional racism.

For the current study, I focused on student-teacher interactions due to the fact that studies have shown that they are an important factor for academic success, specifically for African American male students (Cokley, 2000; Hudley & Daoud, 2008; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). For example, Cokley (2000) conducted a study that examined how factors, such as student-teacher

interactions affected academic self-concept in African American college students (84 males, 122 females) in a predominantly white setting versus a predominantly black setting. The quality of these interactions, such as teachers being supportive and opportunities to make friendships as well as gender differences, were analyzed. The findings showed that African American students have better academic success in a predominantly black setting, which was due, in part, to their interactions with teachers, especially for African American male students. The male students reported having more positive interactions with teachers than females, which may be due to the number of male professors as opposed to females.

The current study seeks to extend this line of research pursued by Cokley and colleagues by examining the association between student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept among African American male high school students.

Prior to the presentation of the study methodology, I have reviewed the conceptual framework that encompasses student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept. Then, I discussed academic factors in relation to African American male students. Following this is a discussion of the two factors in question: student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept. There have been several studies that examine how student-teacher interactions affect academic self-concept in all students, and even a study that examined it in African American male college students in relation to the culture of their academic setting (Cokley 2000; Hudley & Daoud, 2008; Komarraju et al., 2010).

However, there has not been a study to specifically examine how student-teacher interactions affect academic self-concept in African American male high school students. Therefore, this study will add to educational research by providing a general idea of African American male high school students' academic self-concept by examining its association with reported perceptions of student-teacher interactions. In knowing whether student-teacher interactions have a significant association with academic self-concept, not only can training be developed for teachers, but students can also become engaged in other interactions that build on and build up their academic self-concept.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Social cognitive theory serves as the conceptual framework used in the current study to examine the association between student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept among African American male high school students. Social cognitive theory is fitting for this study because students' expectations of their academic abilities is one determining factor in their motivation to succeed (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). Moreover, their interactions with their teachers can be a determining factor in how they perceive their ability to succeed. Specifically, a person's belief about his or her ability to succeed can arise from personal or vicarious experiences (Ormrod, 2011), which may come from interactions with teachers. The social cognitive theory emerged from work done by Albert Bandura (1977) and states that 1) learning is social wherein people and their environments influence one another, 2) cognitive processes influence learning, and 3) a great deal of what is learned occurs through observations. In order for learning to occur, attention, retention, motor reproduction—which comprise the necessary physical and behavioral-based aspects of learning, must be present. Also present and necessary for learning is the individual's motivation, which serves, according to Bandura, as a cognitive factor within the individual (Ormrod, 2011). Within this theory, the learner has the ability to decide what behaviors and skills to internalize.

One premise of the social cognitive theory is triadic reciprocity. Triadic reciprocity is the idea that personal, behavioral, and environmental factors

influence one another in a correlative way (Bandura, 1986). An example of that would be a student's academic self-concept being shaped by components within the academic environment, such as their interactions with teachers. In relation, academic self-concept is also affected by students' own thoughts and perceptions of their academic environment. Positive interactions with teachers affect academic self-concept by encouraging students to be more engaged academically, which results in academic success (Komarraju et al., 2010). Perceptions of the academic environment affect academic self-concept as students get a sense of their teachers' expectations of them, which can be considered a precursor for how their learning will take place. Given that many African American male students are reported to have significant difficulties throughout their formal schooling experiences, it is important to examine more closely their experiences within the academic environment and the impact such may have on their academic performance and the cognitively related factors that precede such performance, namely academic self-concept.

African American Males

African American students have been at a disadvantage in relation to education, amongst other factors, for well over a century. In both the 20th and 21st centuries, the academic dilemmas of African American students have often been the face of academic failure (Garibaldi, 1992; Thomas, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), although math and reading scores are higher for African American and Caucasian students from previous years, Caucasian students continue to outperform African American students on all

assessments. The national achievement gap in fourth grade math in 2007 between African American and Caucasian students was 26 points. In Grade 8 in 2007, the national achievement gap was 31 points. Specifically, for fourth grade reading achievement, the national achievement gap in 2007 was 27 points between African American and Caucasian students. In eighth grade reading in 2007, the national achievement gap was 26 points between African American and Caucasian students.

Regarding African American male students, the academic performance issues are even more disheartening. For example, for African American males in the fourth grade in 2007, the reading achievement gap was 28 points between them and their Caucasian student counterparts. As for female students, the achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students was 25 points. The male and female score disparities did not change for Grade 8. In examining these data, it is evident that achievement gaps between African American and Caucasian students continue to increase as they matriculate through school. Indeed, it is clear that African American male students are performing worse academically than their Caucasian and female student counterparts.

Further, there have been several studies and books to discuss the low academic achievement of African American male students in comparison to other ethnic groups. (Gibbs, 1988; Howard, 2008; Jackson & Hilliard, 2013; Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, & Jennings, 2010). Over the years, research has shown that African American male students continue to underachieve in most academic

areas. They are, on average, a year behind their current grade level in reading and writing (Gurian & Stevens, 2005; Jackson & Hilliard, 2013). In 2003 – 2004, the Schott Foundation found that 55% of African American male high school students did not graduate with their incoming class (as cited in Howard, 2008).

To address this and additional difficulties faced in school by many African American male students, Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, and Jennings (2010) used critical race ethnography to examine teachers' beliefs about why African American students fail or succeed in school. This study took place in a small urban area, in a low-performing high school with ninety-nine percent African American students (953 total), where more than 50% of the African American male students either dropped-out, transferred, or graduated at the bottom of their class. Results of the study showed that eighty percent of teachers (40 African American women, 8 African American men and 2 Caucasian women) believed African American students and their home environments were responsible for their academic failures. The teachers, however, did not identify themselves or their interactions with African American students as part of the reason the students were low-achievers. The following paragraph will provide some insight into why such interactions between teachers and students should have been considered by teachers of African American students.

Student-Teacher Interactions

Chickering (1969) was the first to conceptualize student-teacher interactions. He believed that student-teacher interactions should include the teacher being accessible, authentic, knowledgeable, and a good communicator.

Also, these interactions should occur throughout schooling with students being an active participant in the interaction. Chickering's explanatory model of student development (as cited in Cokley et al., 2004) stated when students and teachers often have formal and informal interactions, students are motivated academically. Woodside, Wong, and Wiest (1999) discuss student-teacher interactions as "formal classroom experiences and informal interactions outside of class" (p. 730).

Cox and Orehovec (2007) and Komarraju et al. (2010) discuss several types of interactions, including 1) functional, which is an interaction outside of the classroom, but is focused solely on school-related topics, 2) personal, which goes beyond school-related issues that focuses on the personal interest of the student or teacher and may result in a friendship, 3) incidental, which is an occasional greeting in passing, and 4) disengagement, which is bare minimum interaction or none at all. Each type of interaction in itself can be regarded as negative or positive.

Positive student-teacher interactions, for instance, can encourage students to meet higher expectations, utilize their strengths to succeed, and potentially promote professional education endeavors (Komarraju et al., 2010). However, negative student-teacher interactions can demonstrate a lack of appraisal, appreciation, acknowledgment, acceptance, or comfort between the pair, which can cause the student to lose self-esteem, motivation, and decrease his or her academic performance (Casteel, 1998). A positive student-teacher interaction includes teachers who are approachable, respectful, and provide time

outside of the classroom for informal interactions, whereas a negative interaction would include teachers who are uninterested in students as well as their learning or teachers who “request favors, have sexual relations with, and spend time alone” with students (Komarraju et al., 2010 p. 333). Thus, the type of interaction that a student has with a teacher may affect them negatively or positively.

Female students are more likely to seek interactions and have positive interactions with teachers than their male counterparts (Hagedorn, Maxwell, Rodriguez, Hocevar, & Fillpot, 2000; Komarraju et al., 2010; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994). In addition, student characteristics, such as having like interests and ambitions with teachers, are important precursors in determining how often and to what extent students need to interact with teachers (Cole, 2007). Positive student-teacher interactions can differentiate those students who will succeed from those who may potentially fail (Cokley, 2000).

Interactions with teachers, amongst other factors, influence academic achievement and motivation (Finn & Rock, 1997; Hudley & Daoud, 2008; Komarraju et al., 2010; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011). Komarraju et al. (2010) believe that students who experience informal interactions with teachers are more likely to be engaged in the learning process. Moreover, when a student has a positive relationship with a teacher, he or she is likely to incorporate some of the teacher’s beliefs into his or her own (Martin & Dowson, 2009), which can encourage him or her to achieve.

In addition, the way that teachers behave in class towards students determines whether students want to interact with them outside of class (Cole,

2007; Wilson, Wood, & Gaff, 1974). For instance, Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya (2010) conducted a study examining the different aspects of student-teacher interactions. The sample consisted of 242 (67% Caucasian, 24% African American, 9% other; 54% Female, 46% Male) undergraduate students from a university in the Midwest region of the United States. The data were collected using the Student-Professor Interaction Scale, Academic Self-Concept Scale, and Academic Motivation Subscales, and analyzed using a correlation and regression analysis. The regression analysis indicated 18% of the variance in academic self-concept was due to reported facets of student-professor interactions. Those interactions included feeling respected ($\beta = .20$), being approachable ($\beta = .21$), and off-campus contact ($\beta = .15$), $F(3, 233) = 16.73$; $p < .001$. The overall results showed that interactions with teachers are related to psychosocial and academic outcomes for undergraduate students. Students who perceive their teachers to be approachable, respectful, and available are more probable to be confident about their academic skills and be motivated. On the contrary, students who perceive their teachers to be uninterested in them and their learning are more likely to be unmotivated.

Additionally, the manner in which teachers interact with students can determine students' sense of belongingness or relatedness to the school overall, and thereby, be associated with achievement-related cognitive factors. That is, relatedness and student-teacher interactions are closely associated. Relatedness is one of the basic psychological needs that dispenses motivation for engagement and learning (Locke, 2014). Wanting to have a sense of relatedness

or “feel belongingness and connectedness” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 73) to others is said to be a source of academic motivation for students (Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011). Students who have a strong sense of relatedness to their school are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and self-regulated. Relatedness influence these factors by fulfilling students need to belong, which gives them a positive outlook on their academic environment (Locke, 2014; Martin & Dowson, 2009). Given this, it is important for this feeling of relatedness to come from teachers in a classroom setting because if a social environment fails to foster relatedness, it may result in an underdeveloped student or that student may have a compromised sense of academic self-concept or related factors (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

For example, if a student does not feel as if he or she can relate to his or her teacher, it can affect his or her interactions with them, especially for African American students (Cokley et al., 2004). If a school’s social environment—of which the classroom teacher is the primary focus—does not provide the basis for relatedness through positive student teacher interactions, then students are more likely to become disengaged (Locke, 2014; Martin & Dowson, 2009). Cokley et al. (2004) stated that African American students tend to prefer personal interactions with teachers of the same ethnicity because they feel as if they will be able to relate to them. However, there are far fewer African American teachers (about 18% of ethnic minority total) in the school system (Center for American Progress, 2014). Therefore, the lack of racial similarity may cause African American students to shy away from interacting with their teachers, which

negatively affects them academically. Prior to the impact on academic performance, however, it is likely that limited positive experiences and interactions with classroom teachers can influence how students, African American students in particular, think about themselves as students, that is, their academic self-concept.

Academic Self-Concept

Cokley (2008) defined academic self-concept as “the attitudes and feelings that an individual has about his or her academic abilities” (p. 354). How a person perceives himself or herself is based, in part, on how he or she believes someone of significance in their life (e.g., a teacher) perceives them. Students’ perceptions of their school environment are related to their academic self-concept (Liu & Wang, 2008). Students who have positive perceptions of their schools’ social context—including their interactions with teachers—generally have a positive academic self-concept (Locke, 2014). On the contrary, students who are estranged and dissatisfied within the school context—most notably at the hands of teachers—typically lack motivation to attend school and to engage in learning (Meece, Anderman & Anderman, 2006). That is, they may have developed a negative academic self-concept.

In particular, Ireson and Hallam (2005) conducted a study that observed pupils’ liking for school and the relation it had to their self-concept and self-esteem. The data were collected through three different questionnaires, which were “pupils’ liking for school”, “perceptions of teaching”, and “self-esteem and self-concept in English, math and science” The data was analyzed using inter-

item correlation. The sample consisted of 45 secondary schools, which was a total of 6,013 students (about 53% male and 47% female) and the racial demographics were not given. The study showed that students' academic attitudes were linked to a sense of community in school and that students liked schools in which they felt supported by their teachers (p. 298).

Additionally, students' race is significant to student-teacher interactions, academic self-concept, and achievement motivation (Cole, 2007; & Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011). Students' race can be a determining factor in how they have been taught to socialize and learn in school. Motives that students have for achieving depend, in part, upon their racial and cultural background. Each individual culture has different cultural values, expectations, and cultural practices, which influence student's development and achievement motivation (Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011).

For minority students, racism or racial tension can create a barrier when trying to interact with teachers, which can affect their academic self-concept (Cole, 2007). Cokley (2000) conducted a study that examined the academic self-concept of 206 African American undergraduate students (84 males and 122 females) who attended a historically black university versus those who attended a predominantly white institution. The data included reports from the Academic Self-Concept Scale and the National Study of Black College Students Questionnaire, which were collected from two predominantly white institutions and three historically black universities in the southeast region of the United States. The regression analysis showed that African American students who

attend historically black universities have more favorable student-teacher interactions ($\beta = .276$) as opposed to being at a predominantly white institution ($\beta = .206$), which according to the study was a significant predictor for their academic self-concept.

This study supports the claim that African American students are more comfortable having interactions in a setting where the majority of people look like them and shows how these interactions are associated with academic self-concept. Also, it supports the claim that race is significant to student-teacher interactions, academic self-concept, and achievement motivation by showing how being in an environment with a different racial composition has contrasting outcomes on African American students. In addition, it supports my reasoning for studying how student-teacher interactions affect academic self-concept in African American male high school students.

To date, I have not found any studies that focus solely on how the types of student-teacher interactions affect academic self-concept in African American male high school students. Thus far, there have not been any quantitative studies that analyze the relationship between these factors focusing specifically on African American male high school students. The studies that have been conducted at this point have focused on student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept in college students of multiple ethnicities and gender or have been a qualitative study focusing on high school students (Cokley, 2000; Hudley & Daoud, 2008; Komarraju et al., 2010). Conducting the current study will help enhance educational research on African American male students by

determining whether student-teacher interactions have a statistically significant association with reports of academic self-concept. The contributions of this study are two-fold. First, the study will show African American male high school students' perceptions of their interactions with their teachers, which will give an idea of what these students are facing in their day-to-day interactions and experiences in secondary education. In addition, this study will add to educational research by having a general idea of African American male students' academic self-concept, specifically, whether it can be predicted by the reported perceptions of the types of interactions they have with their teachers. Overall, this study provides a new look at the association between student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept in African American male high school students.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Participants

The sample for this study included 154 African American male high school students. The data were collected from a secondary school located in an urban area in the Southeastern region of the United States. Participants included freshman (Grade 9) through senior (Grade 12) levels. Within the sample were 11.5% high school freshmen, 51.9% sophomores (48.6%), 27.6% juniors, and 9% were seniors. About three percent (2.6%) of the sample reported a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher, 26.3% indicated a GPA between 3.0-3.5, 37.8% indicated a GPA of 2.5-3.0, 23% indicated a GPA of 2.0-2.5, and 10.3% indicated a GPA below 2.0. Eighty-two percent (82.4%) of students received free or reduced price lunch.

Measures

The Student-Professor Interaction Scale. The quantitative independent variable in the current study is the students' self-reports of their interactions with teachers. It is operationalized through a 40-item, nine subscale instrument designed to assess different types of student-faculty interactions. The scale employs a 7-point Likert response pattern and responses range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Validation of the scale yielded a 9-factor structure and internal consistency coefficients ranged from .73 to .87 (Cokley et al., 2006). The nine subscales include the following: (1) Career guidance, (2) Off-campus interactions, (3) Approachability, (4) Validity scale, (5) Accessibility, (6) Negative experiences, (7) Respectful interactions, (8) Caring attitudes, (9)

Connectedness. Cokley et al. (2006), conducted a study using the nine subscales with a sample of 290 college students to show more support for the structure validity of the scale.

The Academic Self-Concept Scale. The quantitative dependent variable is students' academic self-concept. It is operationalized through a 40-item scale that measures academic self-concept among college students (Reynolds et al., 1980). The scale employs a 4-point Likert-type response pattern ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Cokley, Komarraju, King, Cunningham, and Muhammad (2003) uncovered a seven-factor solution for the ASCS with an African American sample. Internal consistency coefficients for the subscales were low to moderate (i.e., .57-.76). The 7-factor structure consists of (1) grade and effort dimension, (2) study habits/organizational self-perceptions, (3) peer evaluations of academic ability, (4) self-confidence in academics, (5) satisfaction with school, (6) self-doubt regarding ability, (7) self-evaluation with external standards. According to Cokley et al. (2003), comparable reliability of the scale does not transfer to comparable reliability of the subscales, therefore, the mean of all of the items on the scale was used.

Procedures

The researchers obtained permission to collect data from a high school located in an urban metropolitan area within the Southeastern region of the country. Informed consent forms were submitted to all African American male high school students two days prior to survey administration. On the day of survey administration, participants were called into the auditorium where the

principal investigator explained the purpose of the research study and collected signed informed consent forms. Participants were to take the surveys home to complete them and return them the following day. To entice participation, upon completing and returning surveys the next day to the research team, participants received twenty dollars (\$20).

Data Analysis

To address the research question, Pearson's correlation coefficient ($p < .05$) and hierarchical multiple regression was used to examine the relationship between student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept in African American male high school students. This interaction was tested at the 5% significance level to determine if the correlation coefficients are statistically significant. Considering this data has already been collected, this study is a secondary data analysis. There are no missing data.

Chapter Four: Results

Student-Teacher Interactions

Reports for student-teacher interactions were gathered using the Student-Professor Interaction subscales. The scales employ a 7-point Likert response pattern and responses range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), with neither agree or disagree (4) being the midpoint. Out of 156 participants in the study, 154 students responded to all items on the scales. The subscales for the Student-Professor Interaction Scale are as follows: 1) Career Guidance, 2) Off-Campus Interactions, 3) Approachability, 4) Validity, 5) Accessibility, 6) Negative Experiences, 7) Respectful Interactions, 8) Caring Attitudes, and 9) Connectedness. Out of the nine subscales, the mean of the items for eight of the subscales were above the midpoint of the scale. This indicates that, on average, students were more positive on the amount of career guidance provided by the teachers, the amount of off-campus interactions, the amount that teachers were approachable, the accessibility of the teacher, how respectful their teachers were, how much they perceived teachers to be caring, as well as how valid student-teacher interactions were in relation to academic self-concept. In addition, subscale six, negative experiences, was the only subscale mean that was below the midpoint of the scale and the only scale that was reverse coded. This implies that negative experiences weren't happening as frequently. See Table 1.1 for means, reliability, and standard deviations.

Academic Self-Concept

Academic self-concept was assessed using the Academic Self-Concept Scale. The scale consisted of 40 items and was used as one scale as opposed to

the 7-factor subscale due to issues of comparable reliability. The scale used a 4-point Likert-type response pattern ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). One hundred fifty-four students responded to this scale out of the 156 total participants. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .814, which denotes that responses to all of the items were internally consistent and is sufficient for the use of this study. According to Kline (2000), a Cronbach's alpha of .70 or above indicates good reliability for a scale. The mean of the scale is 2.677, indicating that the participants were somewhat neutral in their response to reports of academic self-concept.

Bivariate Correlation Analysis

Student-Teacher Interactions and Academic Self-Concept

A Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to examine the direction and the strength of the relationship between each type of student-teacher interaction and academic self-concept among African American male high school students using $p < .001$ to determine the statistical significance. The results supported the hypothesis that student-teacher interactions have a significant positive relationship with academic self-concept in African American male high school students. All of the Student-Teacher Interaction subscales were statistically significant ($p < .001$). In addition, a preliminary data analysis was run which showed that demographic variables, such as GPA, grade level, and socioeconomic status were insignificant in relation to academic self-concept. According to the findings in Table 1.1, the higher the quality of the student-teacher interaction, the more positive the academic self-concept of the student.

Table 1.1

Pearson's Correlation and Descriptive Statistics for Student-Teacher Interactions, Academic Self-Concept, and Demographic Variables

| | VARIABLE | ASCS | <i>M</i> | α | <i>SD</i> |
|-----|----------------|-------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. | SPIS1 | .239* | 5.082 | .857 | 1.32 |
| 2. | SPIS2 | .340* | 4.297 | .793 | 1.39 |
| 3. | SPIS3 | .271* | 5.010 | .798 | 1.27 |
| 4. | SPIS4 | .351* | 4.589 | .732 | 1.34 |
| 5. | SPIS5 | .412* | 4.562 | .782 | 1.28 |
| 6. | SPIS6 | .453* | 3.752 | .867 | 1.47 |
| 7. | SPIS7 | .225* | 4.715 | .916 | 1.19 |
| 8. | SPIS8 | .215* | 5.034 | .897 | 1.52 |
| 9. | SPIS9 | .322* | 4.351 | .780 | 1.24 |
| 10. | GPA | .085 | 2.889 | — | 1.00 |
| 11. | FREE LUNCH | .125 | 1.821 | — | .384 |
| 12. | GRADE LEVEL | -.080 | 2.344 | — | .803 |
| | <i>M</i> | 2.667 | | | |
| | <i>SD</i> | .814 | | | |

* $p < .001$

Note. SPIS = Student-Professor Interaction Scale (student-teacher interactions); SPIS 1 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 2 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 2 (Off-Campus Interactions), SPIS 3 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 3 (Approachability), SPIS 4 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 4 (Validity), SPIS 5 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 5 (Accessibility), SPIS 6 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 6 (Negative Experiences), SPIS 7 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 8 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 9 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 9 (Connectedness); ASCS = Academic Self-Concept Scale; Demographic variables include GPA (grade point average), free lunch, and grade level

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

After finding a significant relationship among different forms of student-teacher interaction and academic self-concept, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis determined if there was a predictive association between the types of student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept for the African American male high school student participants. Nearly 37% ($R^2 = .368$) of the variance in academic self-concept was explained by student-teacher interactions overall. This signifies that reports of academic self-concept was predictive of students' perceptions of their student-teacher interactions. Within this analysis, subscale 6, negative experiences was reverse coded.

Table 1.2

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Model

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | SE | Change Statistics | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .215 ^a | .046 | .040 | .31440 | .046 | 7.385 | 1 | 152 | .007 |
| 2 | .245 ^b | .060 | .048 | .31313 | .014 | 2.236 | 1 | 151 | .137 |
| 3 | .273 ^c | .074 | .056 | .31178 | .014 | 2.302 | 1 | 150 | .131 |
| 4 | .288 ^d | .083 | .058 | .31143 | .008 | 1.345 | 1 | 149 | .248 |
| 5 | .350 ^e | .123 | .093 | .30560 | .040 | 6.741 | 1 | 148 | .010 |
| 6 | .391 ^f | .153 | .119 | .30124 | .031 | 5.308 | 1 | 147 | .023 |
| 7 | .427 ^g | .182 | .143 | .29705 | .029 | 5.177 | 1 | 146 | .024 |
| 8 | .501 ^h | .251 | .209 | .28535 | .068 | 13.220 | 1 | 145 | .000 |
| 9 | .606 ⁱ | .368 | .328 | .26299 | .117 | 26.704 | 1 | 144 | .000 |

Note. SPIS = Student-Professor Interaction Scale; ASC = Academic Self-Concept

1. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes)

2. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance)
3. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions)
4. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 3 (Approachability)
5. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 3 (Approachability), SPIS 9 (Connectedness)
6. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 3 (Approachability), SPIS 9 (Connectedness), SPIS 2 (Off-Campus Interactions)
7. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 3 (Approachability), SPIS 9 (Connectedness), SPIS 2 (Off-Campus Interactions), SPIS 4 (Validity)
8. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 3 (Approachability), SPIS 9 (Connectedness), SPIS 2 (Off-Campus Interactions), SPIS 4 (Validity), SPIS 5 (Accessibility)
9. Predictors: (Constant), SPIS 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 3 (Approachability), SPIS 9 (Connectedness), SPIS 2 (Off-Campus Interactions), SPIS 4 (Validity), SPIS 5 (Accessibility), SPIS 6 (Negative Experiences)

As shown in Table 1.3, in analyzing the different types of student-teacher interactions, it was found that accessibility ($\beta = .400, p < .01$) and negative experiences ($\beta = .394, p < .01$) predicted academic self-concept. This indicates that accessibility and negative experiences predicts academic self-concept in African American male high school students. In addition, the beta weights indicate that for every 1 standard deviation increase in accessibility, academic self-concept increases by .400 holding all subscales with the exception of negative experiences constant. Moreover, for every 1 standard deviation increase in negative experiences, academic self-concept decreases by .394 holding the others subscales constant. See Table 1.3 below.

Table 1.3

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Prediction Academic Self-**Concept*

| | Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
|---|------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------|--|--------|------|
| | | B | SEB | B | | | |
| 9 | (Constant) | 1.904 | .117 | | | 16.317 | .000 |
| | SPIS 8 | .001 | .022 | .004 | | .041 | .968 |
| | SPIS 1 | .005 | .007 | .079 | | .675 | .501 |
| | SPIS 7 | -.047 | .028 | -.174 | | -1.692 | .093 |
| | SPIS 3 | -.019 | .029 | -.074 | | -.642 | .522 |
| | SPIS 9 | .019 | .025 | .074 | | .766 | .445 |
| | SPIS 2 | .011 | .020 | .046 | | .529 | .597 |
| | SPIS 4 | .017 | .022 | .069 | | .762 | .447 |
| | SPIS 5 | .099 | .029 | .400 | | 3.460 | .001 |
| | SPIS 6 | .086 | .017 | .394 | | 5.168 | .000 |

Note. SPIS 1 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 1 (Career Guidance), SPIS 2 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 2 (Off-Campus Interactions), SPIS 3 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 3 (Approachability), SPIS 4 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 4 (Validity), SPIS 5 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 5 (Accessibility), SPIS 6 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 6 (Negative Experiences), SPIS 7 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 7 (Respectful Interactions), SPIS 8 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 8 (Caring Attitudes), SPIS 9 = Student Professor Interaction Subscale 9 (Connectedness); ASC = Academic Self-Concept. Dependent Variable: ASC

Chapter Five: Discussion

The results of this study imparts an understanding of the impact student-teacher interactions have on academic self-concept in African American male high school students. In comparison to some research (Cokley, 2000; Hudley & Daoud, 2008; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010), student-teacher interactions do have an impact on academic self-concept. However, this study showed that the types of interactions that are significant to academic self-concept are different from what other studies have found. As stated previously, the nine different types of interaction subscales that are included in the Student-Professor Interaction scale are 1) Career Guidance, 2) Off-Campus Interactions, 3) Approachability, 4) Validity, 5) Accessibility, 6) Negative Experiences, 7) Respectful Interactions, 8) Caring Attitudes, and 9) Connectedness. In first conducting the correlation analysis, the results showed that all of the subscales were significant in their relationship with academic self-concept. The correlations that were the strongest were negative experiences ($r = .453$) and accessibility ($r = .412$). The lowest correlations were career guidance ($r = .239$), caring attitudes ($r = .215$) and respectful interactions ($r = .225$). A strong positive correlation is one that is closest to 1 as where a weak positive correlation is closer to 0. The relationship between these subscales and academic self-concept are possibly the lowest because, for years, there has been a lack of career guidance in secondary education (Anctil, Smith, Schenck, & Dahir, 2012; Hurley & Thorp, 2002). Moreover, high school teachers come in contact with several students throughout the day; therefore it may be difficult for teachers to exhibit their passion to all students and as adolescent African American male students, they

are able to understand stereotypes about their own group (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Hudley & Graham, 2005; McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Nasir, Mclaughlin, & Jones, 2009), which likely causes them to not expect certain interactions. Approachability ($r = .271$), connectedness ($r = .322$), and off-campus interactions ($r = .340$) are the correlations whose strength fall in-between the strongest correlation and the weakest correlations presented. The direction and strength of these correlations are simply indicating that they are positive correlations, but they are not the strongest indicators of the relationship between student-teacher interactions and academic self-concept in comparison to the other subscales.

In examining the regression analysis, the two subscales that were statistically significant were accessibility ($\beta = .400, p < .01$) and negative experiences ($\beta = .394, p < .01$). In this model, accessibility is a predictor of academic self-concept. A statistically significant positive partial standardized linear slope exists between accessibility and academic self-concept, which means that for every 1 standard deviation increase in accessibility we can expect academic self-concept to increase by .400 standard deviations, controlling for all previous subscales in the model. Also, in comparing the beta weights, accessibility was the largest contributor to the model. This shows that the increased accessibility of the teacher is associated with an increase in academic self-concept. African American male high school students need teachers who are readily able to help them when they need it. In addition, negative experiences is also a predictor of academic self-concept. A statistically significant positive partial standardized linear slope exists between negative experiences and academic

self-concept, which means that for every 1 standard deviation increase in negative experiences we can expect academic self-concept to decrease by .394 standard deviations, holding the other predictors in the model constant. This shows that an increased level of negative experiences is associated with lower academic self-concept. These results support the hypothesis that student-teacher interactions are predictive of academic self-concept. It also supports the idea that the manner in which a teacher engages with a student is predictive of their academic self-concept, particularly for African American male high school students. Cokley (2000) showed that GPA, class status, and quality of student-teacher interactions are significant predictors for African American male student's academic self-concept. For this study, GPA and class status were not significant predictors, but two types of student-teacher interactions were. Cokley (2000) used the National Study of Black College Students Questionnaire to assess GPA, sex, class status, and quality of student-teacher interactions, whereas this study used the SPIS to assess student-teacher interactions. Without exception, we both found that student-teacher interactions are significant predictors of academic self-concept, specifically for African American male students. However, this study takes it a step further to show which types of interactions are significant in the matter. These results provide evidence that, for African American male high school students, it is important for teachers to be accessible and engage in positive interactions as often as possible in order to improve upon African American male students' academic self-concept.

In connection with the framework for this study, social cognitive theory, it supports the significance of the results. Social cognitive theory explains that a person's belief about their ability to succeed can arise from personal or vicarious experiences. This connects back to negative experiences being a significant predictor of academic self-concept. In sum, the way that a student feels about his or her ability to succeed, academic self-concept, arises from personal/vicarious experiences, which in this case are negative student-teacher interactions. Additionally, the social cognitive theory also states that learning is social and people and their environments influence one another. In examining the social aspect of the theory, it supports the significance of accessibility being influential to academic self-concept. With learning being social, it is important to be able to interact with or easily access the people who are a part of your learning process. Furthermore, an important piece to the social cognitive theory is triadic reciprocity. Triadic reciprocity states that personal, behavioral, and environmental factors all influence one another in a correlative way. In relation to the significant regression analysis results, triadic reciprocity plays out by showing how students' academic self-concept (personal) is shaped by negative experiences (behavioral) and accessibility (environmental) within the academic environment. With the support from the conceptual framework, it shows that findings in this study are useful in determining factors that affect academic self-concept for African American male high school students.

Limitations

I believe that my findings will address a gap in the literature, but there are a few limitations that could impact the study. The first limitation is sample size. The sample consists of 154 African American male students'; therefore it cannot be generalized to populations outside of the school site. Moreover, the small sample size could affect the external validity of the study. In addition, the data collected for the study was dependent upon participants' self-report responses. The self-reported responses could have been influenced by the presence of the university-based research team during survey explanation or by someone in the location where the student decided to complete the survey. Related to this issue and hence, another limitation to the study, is the fact that the participants took the questionnaire home to complete. The time needed to take this questionnaire would have taken away from instructional time, therefore to avoid more interruptions, the questionnaires were completed at home and returned to the research team the following day. Thus, the researcher was not present during survey completion and unable to field possible participant questions. In future research, all instrumentation should be distributed over a specified amount of days or shortened to allow ample time to be completed at school without taking away from instructional time, possibly during students' lunch or homeroom.

Conclusion

African American male students are continuously at-risk for academic failure. There are several assumptions as to factors that may be contributing to their academic failures. However, this study supports the claim that student-teacher interactions, specifically negative experiences and accessibility, are

important when considering African American male high school students academic success. Negative experiences and accessibility were significant predictors of African American male high school students' academic self-concept. Further research should examine these factors in a larger sample in order to generalize the results and possibly target training to enhance academic self-concept amongst all students.

Table 1.4
Student-Professor Interaction Scale

CODING

| STUDENT-PROFESSOR INTERACTION SUBSCALE ITEMS | |
|---|---|
| SPIS 1 Career Guidance | |
| 9. Teachers have encouraged me to go to graduate or professional school | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 10. At least one or more teachers have provided me with guidance in developing my career goals | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 11. My teachers encouraged me to succeed in achieving my academic dreams | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 12. My teachers provide information about career and academic options | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 2 Off-Campus Interactions | |
| 5. I have spent time with teachers | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 6. I have a positive relationship with a teacher outside of the classroom | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 7. I have interacted with a teacher outside of the classroom | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 8. Teachers initiate contact with students after class | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 3 Approachability | |
| 17. I am comfortable approaching teachers | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 18. I feel comfortable approaching teachers to discuss my grades and class work | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 19. I feel comfortable asking my teachers questions about concepts that are not clear | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 20. I have not felt intimidated by my teachers | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 4 Validity | |
| 38. The quality of my relationships with teachers impacts my academic performance | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 39. I work harder to succeed in a class if I know my teacher genuinely cares about me | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 40. I think a positive relationship with a teacher would enhance my experience at his school | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |

| | |
|--|---|
| SPIS 5 Accessibility | |
| 21. Teachers are accessible outside of class | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 22. Teachers are available when I need guidance or assistance | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 23. My teachers make time to talk to me when needed outside of class time | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 24. Although teachers are busy, I can talk to one or more of them whenever I need to | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 6 Negative Experiences | |
| 34. My teachers seem distant and uninterested to me | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 35. Teachers do not value talking with students outside of the classroom | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 36. I do not believe my teachers treat me fairly | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 37. I feel isolated from my teachers | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 7 Respectful Interactions | |
| 25. Teachers show respect for all students in the classroom | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 26. My teachers are clear about expectations regarding coursework | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 27. When I interact with my teachers I feel s/he truly listens to me | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 28. My teachers are alert and attentive when I approach them | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 29. When I interact with my teachers I feel s/he cares about my question or problem | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 30. Teachers show respect for ethnic minority students | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 31. When I interact with my teachers i feel understood | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 32. My teachers value my contributions and opinions | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 33. My teachers seem comfortable interacting with students outside of their racial / ethnic group | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 8 Caring Attitudes | |

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. I feel that one or more teachers are supportive of me | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 2. I believe that there is at least one teacher who cares about my well-being | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 3. I believe there is a teacher who is concerned about my future | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 4. I feel that teachers generally care about me | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| SPIS 9 Connectedness | |
| 13. My teachers demonstrate familiarity with my culture | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 14. I feel connected with faculty | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 15. I have faculty that I can identify with on campus | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |
| 16. I feel a bond with one or more faculty | Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7) |

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Vita

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- Gave a presentation on the benefits of the Professional Development Engagement Plan and professionalism

Presenter
School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences,
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

Fall, 2012

- Gave a presentation on Transformational Learning

Presentation
Underclassmen
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

Fall, 2012

- Gave a presentation titled "Beginning with an End"

Ronald E. McNair Program
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

Summer, 2012

- Conducted research and wrote a proposal on the Professional Development Engagement Plan (PDEP)
- Attended conferences at the University of Baltimore College
- Assisted scholars in the process of conducting research

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND HONORARY SOCIETIES

Junior League of Lexington
Kappa Omicron Nu Honors Society
Ronald E. McNair Scholar
National Education Association (NEA)

Fall, 2014
Fall, 2012
Fall, 2012
Fall, 2012