

Cultural Identification and Academic Achievement Among African American Males

Miles Anthony Irving
Georgia State University

Cynthia Hudley
University of California, Santa Barbara

According to cognitive and social developmental theory, successfully structuring a multifaceted sense of self comprised of a mix of social, political, economic, and philosophical identities is one of the major accomplishments of adolescence (Marcia, 1980). African American adolescents grapple with the additional task of developing a racial/ethnic identity in an American social milieu that is often polarized along racial lines (Monteith & Spicer, 2000; Winant, 1998) and is replete with negative racial stereotypes (Hudley & Graham, 2001). Undoubtedly, African American identity has been shaped by a history of oppression and marginalization in American society that dates from the 1600s, with the arrival of the first Africans in this country (Bogle, 1994). For example, scurrilous depictions of incompetence, laziness, and aggression (e.g., Devine & Elliott, 1995) have their genesis in this country's historical attempts to rationalize slavery and state-sanctioned racial terrorism. Thus, African Americans may interpret such demean-

Although most African Americans are aware of the importance of education, many still continue to suffer from poor school achievement. School failure, high rates of educational dropout, low college enrollment, overrepresentation in special education classes, and low standardized test scores reflect a pervasive problem of educational underachievement among African Americans. Our work with African American males reveals a positive relationship between cultural mistrust and oppositional cultural attitudes and an inverse relationship with outcome expectations, outcome value, and academic achievement. Cultural mistrust is a significant predictor of academic achievement. As African American males' mistrust increases, their academic outcome expectations decrease. As mistrust increases, oppositional cultural attitudes also increase. Students with high cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and low valuation for educational outcomes have lower expectations for the benefits of their educational outcome. A presence of cultural mistrust and oppositional cultural attitudes clearly undermines educational outcome expectations. These findings have implications for educational research and practice, particularly concerning the education of African American males living in urban environments. Resistant cultural identity or cultural mistrust may be early markers of risk status for educational underachievement. School policies and practices that support identity development may help more African American youth cultivate a strong positive cultural identity that is consistent with academic achievement. African American students who value outcomes associated with education and who exhibit oppositional identities may not anticipate being able to achieve those outcomes through educational means.

Summary

ing images as a continuing part of a larger system of oppression perpetrated by the dominant White culture. Although African Americans finally won a measure of employment access as a result of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, limitations on opportunities for upward mobility (Ogbu, 1991) remain prevalent in American society, and these limitations are a visible indicator of racism directed toward African Americans (Phelps, Taylor, & Gerard, 2001). Many African Americans believe that racism remains a core element in the American macroculture (Irving & Hudley, 2005); therefore, they expect that institutions they perceive to be created and controlled by the White establishment will not treat them in a fair manner.

To understand the complex nature of African American identity development in a potentially hostile society, it is necessary to differentiate the constructs of racial and ethnic identity (Cokely & Williams, 2005). In the United States, both ethnic and racial identities reflect the importance individuals place on membership in racial and/or ethnic categories. However, ethnic identity represents allegiance to a set of customs, practices, behaviors, and beliefs that define a group of people, often with a shared ancestry or location (Phinney, 1992). Racial identity reflects endorsement of membership in a group defined by physically identifiable characteristics (Helms, 1994; Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan, & Sellers, 2004). African American adolescents are members of a visible racial minority; however, they also may endorse a unique variety of beliefs and behaviors that also align closely with a definition of ethnic identity. In this study, we were especially interested in the within-group variability of African American adolescents' beliefs and behaviors that were shaped by perceptions of discrimination directed toward their racial group.

Identity, Cultural Mistrust, and Adolescent Achievement

Academic underachievement has been particularly evident in urban areas where many low-income African Americans reside,

which is especially troubling because academic success remains a primary avenue for social mobility in the United States (Finn & Rock, 1997; Jordan & Sanders, 2000). The empirical literature connecting African American adolescent identity to academic achievement has been somewhat inconsistent. For example, some work has found no relationship between academic GPA and ethnic identity for African American youth (Prelow, Bowman, & Weaver, 2007), while other work found that ethnic identification (e.g., feeling close to members of their own ethnic group) was positively related to school grades for African American adolescents and provided a buffer against perceived discrimination from teachers and peers (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). These inconsistent findings may be a function of unmeasured dimensions of identity. Therefore, this study incorporated a broader range of identity relevant variables that potentially influence both academic motivation and achievement.

Cultural mistrust (i.e., the tendency for African Americans to distrust institutional, personal, or social contexts that are controlled by Whites) is a construct that attempts to capture the influence of discrimination on academic motivation (Terrell & Terrell, 1981). African Americans value education as a means to improve their social and economic circumstances (Barnett, 2004; Burlew, 1975; Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Ford, 1993; Graham, 1994). However, when confronted with poorly maintained, underfunded schools and ill-prepared teachers (Jordan & Robert, 2003; Kozol, 1991), African Americans may not trust the public schools to provide an adequate education (Ogbu, 1991). A belief that African Americans cannot expect equal educational services or access to the opportunity structure in the United States may have created both lowered expectations for the benefits of educational achievement and a devaluation of striving for achievement among African American adolescents (Ogbu, 1991). Research has shown that adolescents who devalue academic achievement more often direct their behavior to nonacademic pursuits (personal dress and grooming, athletic prowess, dating success) that may conflict with academic success (Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 1998).

Few studies have investigated the relationship between cultural mistrust and academic functioning. However, early research on the construct revealed that for African American students with high cultural mistrust, aptitude test scores were significantly higher when the test was administered by an African American examiner. This finding was true for both elementary school children (9–11 years old) taking the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (Terrell & Terrell, 1981) and for adolescent males (17–19 years old) taking the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS; Terrell, Terrell, & Taylor, 1981). Other research identified a negative relationship between occupational expectations and cultural mistrust among African American junior high school students (Terrell, Terrell, & Miller, 1993), which may have a negative influence on school engagement. However, research on a similar construct, racial trust/mistrust, found no relationship with reading and math grades or standardized achievement test scores for elementary school students (Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003). The scant literature on achievement and cultural mistrust suggests a tentative relationship with academic achievement and motivation that may be moderated by age as well as by other factors related to perceived discrimination. This study focused on examining mistrust in late adolescence as one of a set of attitudinal variables that might influence achievement and motivation.

Minority Status

Cultural ecological theory identifies African Americans as a caste-like minority, a group that was involuntarily and permanently incorporated into a society by the processes of slavery or conquest (Ogbu, 1991); African American descendants of Africans brought to this country as slaves fit this definition. In response to caste-like minority status, members may develop multiple forms of adaptation to oppression and subjugation that they neither control nor deserve (Ogbu, 1991, 2003), including specific beliefs and behaviors to cope with the negative attitudes and treatment they received from the dominant culture. The

extremes of these coping mechanisms vary from assimilation to the norms of the dominant culture to resistance or opposition to the dominant culture (Ogbu, 2003). Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggested that high-achieving African American high school students may choose assimilation and deemphasize their African American identity. Ford's (1992) work with 5th- and 6th-grade students found that high achievers more often endorsed the American macroculture achievement ideology. Conversely, low-achieving students often adopted an oppositional identity and espoused a strong ethnic group identification (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Solomon, 1992).

Moderating Factors

Gender may further moderate the relationship between minority status and educational achievement among African Americans (Fashola, 2005; Isom, 2007). For the past 20 years, African American males, as a group, have had lower graduation rates, lower standardized test scores, and higher drop out rates when compared to their female and European American counterparts. Further, on many important indicators of well-being (e.g., incarceration rates, unemployment, mortality rates), African American males, on average, fared more poorly than almost any other group (Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Skolnick & Currie, 1994), while their female counterparts were more successful. Perhaps unsurprisingly, African American boys and girls also demonstrated differences in their ideas of success and perceptions of social support (Conchas & Noguera, 2004; Isom, 2007; Taylor, Graham, & Hudley, 1997). In earlier research, boys valued education, but academic success was viewed as more appropriate for African American girls than for African American boys (Hudley & Graham, 2001). African American males more often defined their success by athletic ability or other nonacademic indicators (Isom, 2007). Further, African American males more often believed that their teachers did

not support them or care about their success, compared to their peers of other races (Noguera, 2003).

However, African American youth who grew up with economic resources and regular contact with people of a variety of ethnicities may not experience such negative outcomes nor develop attitudes in opposition to the dominant culture. Economic success in the United States can attenuate the perception that structural bias is an obstacle that cannot be overcome (Ainsworth, 2002). Rather, they may feel comfortable with the institutions of the dominant culture and develop successful strategies to cope in a multiethnic environment (Hudley & Taylor, 2006). Thus, we wondered whether students' economic circumstances moderate oppositional attitudes, ethnic identity, and cultural mistrust. In sum, a clearer understanding of the relationship between identity variables, economic circumstances, and achievement beliefs may yield not only theoretical knowledge but also practical benefits for educators committed to supporting the achievement of all students to their full capabilities.

The Current Study

We designed this study to test five hypotheses concerning identity variables and academic achievement among African American males. We expected cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and ethnic identity to be positively intercorrelated. We also hypothesized that expectations for academic outcomes and the value placed on academic outcomes would be inversely related to cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and ethnic identity. We expected socioeconomic status (SES), cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, ethnic identity, and academic outcome value to be significant predictors of academic outcome expectations and academic grade point averages. Finally, we expected a resistant cultural identity (oppositional cultural attitudes and cultural mistrust) to be inversely related to academic achievement and SES.

Method

Setting and Participants

Participants were 115 male African American students enrolled in 11th and 12th grade at an urban, multiethnic high school in Southern California. The high school population consisted of 27% African American, 12% Hispanic, 15% European American, and 46% Asian and Pacific Islander students. The neighborhood surrounding the high school was a lower-middle- to working-class community with 16.5% African Americans, 34% Hispanics, 24% European Americans, and 23% Asians and Pacific Islanders. To control for the previously discussed gender differences, we confined our sample to males only, rather than employing a gender comparative design. All participants were fluent in English.

We recruited students through personal visits to high, medium, and low track classrooms offering U.S. history and U.S. government, two subjects required for graduation. All African American male students in the school were eligible for participation, and we selected students from all levels to avoid any potential achievement level selection bias. We obtained written informed consent from the participants as well as from the parent or legal guardian of students under 18 years of age. To ensure an adequate return of parental consent and student assent forms, those who returned forms were entered into a school-wide raffle for a \$50 gift certificate at a local record store. There was a 50% return rate of the consent forms.

Measures

A survey comprised of 72 items was organized into subscales to measure cultural mistrust, academic outcome expectations, outcome values, cultural attitudes, and ethnic identity affirmation. All items, selected from existing instruments, were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

Cultural mistrust. The Revised Cultural Mistrust Inventory (CMI; Irving, 2002) is a measure of African Americans' mistrust of the dominant culture (Terrell & Terrell, 1981). Originally, the Cultural Mistrust Inventory was a 48-item measure with four subscales: Politics and Law, Business and Workplace, Education and Training, and Interpersonal Relationships. However, our previous research demonstrated high intercorrelations for subscales, ranging from $r = .75$ to $r = .88$ (Irving, 2002). A factor analysis revealed that the one-factor model explained 43% of the variance, and we decided to analyze the Cultural Mistrust Inventory as a single composite score. We also reduced the number of items by eliminating items with low factor loadings and selecting the 10 questions that best reflected a general description of mistrust towards the dominant culture (e.g., "White teachers teach so that information favors Whites" and "It is best for Blacks to be on their guard when among Whites"). We verified that the reliability of the reduced scale remained at an appropriate level ($\alpha = .91$). For the 10-item Revised Cultural Mistrust Inventory, low scores represented a low level of mistrust, while high scores reflected a high level of mistrust.

Outcome expectation and outcome values. We assessed outcome beliefs using the African American Academic Outcome Expectations Scale (Irving & Hudley, 2005). This 20-item scale has two subscales, one measuring expected benefits of academic achievement (e.g., "If I graduate from high school and complete a higher educational program, I will be able to gain a higher income"), and one measuring how much they value each academic outcome. Higher scores indicated higher outcome expectations or a higher valuation of a given item. Previous reliability scores for the Expectations and Value subscales were $\alpha = .89$ and $\alpha = .91$, respectively (Irving & Hudley, 2005).

Ethnic identity. We assessed ethnic identity using the 7-item Affirmation and Belonging subscale of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Roberts et al., 1999). This subscale tapped the strength and importance of ethnic group membership. Examples of this scale included "I have a clear sense of my ethnic group and what it means to me" and "I have a strong sense

of belonging to my own ethnic group.” (Roberts et al., 1999). High scores indicated a strong, positive connection to one’s ethnic identity. Previous studies indicated reasonable reliability for the scale with African American high school students ($\alpha = .75$; Phinney, 1992).

Oppositional cultural attitudes. We assessed cultural attitudes using the cultural subscale of the Self-Perception of School, Peers, and Achievement Survey (SPSPAS; Ford, 1993). This 35-item subscale measured students’ cultural attitudes, values regarding achievement motivation (e.g., “If you are Black, going to school is a waste of time”), and students’ perceptions of parental and community beliefs about school (e.g., “My parents believe that going to school is important”). Questions included beliefs and values characteristically espoused in White American culture as well as beliefs and values in opposition to those held by White American culture. Items reflective of White American cultural norms and values were reverse coded to reflect nonoppositional cultural attitudes; thus, high scores represented oppositional cultural attitudes. In prior research, scores on the cultural subscale demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha = .92$; Addo, 1997).

Socioeconomic status. We measured SES by asking parents to answer two questions that were attached to the parental informed consent form. Each question contained six possible categorical choices. The first question asked for the level of education for the parent in the household who had attained the highest level of education, with choices ranging from no high school diploma to graduate degree. The second question assessed the combined parental income on a scale from 1 = *less than \$15,000* to 6 = *greater than \$75,000*. The two responses were summed and divided by two to obtain a score for SES ranging from 1 to 6.

Academic achievement. We measured students’ academic achievement using their cumulative academic grade point average (GPA), ranging from 0 to 4. Academic GPA does not take into consideration nonacademic electives like physical education, nor does it take into account extra grade points available in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Procedure

The first author administered the surveys in a single 20–30 minute session during the regular school day and apart from the regular classroom to groups of 10–15 students. Students completed the questionnaire independently, but the administrator was available to help with reading and comprehension. Measures were counterbalanced to avoid the possibility of order effects. We reviewed students' records to retrieve their academic GPAs.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Cronbach alphas obtained from this sample for cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, ethnic identity affirmation, outcome expectations, and outcome value were $\alpha = .91$, $\alpha = .85$, $\alpha = .74$, $\alpha = .84$, and $\alpha = .68$, respectively. Table 1 reports the means and standard deviations for each of the measures used in these analyses. While examining partial plots of our data, we discovered what appeared to be an outlier and verified this by calculating the standardized residuals. One of our participants in the sample had a standardized residual of 4.11, while the next closest subject had a standardized residual of 2.51, indicating this subject was indeed an outlier. Therefore, this subject was eliminated from the analyses.

Correlations

Correlations between cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and ethnic identity provided only partial support for our first hypothesis (see Table 1). Cultural mistrust was related to oppositional cultural attitudes; however, ethnic identity was unrelated to either of the two variables. The second hypothesis concerning cultural mistrust and outcome expectations, outcome value, SES, and GPA was also partially supported (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelation
of Variables ($N = 114$)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Cultural Mistrust	2.7	.60	—	.62*	-.01	-.45*	-.12	-.33*	-.45*
2. Oppositional Cultural Attitudes	1.8	.30		—	-.12	-.44*	-.31*	-.28*	-.33*
3. Ethnic Identity Affirmation	3.8	.29			—	-.02	.21*	.11	.11
4. Outcome Expectations	3.0	.47				—	.40*	.16	.21*
5. Outcome Value	3.5	.34					—	.16*	.21*
6. SES	3.3	1.21						—	.29*
7. GPA	2.0	.65							—

* $p < .05$.

Cultural mistrust had a significant inverse relationship with outcome expectations, SES, and GPA. However, cultural mistrust was unrelated to ethnic identity affirmation and outcome value. The results supported the fourth hypothesis concerning the relationship between a resistant cultural identity (i.e., oppositional cultural attitudes and cultural mistrust) and SES and GPA (see Table 1). Both oppositional cultural attitudes and cultural mistrust, as expected, were inversely related to SES and GPA.

Regression

We used regression analysis to examine the third hypothesis, using cultural mistrust (CM), oppositional cultural attitudes (OCA), ethnic identity (EI), outcome value (OV), and socioeconomic status (SES) as predictor variables and outcome expectations (OE) as the dependant variable. The overall model (see Table 2) was statistically significant, $F(5, 108) = 11.87, p < .05$, accounting for 35% of the variance in outcome expectations. As predicted, cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and

Table 2

Regression Analysis Predicting Outcome Expectations
($N = 114$)

Variable	R^2	F	B	$SE B$	β	t
(Constant)	.35	11.87*				
SES			-.01	.03	-.03	-.38
CM			-.25	.08	-.32	-3.22*
OCA			-.24	.16	-.15	-1.52*
EI			-.19	.12	-.12	-1.52
Outcome Value			.47	.11	.34	4.07*

* $p < .05$.

outcome value were significant predictors of outcome expectations; however, ethnic identity and SES were not.

We also used regression to investigate the fourth hypothesis, using CM, OCA, EI, OE, OV, and SES as predictor variables and academic grade point average as the dependent variable. Given the large standard errors and lack of multicollinearity, we also tested for interactions among the predictors. We created interaction terms by multiplying the two variables to create a new interaction variable. We found two significant interaction models among the predictors and tested a final model with both interaction terms present. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(8, 105) = 6.75, p < .05$, and accounted for 34% of the variance in grade point averages (see Table 3). Our model revealed a statistically significant main effect of SES as well as a statistically significant interaction between cultural mistrust and SES ($\beta = -1.21, p < .05$; see Table 3). Cultural mistrust exerted a stronger negative effect on GPA among upper SES respondents; however, cultural mistrust did not appear to negatively impact the achievement of low-SES students. As demonstrated by the main effect of SES in predicting GPA, low-SES students generally attained lower GPAs than their higher SES peers. However, at high levels of cultural mistrust both high- and low-SES respondents had similar GPAs (see Figure 1).

Table 3

Regression Analysis Predicting Grade Point Averages
($N = 114$)

Variable	R^2	F	B	$SE B$	β	t
(Constant)	.34	6.75*				
SES			.73	.24	1.36	2.98*
CM			-.05	.79	-.04	-.06
OCA			-.79	1.02	-.36	-.78
EI			.21	.18	.09	1.13
OE			-.05	.13	-.04	-.40
Outcome Value			.24	.17	.12	1.36
SES X CM			-.24	.09	-1.21	-2.65*
CM X OCA			.23	.34	.63	.68

* $p < .05$.

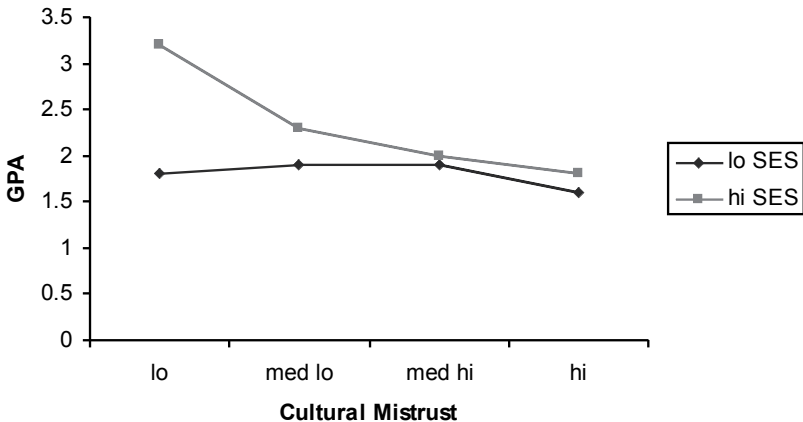


Figure 1. The effect of Cultural Mistrust on GPA at two levels of SES.

Discussion

This study explored the variability of individual African American adolescents' academic achievement motivation by

examining students' resistant racial identification. Ogbu's cultural ecological theory, one of the earliest to explore the relationship between resistant identity and academic achievement of African Americans, sparked a dialogue around the relationship of culture to achievement. Supporting Ogbu's framework, it is clear from our study that variables associated with an oppositional identity have a negative influence on academic achievement. However, our data also call into question the rigid typology of Ogbu's model. Our findings suggest that individual differences in cultural identity may be important in understanding school failure. Although school success is dependent on educational opportunities, consistent engagement, and persistence, attitudes and behaviors associated with a resistant cultural identification may undermine the school engagement of some African American males (Mickelson, 1990).

Cultural Mistrust and Oppositional Cultural Attitudes

In this study, cultural mistrust, resistant cultural attitudes, and low academic outcome expectations were intercorrelated, and each measure also was correlated with academic achievement. In our regression model, only the interaction of cultural mistrust and SES significantly predicted achievement. One possible interpretation of nonsignificant findings is that our multiple measures may tap a single construct. Previous qualitative studies of African Americans' cultural identification also support our findings. For instance, Solomon (1992) found that the students in his sample had an attitude of resistance toward the dominant culture; they displayed a mistrust of the school system, resistant cultural attitudes, and limited educational outcome expectations. The present study expands Solomon's findings in that it investigates the relationship of resistant cultural identity to a direct measure of academic achievement (academic GPAs).

Addo (1997) found in her study of African American students' oppositional or resistant cultural identification that students in her sample tended to have positive attitudes towards education. This present study investigated students' actual aca-

ademic achievement as a function of their cultural identification and found that students' grades did vary. These data suggest that as African American males' mistrust increases, their academic outcome expectations decrease. In addition, this study found that as students' mistrust increased, their oppositional cultural attitudes increased. Given the questions on the cultural mistrust inventory, students who had high responses to this measure may have some reservations concerning the willingness of a White-controlled system to reward African Americans.

Outcome Expectations

Our regression model reveals that cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and outcome value are all significant predictors of outcome expectations. The direction of the relationships indicates that students with high cultural mistrust, oppositional cultural attitudes, and low valuation for educational outcomes have lower expectations for the benefits of their educational outcomes. This finding is consistent with research of both Ogbu (2003) and Fordham (1996), who both found that low-income parents often give their children mixed messages regarding the utility of formal education. For example, parents might tell children it is important to work hard and get an education but also that they had better beware because the "White man" may take away anything African American people attempt to gain. Related to this sentiment is the folk saying in the African American community, "Get a good education because that is the only thing the White man can't take away from you." Cultural ecological theory attributes this ambiguity to a cynical and mistrusting attitude toward education that has developed over decades of unequal opportunity (Ogbu, 1991). In the present study, the presence of cultural mistrust and oppositional cultural attitudes clearly undermined educational outcome expectations.

Socioeconomic Status

In these data, socioeconomic status maintains an inverse relationship with cultural mistrust and oppositional cultural attitudes, and a positive relationship with outcome value and grade point averages. However, SES is not significantly related to academic outcome expectations and ethnic identity affirmation. Some researchers have suggested that oppositional identity is a function of poverty rather than a resistant cultural identification as a response to racism (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998). It is clear that cultural mistrust maintains the most powerful relationship with academic achievement for this sample of African American males. Some students from high-SES households still maintain the characteristics of a resistant cultural identity. Ogbu's (2003) research in an affluent African American suburb found that students engaged in a variety of oppositional behaviors that impacted school achievement. According to Osborne (1997) and Steele (1992), African American disidentification with the school system extends beyond the boundaries of class or social status. Steele's research acknowledged the impact of SES on an individual's orientation toward school success; however, his research also found the threat of African Americans' disidentification extended beyond factors related to economic class and social status. In addition, Osborne found that even when controlling for SES, African American males remained more prone to academic disidentification. Although disidentification from education is not the same as oppositional identity, they similarly reflect a resistant cultural identification that is grounded in racial group membership.

The interaction of cultural mistrust and SES provides intriguing evidence that negative attitudes toward the dominant culture may significantly depress academic achievement, even among groups who might be expected to be academically successful (i.e., high-SES students). As mentioned earlier, our results are entirely consistent with Ogbu's (2003) work with affluent students. African American students continue to achieve at levels below other racial and ethnic groups, even at the highest levels

of SES (Hudley, in press). Our data suggest that these students' academic achievement may be negatively affected by persistent racial inequality (Miller & Garran, 2007), a fact of life for African Americans regardless of economic success.

Limitations, Implications, and Future Studies

There are several limitations in this study that should be acknowledged. The sociocultural environments that African Americans live in may differ from region to region in the United States. However, we conducted our research at a single urban southern California high school campus with a diverse student population. Thus, we are not clear how broadly our findings might generalize beyond the urban California adolescent population. The skew of the ethnic identity measure, indicated by the high mean score and restricted range, suggests that the entire sample tended to score high on the measure of ethnic identity affirmation. This, coupled with the well-known problem of attenuation of correlation and other linear models by restricted ranges, suggests the possibility that research with participants who endorse a wider range of ethnic identity might yield stronger results for that variable. Therefore, nonsignificant results of ethnic identity in our analyses may have been due to sampling issues rather than substantive findings. The sociocultural conditions of this sample could have contributed to unique manifestations of African Americans' racial identification that may or may not be replicated in another sample.

Even given these limitations, the findings of this study have implications for educators, researchers, and anyone concerned with the healthy development of African American males living in urban environments. Early detection of students with a resistant cultural identity or cultural mistrust may help educators understand more clearly which students are at risk for educational underachievement. Educational policy and practice that supports students' identity development in the school context may help more African Americans develop a cultural identification that is consistent with academic achievement while not

compromising a positive ethnic identity (Mehan, Hubbard, Villanueva, & Lintz, 1996). African American students in this study did value outcomes associated with education, yet the students in this sample with an oppositional identity did not anticipate being able to achieve those outcomes through educational means. It may be that many students fall victim to institutional barriers and oppositional coping responses that create obstacles to academic success. Programs designed to help students become change agents in the current system while simultaneously creating successful educational experiences may help students with an oppositional identity develop a more effective cultural identification.

This study was successful in specifying and quantifying specific components of oppositional identity. In addition, this study found that the variables associated with oppositional identity have a negative relationship with academic achievement. However, given the limitations previously mentioned, more research is needed to expand our knowledge of these issues. To create more opportunities for an American ethnic group that has chronically experienced discrimination and difficulty in mainstream educational institutions, more resources, improved teacher training, and improved curriculum need to be directed toward this problem.

References

- Addo, L. A. (1997). Oppositional behavior in Black male early adolescents (Doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1997). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57, 4645.
- Ainsworth, J. W. (2002). Why does it take a village? The mediation of neighborhood effects on educational achievement. *Social Forces*, 81, 117–152.
- Ainsworth-Darnell, J., & Downey, D. B. (1998). Assessing the oppositional identity culture explanation for racial/ethnic differences in school performance. *American Sociological Review*, 63, 536–553.

- Barnett, M. (2004). A qualitative analysis of family support and interaction among Black college students at an Ivy League university. *Journal of Negro Education, 1*, 53–68.
- Bogle, D. (1994). *Toms, coons, mulattoes, mammies, and bucks: An interpretive history of Blacks in American films* (3rd ed.). New York: Continuum.
- Burlew, A. K. (1975). Expectancy theory and its implications for higher education among Black youth. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 35*(7-B), 3642–3643.
- Cokely, K., & Williams, W. (2005). A psychometric examination of the Africentric Scale: Challenges in measuring Afrocentric values. *Journal of Black Studies, 35*, 827–843.
- Conchas, G. Q., & Noguera, P. A. (2004). Understanding the exceptions: How small schools support the achievement of academically successful Black boys. In N. Way & J. Y. Chu (Eds.), *Adolescent boys: Exploring diverse cultures of boyhood* (pp. 317–337). New York: New York University Press.
- Constantine, M. G., & Blackmon, S. M. (2002). Black adolescents' racial socialization experiences: Their relations to home, school, and peer self-esteem. *Journal of Black Studies, 32*, 322–335.
- Devine, P. G., & Elliot, A. J. (1995). Are racial stereotypes really fading? The Princeton trilogy revisited. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 11*, 1139–1150.
- Fashola, O. S. (Ed.). (2005). *Educating African American males: Voices from the field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Feagin, J. R., & Sikes, M. P. (1994). *Living with racism: The Black middle class experience*. Boston: Beacon.
- Finn, J. D., & Rock, D. A. (1997). Academic success among students at risk for school failure. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*, 221–234.
- Ford, D. (1992). Self-perceptions of underachievement and support for the achievement ideology among early adolescent African Americans. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 12*, 228–252.
- Ford, D. (1993). An investigation of the paradox of underachievement among gifted Black students. *Roeper Review, 16*, 78–84.
- Fordham, S. (1996). *Blacked out: Dilemmas of race, identity, and success at Capitol High*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the burden of "acting White." *The Urban Review, 18*, 176–206.
- Graham, S. (1994). Motivation in African Americans. *Review of Educational Research, 64*, 55–117.

- Graham, S., Taylor, A., & Hudley, C. (1998). Exploring achievement among ethnic minority early adolescents. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*, 606–620.
- Helms, J. E. (1994). The conceptualization of racial identity and other racial constructs. In E. Tricket, R. Watts, & D. Birman (Eds.), *Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context* (pp. 285–311). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hudley, C. (in press). Academic motivation and achievement of African American youth. In H. Neville & B. Tynes (Eds.), *The handbook of African American psychology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hudley, C., & Graham, S. (2001). Stereotypes of achievement striving among early adolescents. *Social Psychology of Education, 5*, 201–224.
- Hudley, C., & Taylor, A. (2006). Cultural competence and youth violence prevention programming. In N. Guerra & E. Smith (Eds.), *Ethnicity, culture, and youth violence prevention programming* (pp. 249–269). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Irving, M. A. (2002). Oppositional identity and academic achievement among African American males. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63*(06), 2129. (UMI No. AAT 3055998)
- Irving, M. A., & Hudley, C. (2005). Cultural mistrust, academic outcome expectations and outcome value among African American males. *Urban Education, 40*, 476–496.
- Isom, D. A. (2007). Performance, resistance, caring: Racialized gender identity in African American boys. *Urban Review, 39*, 405–423.
- Jordan, W. J., & Robert, C. (2003). High school reform and Black male students: Limits and possibilities of policy and practice. *Urban Education, 38*, 196–216.
- Jordan, W. J., & Sanders, M. G. (Eds.). (2000). *Schooling students placed at risk: Research, policy, and practice in the education of poor and minority adolescents*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in American's schools*. New York: Crown.
- Marcia, J. E. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 159–187). New York: Wiley.
- Marks, B., Settles, I. H., Cooke, D. Y., Morgan, L., & Sellers, R. M. (2004). African American racial identity: A review of contemporary models and measures. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (4th ed., pp. 383–404). Hampton, VA: Cobb & Henry.

- Mehan, H., Hubbard, L., Villanueva, I., & Lintz, A. (1996). *Constructing school success: The consequences of untracking low-achieving students*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mickelson, R. A. (1990). The attitude-achievement paradox among Black adolescents. *Sociology of Education*, *63*, 44–61.
- Miller, J., & Garran, A. (2007). *Racism in the United States*. Florence, KY: Brooks Cole.
- Monteith, M. J., & Spicer, C. V. (2000). Contents and correlates of Whites' and Blacks' racial attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *36*, 125–154.
- Noguera, P. A. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, *4*, 431–459.
- Ogbu, J. (1991). Minority coping responses and school experience. *Journal of Psychobiology*, *18*, 433–456.
- Ogbu, J. (2003). *Black American students in an affluent suburb: A study of academic disengagement*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Osborne, J. (1997). Race and academic disidentification. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *89*, 728–735.
- Phelps, R. E., Taylor, J. D., & Gerard, P. A. (2001). Cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, racial identity, and self-esteem among ethnically diverse Black students. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *79*, 209–216.
- Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *2*, 156–176.
- Prelow, H. M., Bowman, M. A., & Weaver, S. R. (2007). Predictors of psychosocial well-being in urban African American and European American youth: The role of ecological factors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *36*, 543–553.
- Roberts, R., Phinney, J., Masse, L., Chen, R., Roberts, C., & Romero, A. (1999). The structure of ethnic identity of young adolescents from diverse ethnocultural groups. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *19*, 301–322.
- Skolnick, J. H., & Currie, E. (Eds.). (1994). *Crisis in American institutions* (9th ed.). New York: Harper Collins.
- Smith, E. P., Atkins, J., & Connell, C. M. (2003). Family, school, and community factors and relationships to racial-ethnic attitudes and academic achievement. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *32*, 159–173.

- Solomon, P. (1992). *Black resistance in high school*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Steele, C. M. (1992). Race and the schooling of African Americans. *The Atlanta Monthly*, 269, 68–78.
- Taylor, A., Graham, S., & Hudley, C. (1997, April). *Falling stars: The valuing of academic achievement among African American, Latino, and White adolescents*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproductive Service No. ED413366)
- Terrell, F., & Terrell, S. L. (1981). An inventory to measure cultural mistrust among Blacks. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 3, 180–185.
- Terrell, F., Terrell, S. L., & Miller, F. (1993). Level of cultural mistrust as function of educational and occupational expectations among Black students. *Adolescence*, 28, 572–578.
- Terrell, F., Terrell, S. L., & Taylor, J. (1981). Effects of race of examiner and cultural mistrust on the WAIS performance of Black students. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 49, 750–751.
- Winant, H. (1998). Racism today: Continuity and change in the post-civil rights era. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, 21, 755–766.
- Wong, C. A., Eccles, J. S., & Sameroff, A. (2003). The influence of ethnic discrimination and ethnic identification on African American adolescents' school and socioemotional adjustment. *Journal of Personality*, 71, 1197–1232.