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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

FICTIVE KINSHIP, RACIAL IDENTITY, PEER INFLUENCE, ATTITUDES
TOWARD SCHOOL, AND FUTURE GOALS: RELATIONSHIPS WITH
ACHIEVEMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
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ACHEIVEMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships among measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, attitudes towards school, influence of peers, and future goals and achievement among African American high school students. The study also examined how fictive kinship, racial identity, influence of peers, and attitudes toward school predict achievement; and how racial identity, perceptions of fictive kinship, influence of peers, and attitudes toward school predict future goals; and how racial identity, perceptions of fictive kinship, influence of peers, and future goals predict attitudes toward school. Previous research has found that African American adolescents achieve at lower levels than other racial groups, but few studies have investigated their desire to achieve. An examination of racial identity in African American students will help provide an understanding of fictive kinship, group identity, and peer influences that are unique within the African American community and the potential effects that it may have on the achievement of African American students.

The sample consisted of 270 African American high school students in grades nine through twelve. The sample of students was drawn from three urban high schools in a public school district in the mid-South. The students were enrolled in History and English classes. Results of the study indicated that racial identity was correlated with

fictive kinship, attitudes towards school, peer influence, future goals, and achievement thus, playing a major role in the lives of African American students. The study also found that fictive kinship exists among African American adolescents, and that attitudes towards school, racial identity and future goals are the strongest predictors of achievement. Findings related to racial identity and fictive kinship warrant further investigation of the roles of these variables as they relate to achievement. Suggestions for future research and implications of these findings are discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

There is a distinct relationship that exists among African Americans that extends beyond geographical regions, socio-economic status, family background, age, and gender differences. This relationship can be traced back to when Africans were brought to America as slaves. Although the slaves were from different tribes, they formed a unique bond because of their racial heritage, country of origin, minority status, and cruel circumstances. There was a visible bond present, yet a deeper relationship was created when many of the slave families were split and sold to different plantations. The slaves living on those plantations would bond together and care for the new slaves like they were family, which deepened the original bond among the slaves. This bond is called fictive kinship, which is defined as the kinship-like connection between and among persons in a society when such people have a social or economic relationship (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The purpose of this study is to explore this bond, and its relation to measures of racial identity, peer influence, attitudes toward school, and achievement.

The bond of African Americans was also formulated because of their racial heritage, country of origin, minority status, and shared circumstances. Unlike other ethnic groups, African Americans can trace their ancestral

line to the African slaves who were brought to America. Even though there is evidence of biological kinship in many African American families, the stronger kinship is found in the bonding spirits of African Americans' because of their minority status and shared experiences.

Two national examples will provide an illustration of the reality of fictive kinship. The first example is the collective feelings of injustice that were experienced by the majority of African Americans when the police officers were found not guilty in the beating of Rodney King. The disbelief and disappointment in the judicial system caused a uniting of voices and spirits of African Americans. Unfortunately, the anger felt by some of the community raged in the fires which caused greater damage emotionally, spiritually, and socially.

A more recent, and positive, example is the response to the achievements of Tiger Woods. When he competed in the Masters for the golf championship, many African Americans felt like they were also competing. The fact that he won is considered a victory for African Americans. Because he succeeded, the whole race succeeded. These are two examples that depict fictive kinship among African Americans.

This relationship prompted a study that was conducted by Fordham and Ogbu (1986), to examine how fictive kinship influenced African American students academically. They concluded that the influence of fictive kinship was

extensive among African American students. They also asserted that because of the ambivalence about school, affective dissonance, and social pressures concerning achievement, many African American students who are academically able do not put forth the necessary effort in their school work, and consequently do poorly in school.

In examining fictive kinship, it is important to explore the concept of racial identity among African American students. One theory of racial identity includes what Fordham and Ogbu (1986) proposed to be collective identity. They believed that African Americans develop a sense of collective identity or sense of "peoplehood" in contradiction to the social identity of Caucasian Americans, because of the way Caucasian Americans treated them in economic, political, social, and psychological domains. They submitted that minorities also developed an oppositional cultural frame of reference, which includes devices for protecting their identity and for maintaining boundaries between them and Caucasian Americans. These devices that were developed may include the avoidance of academic achievement that some African American students demonstrate in school. The conclusion of their study was that the clearer the sense of identity, the poorer the grades because African American students viewed themselves as "acting white" when they are getting good grades.

Another study, that also examined racial identity in African American high school students, was conducted by Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, and Fulmore (1994). They examined the perceptions of a discriminatory job ceiling, the importance of schooling, ethnic identity, self perceptions of ability, and school performance. Their results showed a positive association of public school African American adolescents' ethnic identity with their school performance and engagement. The higher the sense of ethnic identity, the more likely they were to report that they engaged in behaviors conducive to school achievement and had better grades. Their findings demonstrated that ethnic identity influenced school achievement positively.

The findings of Taylor et al. (1994), emphasized that ethnic identity is positively related to school performance and engagement. Although their findings revealed that adolescents who had a clear sense of ethnic identity had better grades, it can also be inferred that students with an unclear sense of ethnic identity got poorer grades. These findings appear to contradict Ogbu's (1992) theory that the clearer the sense of identity, the poorer the grades because students wished to avoid "acting White". One argument proposed is that the findings of Taylor et al. (1994) indicate that the African American students who are confident in their racial identity, have higher levels of achievement because they don't believe that getting good

grades is "acting White". However, the students in Ogbu's study may feel that they will be ostracized from their racial group for getting good grades and, even though they may report high levels of racial identity, they don't want to be denied membership into the group. These findings emphasize just how critical racial identity is for African American students, and its importance on their achievement and will be expounded on later in this paper.

Considering the uniqueness of fictive kinship and the importance of racial identity for African American students and its influence on their achievement, it is critical to further explore and provide preliminary answers to questions such as: How does fictive kinship affect African American students desire to achieve? Can the strength of fictive kinship be used to explain the desire to achieve among African American students?

Statement of the Problem

This study will examine the relationship of fictive kinship and racial identity among African American high school students. I will also investigate how fictive kinship, racial identity, peer influence and attitudes towards school predict the desire to achieve in school.

Research Questions

1. What are the relationships among measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, attitudes towards school, influence of peers, future goals, and achievement among African American high school students?
2. Do measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, influence of peers, and attitudes towards school predict future goals and achievement?

Definitions of Terms

The following is a list of distinct key terms used in the study. These terms provide the basic vocabulary structure for the research. Most of the definitions were developed through a synthesis of the literature reviewed.

African American: This is the more recent terminology used to identify the population, living in the U. S, previously called colored, Negro, and African American. In recent years, this name was adopted because it signifies the link to their ancestors. Ogbu (1986) refers to African Americans as involuntary minorities because they were conquered, colonized, and oppressed by the United States of America.

Caucasian American: relating to the white race of mankind as classified according to physical features; composed of persons of European ancestry living in the U. S.

Ethnic Identity: one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perception, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

Fictive kinship: a kinship like relationship between persons not related by blood or marriage in society, but who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship (Brain, 1971; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fortes, 1969; Good, 1984; Norbeck & Benu, 1958).

Group Identity: a psychological state which is distinct from that of being a unique and separate individual, and confers social identity, or a shared/collective representation of who one is and how one should behave (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

Peer Influence: the effect that one individual has on another who is of equal status (age), occupation or situation.

Racelessness: the desired and eventual outcome of developing a raceless persona and is either a conscious or unconscious effort to become colorless. Seen as a strategy the high-achieving students utilized in their efforts to "make it" at school (Fordham, 1988,1996).

Racial Identity: The sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group that is strongly based on skin color. The quality or manner of one's identification with the respective racial group and his or her feelings about self, for example, African American (Helm, 1990; Porter & Washington, 1979).

Significance of Study

This study will examine fictive kinship and racial identity of African American high school students. This study is needed because there is little research that explores how fictive kinship of African American students influences their desire to achieve. Although there is research that has shown that African American students' achievement levels are lower than other groups (NAEP, 1996; Taylor et al., 1994; Stienburg et al., 1992), there is little that has explored their desire to achieve. In accepting the research that states, "African American students are underachievers", without probing into variables that affect their desire to achieve, educators may leave room for the fallacy that African American students are somehow disadvantaged intellectually or cannot achieve.

It is also important to examine racial identity in African American students in order to understand group identity and peer influences that are unique within the

African American community. This study is important for educators to provide them with a better understanding of fictive kinship that exists within the African American community and the potential effects that it may have on the achievement of African American students in their class.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In examining the problem, the relevant literature is related to kinship and racial identity among African American students. First, the review focuses on literature that examines the origination of kinship and cultural kinship as it relates to African Americans. The second segment of the review will explore racial identity and is summarized in four sections: 1) identity formation; 2) group identity and its relationship to academic achievement; 3) identity of African Americans; and 4) peer influence. Lastly, I will review literature that examines the desire to achieve, which is operationalized as future goals related to current academics, and achievement of African American students.

Kinship

In exploring kinship, it makes sense to begin with the concept of family. The traditional concept of family which includes, father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, has been around since the beginning of time. Although the concept of family has been around for centuries, as recently as the 1950s and 1960s, Segalen (1986) claimed that the sociology of the family was still an underdeveloped field where the family was presented as a defined structure without precise references to its social and cultural

environment. In other words, it wasn't until recently that researchers began to realize that the family is impacted by cultural and social factors.

Lewis Morgan began the examination of the concept of kinship in the early 1900s by studying kinship systems as a branch of comparative sociology (as cited in Fortes, 1969). Building on Morgans' framework, Radcliffe-Brown (1971) studied the Bantu tribes and Nama Hottentots of South Africa and concluded that in primitive society there is a strongly marked tendency to merge the individual with the group to which he or she belongs. He suggested that the result of this in relation to kinship is the tendency to extend to all members of a group a certain type of behavior which has its origin in a relationship to one particular member of the group (Hsu, 1971). In other words, kinship identity was more salient than individual identity.

Realizing that family and kinship were separate concepts, many researchers offered definitions that extended more broadly than the traditional family. Segalen's (1986) definition of kinship includes those persons who are related to us, i.e. father, mother, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, cousins, either by blood or by marriage, and states that kinship is an institution that to varying degrees governs the functioning of social life. According to Schneider (1984), the term kinship also refers to both the biological system of relations and to the sociocultural

aspects. Keesing (1975) suggested that kinship is the network of relationships created by genealogical connections, and by social ties, which include adoptions, modelled on the "natural" relations of genealogical parenthood.

Kinship is broadly defined and is also inclusive of legal issues. Farber (1981) suggested that kinship is expressed not only through day-to-day interactions among relatives, but also through legal norms that govern such matters as the definition of incestuous marriage, the priorities of succession when one dies without a will, and rights and obligations pertaining to support and guardianship.

Many believe that kinship plays a very significant role in society. Hsu (1971) offered that kinship plays a basic part in the upbringing of the individual, and has a universal place in every society, and that it is relevant to social and cultural developments. The study of kinship and its meaningfulness in society is shown through several conceptual models that illustrate a genealogical connection and its breadth, in addition to dominance and social order (Barnard & Good, 1984; Farber, 1981; Hsu, 1971; Keesing, 1975). Considering kinship is such an important concept, it is necessary to examine kinship terminology.

Kinship Terminology

Socially our system depends on terminology which is used to designate the whole range of relatives provided by consanguinity, marriage, adoption, and is also a system of classification of relatives indicating the attitudes of respect which can be adopted toward them (Segalen, 1986). In our society, there is a limited number of kinship terms such as: father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, sister, brother, and so on, which are referred to as terms of reference. When examining specific terms used by natives to refer to their relatives, earliest anthropologists perceived the differences between various cultures. Some cultures use what is called "classificatory terminology" which means that large ranges of relatives can be put in a small number of groups (Fortes, 1969; Keesing, 1975; Segalen, 1986). For example, an actual father and his brother are both called "father" or the actual mother and her sister are both called "mother".

Other terminologies that are affiliated with kinship are filiation and kindred. Filiation implies the recognition of links between individuals arising from the fact that some are offsprings of others. Whereas, kindred is a concept based on the individual who recognizes his blood relatives and relatives by marriage as far as the genealogical links in his memory or that of group of relatives can take him (Segalen, 1986). This concept is

more closely related to African Americans and will be discussed in the next section.

In exploring kinship terms, Bloch (1971) suggests that kinship terms always do much more than label individuals and that most of the terms can be used by a skillful speaker of a language to refer to an almost unlimited number of people, given the right situation and sufficient ability. He also suggested that the operational potential of kinship terms derives from the fact that they have a mass meaning originating in the general belief system of the culture independent of tactical meaning and use.

More specifically related to African Americans, Brain (1972) asserted the terms "sister" and "brother" are constantly used on the formal and informal level between African Americans and, clearly, the term has a moral base which is tactically manipulated by the speaker to include the persons so addressed by excluding other persons not falling into the moral category evoked by the use of the term. This terminology that is associated with non-relatives between African Americans is an indicator of fictive kinship. The next section, will explore fictive kinship in the Japanese and the African American culture, emphasizing the African American culture.

Fictive Kinship

Japanese Kinship

In anthropology, fictive kinship refers to a kinship like relationship between persons not related by blood or marriage in society, but who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship (Brain, 1971; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fortes, 1969; Good, 1984; Norbeck & Befu, 1958). According to Norbeck and Befu (1958), institutionalized practices of fictive kinship are abundant in Japan. The Japanese use a variety of informal kin terms whereby non-relatives are given the seeming status of relatives, and with other customs applying among relatives which serve at least verbally to alter kinship statuses so that they become fictitious in nature.

Norbeck and Befu's (1958) qualitative study, included thirty Japanese college students, 17 male and 13 female, ranging in age from 18 to 37 years of age. Nearly all of the students were from large urban communities in Japan and were members of economically and socially privileged families. The subjects were interviewed during 1956 and 1957. They found that the dialectical form of relationship terms is taught throughout the public school system in Japan. The informal fictive usage of terms fell into two categories: practices among genetic and affinal relatives, and practices among unrelated persons.

The practice of fictive usage among relatives do not denote the same statuses of kinship as terms of reference for those relatives. In other words, any genetic or affinal relative, except one's spouse, may be addressed by one of eight terms. Close relatives and those sharing a dwelling place who are older than the speaker are addressed only by terms of relationship. More distant relatives older than the speaker are given names and surnames that connote respect and imply the existence of bonds of intimacy closer than those which apply among unrelated persons.

The use of kin terms extends throughout Japanese society among persons who have no mutual bonds of kinship or formalized fictive kinship. The usage of the terms also differ depending upon whether one is addressing friends and acquaintances, strangers, or persons of certain occupational and social groups. The custom of addressing friends and acquaintances is closely associated with the degree of intimacy felt. Terms that are used to address the unrelated are various forms of grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, elder brother, and elder sister. Among relatives, kin terms are used throughout the life span, but among unrelated persons, use of the terms dwindles as one ages. Strangers are usually addressed by kin terms only to open a conversation or when trying to gain their attention. Norbeck and Befu (1958) concluded that the wide use of kinship terms which do not involve kin gives additional

evidence of the lingering importance of kinship in Japan. The next section will discuss and review similar patterns amongst African Americans.

African American Kinship

As noted earlier, fictive kinship refers to a kinship like relationship between persons not related by blood or marriage in society, but who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship (Brain, 1971; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fortes, 1969; Norbeck & Befu, 1958). Fordham (1996) further postulated that for African Americans this connection extends beyond the social and economic to include a political and prestige function as well.

In an attempt to illustrate fictive kinship and its uniqueness among African Americans, Weisobord (1973) reviewed "ebony kinship" among Africans and African Americans. He discussed the connection of African Americans and their direct link to Africa and parallels the racial oppression in the United States to the racial oppression in Africa. He also described the difficulties that African Americans have encountered on their quest to find their identity in America.

In an attempt to explain why this kinship is unique among African Americans, Staples (1971) expressed that the common experience of oppression and discrimination that pervades all phases of life in a minority group is more

penetrating than socioeconomic factors in affecting family and kinship. He further asserted, "One trait that black families usually share is a history of racial oppression, whether under colonialism or slavery, with the result that no white family has faced the historical subjugation and contemporary racism that black families have encountered and continue to encounter even within the same socioeconomic stratum." (p.3)

Using Staples' theory for a framework, Farber (1981) examined data on racial minority groups and found that when the interaction of minority-group status and family income is examined separately from other background and family variables, the economic factor is primary in determining kinship perspective. However, when other competing influences were considered, the impact of income is washed away and oppression of minority groups transcends economics.

Unlike the formal and informal system of fictive kinship that is shared in Japan, African Americans kinship derives from their shared experiences in North America (Staples, 1971; Weisobord, 1973). African Americans' usage of kinship terms varies from "play kin" terminology (Shimkin, Shimkin and Frate, 1978) to a more universal use of "brother" and "sister" which are constantly used on the formal and informal level between African Americans (Brain, 1972).

In a closer examination of fictive kinship, Fordham (1996) offered that the fictive kinship system of African Americans conveys the idea of brotherhood and sisterhood of all African Americans, regardless of class, gender, or sexual orientation. A sense of "peoplehood" or collective social identity exists within the group and is evident from the kinship terms used. Fictive kinship also denotes a cultural symbol of collective identity that is based on more than just skin color. One can be black in color but choose not to seek membership in the fictive kinship system. One can also be denied membership by the group if their behavior, attitudes, and activities are perceived as being at variance with those thought to be appropriate to the group (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1996). An example is the tendency for African Americans to emphasize loyalty to each other in situations involving conflict or competition with Caucasian Americans, which is a key point used in developing items in this study to measure fictive kinship.

Fordham (1996) also suggested that African American children learn the meaning of fictive kinship from their parents and peers while they are growing up. She asserted that they learn it early enough and well enough, so that they even tend to associate their life chances and "success" potential with those of their peers and other members of the community. So how does this influence their academic

success at school? I will explore this issue briefly, and return to it again in a subsequent section.

In an in-depth exploration of the relationship of fictive kinship and adolescents, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) conducted a qualitative study in Washington D.C., that included 33 African American high school students. Their definition of "coping with the burden of acting white", suggested there are various strategies students use to resolve the tension between desiring to do well academically and striving to please their peers with behaviors and attitudes that validate their African American identity. The African American students who chose to pursue academic success were perceived by their peers as "being kind of white" and therefore not truly black. They found evidence that the influence of fictive kinship was extensive among the students. They asserted that because of the ambivalence, affective dissonance, and social pressures, many African American students who are academically able do not put forth the necessary effort in their school work, and consequently do poorly in school. Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study demonstrated that phenomenon. The African American students identified behaviors that they defined as "acting white." Some of these behaviors included; a) speaking standard English, b) spending a lot of time in the library studying, c) working hard to get good grades in school, and d) getting good grades in school. This list indicated the

kinds of behaviors likely to be negatively sanctioned by other African American students, and therefore avoided by most of the students.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) concluded that the underachieving students who had the capability to do well, decided consciously or unconsciously to avoid "acting white" by not devoting time or effort to school work. Those students who were high achievers, usually adopted strategies that enabled them to succeed and to cope with the burden of "acting white." Because of fictive kinship, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) proposed that African American students do not achieve to their potential because that behavior is seen as "white behavior", which is a deviation from the groups' behavior. As was illustrated in their study, fictive kinship affects African American students in school. Because of the sense of collective identity, students don't want to be ostracized or deviate from the group norms.

A summary of this section demonstrates that African American fictive kinship differs from Japanese because of its unique characteristics. The Japanese fictive kinship tends to be a formal custom that is passed to each generation, whereas, the African American fictive kinship is developed through the common shared experiences of oppression and discrimination, and is informal. The unique characteristics associated with African American fictive

kinship influences young people in different ways, including achievement at school.

Racial Identity

This section will review and discuss racial identity of African American students and will be divided into four segments. The first and second segments will examine identity formation of adolescents and the racial identity formation of African American adolescents. The third and final segments will explore group identity and peer influence for African American students.

Identity Development

In order to establish a frame of reference for African American adolescents and their development of racial identity, it is meaningful to briefly review the theory of identity formation for all adolescents. To begin, there will be a review of the definitions proposed to characterize the concept of identity. Erikson offered that individual identity includes the sum of all successive identifications of those earlier years when the child wanted to be, and often was forced to become like the people he depended on. He broadened the definition more to include ego identity. Ego identity is the result of the synthesizing function on one of the ego's frontiers, namely the environment, which is social reality, as transmitted to

the child during successive childhood crises (Erikson, 1968).

Marcia (as cited in Adams, Montemayor & Gullotta, 1992) defined identity as an internal, self-constructed organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history. The better developed the identity structure is, the more aware individuals appear to be of their own uniqueness and similarity to others and to their own strengths and weaknesses in making their way in the world. The less developed this structure is, the more confused individuals seem about their own distinctiveness from others and the more they have to rely on external sources to evaluate themselves.

An additional definition was proposed by Waterman (1984) to include having a clearly delineated self-definition comprised of those goals, values, and beliefs to which the person is unequivocally committed. These commitments evolve over time and are made because the chosen goals, values, and beliefs are judged worthy of giving direction, purpose, and meaning to life.

Often times the assumption is made that identity is developed during adolescence, however, Erikson (1968) suggested that the development of identity occurs throughout the life cycle. It begins in infancy and proceeds through stages into adolescence and through adulthood. Each developmental stage builds upon the foundation provided by

the preceding stages such that a problematic outcome will compromise the likelihood of healthy development at all subsequent stages in the life cycle. These eight stages are each marked by a psychosocial crisis.

During the first stage, trust versus mistrust, Erikson (1968) indicates that a child's attitude about the dependability of the world is shaped during infancy. The second stage, autonomy versus shame and doubt, is influenced by a child's maturing muscle system and this new sense of power is the basis for developing a sense of autonomy. In the third stage, initiative versus guilt, a child gains more skills in using language and moving about. This results in an expanded imagination that they frighten themselves with what they have dreamed and thought up. From this, the child emerges with a sense of initiative as a basis for a realistic sense of ambition. In the fourth stage, industry versus inferiority, children want to busy themselves with activities worth their attention and pursue them with their peers. They want to earn recognition by producing something, however, feelings of inferiority may occur if that task is considered insignificant by teachers or peers.

The fifth stage, identity versus identity infusion, is the adolescent stage that Erikson focused his greatest attention. Because of the onset of puberty, social roles taking new forms, and different expectations from parents, this confusion creates an identity crisis (Erikson, 1968).

According to Erikson (1968) during this period the child's development over the first several years would now synthesize to give a sense of ego identity.

Erikson (1968) asserted that the greatest danger of this stage is identity diffusion or role confusion. This happens when the adolescent does not know who they are to themselves or others, and as a defense they may overidentify with heroes or cliques and temporarily lose their own individuality. He proposed that the successful resolution of the identity crisis depends on how the individual resolved the previous crises of childhood.

According to Erikson (1968), the formation of identity begins where the usefulness of identification ends. Identity arises from the selective exclusion and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration. This condition is dependent on the process by which a society identifies the young individual, recognizing him as somebody who had to become the way he is, he is taken for granted (Erikson 1968).

Scheibe (1995) suggested that socialization is identity formation as a consequence of social interaction. He defined socialization as the process which occurs over the developmental history of the person and is accomplished by one or more of a set of mechanisms for transforming social influences into changed dispositions of the person. He also

indicated that a major component of a person's identity is formed by the development of values about political institutions.

In exploring the process of identity development, Bosma (1992) reasoned that different variables might be relevant for different populations of adolescents, such as male and female; those from ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds; and different age groups. His study was designed to explore the relevance of areas in adolescence and their relationships to differences in age, sex, and educational level. His sample population included 400 students in secondary and tertiary education ranging from 13 to 21 years of age in the Netherlands. Three hundred and three students completed and returned questionnaires that were used for analyses. Ninety seven students were randomly selected and participated in interviews.

The main instrument was an open interview. The participants were invited to write down on cards the topics that were personally important to them and then they were interviewed about each of the topics and why the topic was important to them. The questionnaire items referred to topics known to be important for adolescents (i.e. peers, leisure-time activities, and moral issues). The participants were also asked to list things that were important to them and why they were important. The questionnaire was used for cross-validation of the

interviews. The topics were selected from the interview tapes and from the relevant answers to each questionnaire and were summarized per topic on a card. The results indicated that there were commonly mentioned areas: school; (future) occupation; leisure-time activities; friendship; parents; and home. There were differences found between male and female adolescents. Females more often mentioned the interpersonal areas and males more often mentioned the areas of school and future occupation.

One of the limitations of the study is that cultural and ethnic differences were not included as background variables, so the results cannot be generalized to other groups other than Caucasian adolescents living in the northern parts of the Netherlands. However, a similar study was also done in the United States by Douvan and Adelson (as cited in Adams, Gullotta & Montemayor, 1992) and the results were comparable to Bosma's results.

In discussing intervening factors in the formation of identity, Markstrom-Adams (1992) offered that identity formation is not wholly an individualistic process, but rather the social environment exerts its forms of power and influence. In relation to identity, she identified three social contextual factors that include family relationships, ethnic and racial group membership, and religiosity.

Markstrom-Adams (1992) proposed that for adolescents who are members of ethnic and racial minority groups, the task of identity formation becomes especially complex due to several intervening factors such as color, behavioral distinctions, language differences, physical features, and social stereotypes. One problem recognized by Mendelberg (as cited in Adams, Gullotta & Montemayor, 1992) is the fact that racial minorities are confronted with two sets of cultural values, those of their own minority group and those of the mainstream culture. In the identity formation process, the value of the larger culture and the minority culture may conflict. Therefore, embracing an identity consistent with values of the larger group may result in displacement from one's own minority group.

On the other hand, rejecting the dominant culture's values may result in limited options for interaction in the larger society. Markstrom-Adams (1992) concluded that racial discrimination may limit opportunities for employment and social interaction, thereby inhibiting identity exploration among minority individuals, and also may impede progress in psychosocial stages prior to adolescence.

The review of identity formation of adolescents establishes that identity is influenced by many variables. For racial minority adolescents, the formation is even more complex. The next section will explore some of the

complexities of the development of racial identity for African American adolescents.

African American Identity

In reviewing the development of identity for African American children it is important to include the definition of identity as it relates to race. Identity refers to an individual's sense of uniqueness, of knowing who one is, and who one is not (Devereux, 1975; Harris, Blue, & Griffin, 1995). In the past few decades, psychologists have been aware of the highly complex process of identity formation and of the critical role played by race and ethnicity in defining one's self. In exploring identity, two other concepts emerged; racial identity and ethnic identity. These two concepts are sometimes used synonymously but each has a specific definition.

According to Helms (1990), racial identity refers to the quality or manner of one's identification with the particular racial group. More specifically, African American racial identity theories attempt to explain the various ways in which African Americans can identify (or not identify) with other African Americans and adopt or abandon identities resulting from racial victimization. Ethnic identity has been defined as one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perception,

feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

Examination of racial identity of African Americans began in the late 1930's with a study that was conducted by Clark and Clark (1939). In their study they attempted to investigate the development of consciousness of self in African American preschool children with special reference to emergent race consciousness. They defined race consciousness as consciousness of self as belonging to a specific group which is differentiated from other groups by obvious physical characteristics. The sample included 150 preschool children from 3-5 years of age. A modification of the Horowitz picture technique was used where the children were shown a series of line drawings of Caucasian American and African American boys, a lion, a dog, a clown, and a hen and were asked to identify themselves or others.

Their results indicated that the total group made more choices of the African American boy than of the Caucasian American boy. The ratio of choices of the African American boy to choices of the Caucasian American increased with age in favor of the African American boy. Choices of the lion, dog, clown, and hen dropped off at the end of the three-year old level, indicating a level of development in consciousness of self where identification of one's self is in terms of a distinct person rather than in terms of animals or other characters. The sharpest increase in

identifications among African American boys occurred between the three and four year level and failed to increase significantly at the five year level. This suggest that either this picture technique is not as sensitive when used with five year olds or that a plateau in the development occurs between the ages of four and five.

The limitations of this study include that females were involved in the study and were asked to identify males as a cousin or a brother which is different from those identifications of one's self. Using the line drawings for identification of males should be used with only males for greatest validity.

Another study conducted by Clark and Clark (1940), examined the origin and development of racial identification as a function of ego development and self awareness in African American children. Their subjects included 253 African American children from 3 to 7 years of age. There were 116 males and 137 females. The subjects were presented with four dolls identical in every way except skin color, two black and two white. The position of the head, hands, and legs on all the dolls were the same and they were unclothed except for white diapers. Eight different request were made including "give me the doll that": (a) you like to play with or like best, (b) is a nice doll, (c) looks bad, (d) looks like a white child, (e) looks like a colored child, (f) looks like a Negro child, (g) looks like you."

The results indicated that there is a clearly established knowledge of racial differences among African American children from ages three to seven where there was a 61% correct race choice for the three year old children and a 93% for the seven year old children. The results of the racial preferences tests revealed that 67% of the African American children preferred the white doll to play with, 59% chose the white doll as the nice one, and 60% chose the white doll as having a nice color. Additionally, 59% chose the brown doll as being the one that looks bad. From age three through seven years, the majority of the children preferred the white doll and rejected the brown doll. However, this preference seemed to decrease gradually from ages four through seven.

The results of this study have prompted similar studies that also examined racial preference among African American children. Powell-Hopson (1985) also used the Clark doll test technique with the addition of treatment intervention involving modeling, reinforcement, and color meaning word association. Her participants included 150 African American preschoolers and 50 Caucasian American preschoolers who were presented with dolls exactly alike except skin color and hair texture. The children were asked to choose a doll to play with in groups of five. They were also asked preference questions: "Give me the doll that: (a) you want to be, (b) you like to play with, (c) is a nice doll, (d)

looks bad, (e) is a nice color, (f) you would take home if you could?"

The findings were similar to Clark (1960). In the pretest, 65% of the African American children chose the white doll to play with, and 75% of the Caucasian American children chose the white doll to play with. For the African American children, the preference questions responses ranged from 60%-78% in favor of the white doll with 76% choosing the black doll as the doll that looks bad. The Caucasian American children's preference responses ranged from 62%-82% choosing the white doll, with 82% choosing the black doll as the doll that looked bad.

The second part of the study involved an intervention developed by the researchers. During the intervention the children who chose a black doll were reinforced and allowed to sit up front with the researchers. The children who chose the white doll had to sit in the back. The researchers modeled the desired behavior by selecting the black dolls themselves and demonstrating pro-African American responses to the preference questions. A story was read that depicted the African American children as the smartest and best in the class. The children were also asked to hold up the black dolls and repeat positive adjectives such as "pretty, nice, handsome, clean, smart," and "we like these dolls best." The dolls were never referred to as black or white.

The children were asked to put the dolls away and after 15 minutes they were asked to select a doll to play with in groups of 5, and they were re-administered the preference questions. In contrast, the posttest results revealed 68% of the African American children chose the black doll to play with, as did 67% of the Caucasian American children. For the African American children the preference response ranged from 69%--71% in favor of the black doll. For the Caucasian American children, the responses ranged from 62%-66% in favor of the black doll. Only 27% of the African American children chose the black doll as the doll that "looks bad," whereas 42% of the Caucasian American children chose the black doll.

These similar studies, (Clark & Clark, 1940; Powell-Hopkins, 1985) revealed that African American children (a) develop racial awareness beginning around the age of three, (b) are aware of society's racial preferences, and (c) are aware of the advantages as well as negative attributes assigned to African American and Caucasian American racial groups. These studies help to establish that race is an integral part of the development of identity in African American children.

The concept of race is complex in and of itself. It is not only based on physical characteristics, but also on ancestry, geographic origin, and cultural and political alliances (Alejandro-Wright, 1985). When integrating the

concepts of race and identity and their complexities, it is not difficult to understand that the development of African American children can be difficult.

This difficulty is due to the fact that the typical African American child spends his formative years in essentially an African American world. The African American community provides him with his frame of reference, and he then compares themselves on a personal level with other African American children and not Caucasian American children (Porter & Washington, 1979). For a child growing up in a community where education and hard work is valued, comparison of oneself to others can be helpful. On the other hand, if a child grows up in a community where education is devalued, it can be detrimental.

Phinney and Rosenthal (1992) suggested that for adolescents from ethnic minority groups the process of identity formation has an added dimension due to their exposure to alternative sources of identification, their own ethnic group and the dominant culture. They added, "growing up in a society where the mainstream culture may differ significantly in values and beliefs from their own culture or origin, these youth face the task of achieving a satisfactory and satisfying integration of ethnic identity into a self-identity." (p.145)

Many researchers have concurred that identity formation for African American children is unique (Alejandro-Wright, 1985; Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992; Porter & Washington, 1979). The identity formation in African American children is a combination of several variables. Spencer (1985) offered that the variables are a product of interactions among cultural factors, cognitive developmental processes, and social experiences. The social experiences will be reviewed in the next section as I investigate group identity and peer interaction as it relates to fictive kinship.

In an examination of the impact of ethnic identity on school performance of African American students, Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, and Fulmore (1994) explored ethnic identity. Their sample of 344 African American and Caucasian American students was selected from both public and Catholic high schools. They investigated the hypothesis that African American adolescents' school achievement is detrimentally influenced by their perception of discrimination. Their measures included: perceptions of a discriminatory job ceiling, perceptions of the importance of schooling, ethnic identity, self perceptions of ability and school performance. To examine ethnic identity, they utilized the Multi-group Ethnic Measure composed of 27 items. The items assessed three aspects of identity: a) ethnic group identification, b) ethnic identity development,

and c) attitudes and orientation toward other groups. In their analysis, they used the ethnic identity development subscale which assessed the degree to which the adolescents have searched, explored, and finally developed a sense of commitment regarding their ethnic identity. An example of an item from the scale included, "I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me." The items from the scale were summed and the average was calculated to represent the respondents' mean ethnic identity development score.

Their results revealed that the public school African American students' ethnic identity was significantly associated with their grades and their school engagement. This positive association was to the extent that the students who reported having a clear sense of ethnic identity were more likely to report that they engaged in behaviors conducive to school achievement, and they had better grades. They established that this finding is in concurrence with past results that have shown that parents' encouragement of children's ethnic identity development may also enhance children's school achievement. However, this finding was not apparent for the African American Catholic school students. Taylor et al. (1994) offered that it is possible in the integrated Catholic school setting, the expression of racial or ethnic sentiments were discouraged, whether officially or unofficially among the

students' peers and by school officials. Taylor et al. (1994) concluded that adolescent ethnic identity formation may represent an area of psychosocial adjustment for African American adolescents, that for some students, in some settings, is associated with other areas of their competence, including their schooling. According to Ogbu (1992), among involuntary minorities (e.g., African Americans) school learning tends to be equated with the learning of the culture and language of Caucasian Americans. He asserted that involuntary minorities may consciously or unconsciously interpret school learning as a displacement process detrimental to their social identity, sense of security and self-worth. Some may fear that by learning the Caucasian American cultural frame of reference, they will cease to act like minorities and lose their identity as minorities and their sense of community. Ogbu (1992) also suggested that there are social and psychological pressures against "acting White" that discourage involuntary minority students from striving for academic success.

This assertion complements the findings of Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study that revealed because of the ambivalence, affective dissonance, and social pressures, many African American students' who are academically able do not put forth the necessary effort in their school work, and consequently do poorly in school. The African American students academic efforts are hampered by both external

factors and with-in group factors such as, how African American students respond to other African American students who are trying to "make it" academically. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) also submitted that the school experience of African American students is perceived by African American students, especially adolescents, as learning to act white, as acting white, or as trying to cross cultural boundaries.

As discussed earlier, the findings of Taylor et al. (1994) that adolescents who have a clear sense of ethnic identity reported higher grades appear to oppose the findings of Fordham and Ogbu (1986) and Ogbu, (1992) that African American students perform poorly in school for fear of "acting White" and losing their identity as minorities. To provide clarity for these seemingly contradictory conclusions, there are three arguments proposed. First, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) did not survey ethnic identity in their study, whereas, Taylor et al. (1994) used a specific instrument to examine ethnic identity in their sample. The examination of the racial identity is important in order to establish a foundation of how the student feels about him or herself as an African American and how that effects their achievement. The results of this study supports this argument, considering racial identity was found to be significantly related to achievement.

Secondly, the findings of Taylor et al. (1994) indicate that the African American students who are confident in their racial identity, have higher levels of achievement because they don't believe that getting good grades is "acting white". However, the students in Ogbu's study, may have felt that they would be ostracized from their racial group by getting good grades and even though they may reported high levels of racial identity, they didn't want to be denied membership into the group.

Thirdly, Taylor et al. (1994) concluded that the findings of the African American students in the public school was dissimilar to the students in the Catholic school. The public school was predominately African American, whereas, the Catholic school was predominately Caucasian American. Taylor et al. (1994) offered that in the integrated Catholic school setting, the expressions of racial or ethnic sentiments was discouraged, whether officially or unofficially, among the students' peers and by school officials. I contend that the expression of racial identity and academic performance in school is influenced by the environment of the school. Even though the high school in Fordham's (1986) study was an urban school predominately African American, I maintain that the environment, including teachers, peers, and community affected the students' ideas about academic performance and their desire to achieve.

Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) examination of racial identity included the element of fictive kinship and its relationship to academic achievement. The connection to each other provides a complex scenario for African American students. The absent connection that needs to be explored is the students' awareness of how fictive kinship can be used to increase academic achievement among African American students.

These studies (Fordham, 1986, Ogbu, 1992, & Taylor et al. 1994), emphasize the complexity of the struggle that African Americans face with identity and racial identity. One of the finest African American scholars of the twentieth century, W.E.B. DuBois, took up the problem of racial and ethnic identity. He presented his thoughts in his most famous work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, 1903) in this passage:

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two

unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, -this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of his older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of White Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (p.7)

A review of African American identity establishes that there are many complexities that add to the challenges that African American adolescents face in determining their racial identity. The next section will review the group identity and explore fictive kinship and how that effects the African American adolescent.

Group Identity

In discussing the development of racial identity among African Americans, it is meaningful to incorporate a review of group identity because of its imminent association with

fictive kinship. Hogg and Abrams (1988) asserted that groups have a profound impact on an individual's identity. They suggested that an individual's concept of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others, is largely determined by the groups to which they feel they belong. This approach is referred to as social identity. The fundamental assumption of this theory is that belonging to a group is largely a psychological state which is distinct from that of being a unique and separate individual, and that it confers social identity, or a shared/collective representation of who one is and how one should behave (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

This notion is in concurrence with Fordham's (1988, 1996) assertion that African Americans tend to emphasize group loyalty in situations involving conflict or competition with Caucasian Americans. Hogg and Abrams (1988) proposed that the social identity approach follows the psychological processes associated with social identity and is also responsible for generating distinctly 'groupy' behaviors, such as solidarity within one's group, conformity to group norms, and discrimination against other groups.

Doosje and Ellemers (1997) argued that people who differ in their level of identification with a group may employ different identity management strategies to deal with a threatening group situation. They contended that low identifiers of a group may turn their backs on their group

in a difficult situation, while high identifiers may still keep faith with their group.

According to Bonnett (1980), group identification is manifested through all ways in which members of a minority group feel a sense of unity and take steps to express their feelings. As a result of group identification, members of the group examine current uniquenesses in their culture and label them. Bonnet (1980) suggested, for African Americans, three manifestations of their group identity are revealed in their language, music, and food. Du Bois (1903) described the African American group this way:

This so-called American Negro group.... while it is in no sense absolutely set off physically from its fellow Americans, has nevertheless a strong, hereditary cultural unity, born of slavery, of common suffering, prolonged proscription and curtailment of political and civil rights; and especially because of economic and social disabilities. (p.19)

Once again, this analysis suggests that the group identity for African Americans is unique because of their shared experiences as involuntary minorities (Ogbu,1992). Ogbu's reference to African Americans as castelike or involuntary minorities implies that they were originally brought to the United States against their will. He indicated that involuntary minorities (African Americans), develop a new sense of social or collective identity that is

in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group after they have become subordinated.

For African Americans, the group identity extends to include kinship. According to Fordham (1988,1996), possessing African features or being of African descent does not automatically make one an African American person or a member in good standing of the group. She submitted that only African Americans are involved in the evaluation of group members' eligibility for membership in the fictive-kinship system; thus controlling the criteria used to judge one's worthiness for membership. The determination of the membership rests solely within the African American community. An example of the criteria used to judge high school students, is the study that Fordham and Ogbu (1988) conducted at an urban high school.

Using the same high school sample (Fordham & Ogbu,1986) Fordham (1988) discussed "racelessness" as a factor in African American students' school success; as a pragmatic strategy or pyrrhic victory. She contended that the high achieving African American student learns the value of appearing "raceless" to "make it." Some of the high achieving students are willing to distance themselves from the fictive kinship system in the African American community to seek the American dream. She implied that at the individual level, the high achieving student's attainment of his or her self-defined goals appears to be enhanced by the

development of a raceless persona. In her study, racelessness and school success appeared to be linked at the high school and so racelessness was more prevalent among the high achieving students. She concluded that what high-achieving students often forfeit in their development of becoming raceless, is a strong allegiance to the African American community and connection to the fictive kinship system.

The development of the African American adolescent is elaborate considering their identity, group identity, and fictive kinship. Each of these identities can be examined as separate identities, yet they are intergrated together for the African American adolescent. The development process becomes even more complicated when the variable of peer influence is attached. This next section will examine how peers influence African American students.

Peer Influence

An exploration of friendships among adolescents indicates that peer relations contribute substantially to both social and cognitive development (Hartup, 1993). Hartup indicated that friends are similar to one another in many aspects such as age, race, sex, and social class. He contended that racial concordances are strong and more extensive in adolescence.

According to Cotterell (1996) one of the distinguishing characteristics of adolescents is the amount of time which they spend in public places in groups of their peers. Being a part of a group, and deriving one's identity from the group, are among the benefits which young people seek from associating with others their own age. Considering minority peer groups, Cotterell (1996), indicated that the issue of maintaining one's ethnic social identity versus acculturation in the majority culture is sharpened for adolescents from minority groups by the pressures thrust upon them by peer groups, and by schools themselves, to conform to the majority culture. The demands to assimilate may come into conflict with obligations to maintain traditional practices, which their family and community continue to impose.

Wentzel (1991) offered that relationships with peers have a strong influence on a student's emotional and motivational responses to school. For example, positive relationships with peers can provide emotional security and incentives to achieve. Wentzel (1991) also submitted that positive interactions with peers can provide students with valuable information and resources, can provide emotional support and encouragement, and can directly contribute within peer instructional contexts to intellectual development.

Ogbu (1992) suggested that for African American students, thinking that attitudes and behaviors associated with academic success may result in a loss of peer affiliation and support, and at the same time feeling uncertain of Caucasian American acceptance and support, feelings of personal conflict may result. In addition, he added that the student desiring and striving to do well in school is faced with the conflict between loyalty to the minority peer group, which provides a sense of community and security, and the desire to behave in ways that may improve school performance but that the peer group defines as "White."

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) submitted that, at the social level, peer groups discourage their members from putting forth the time and effort required to do well in school and from adopting the attitudes and standard practices that enhance academic success because they are considered "White." They offered that the peer group pressures against academic striving take many forms, including labeling, exclusion from peer activities or ostracism, and physical assault. Because the students also share their group's sense of collective identity and cultural frame of reference, individuals may not want to behave in a manner they themselves define as "acting white."

Fordham (1996) implied that group membership is essential in African American peer relationships. As a

result, when it comes to dealing with Caucasian American people and White institutions, the unexpressed assumption guiding African Americans' behavior seems to be that "a brother is a brother regardless of what he does or has done," or in other words, in the African American community a "culture of forgiveness" is the norm.

The influence of peers has been found to be a dominating factor affecting the academic achievement motivation of African American students. Kunjufu (1988) proposed that the majority of African American youth have been negatively influenced by their peer group's attitudes toward academic achievement. He examined what he referred to as one of the internal "silent killers," peer pressure. His qualitative study included ten students from five different schools. Six of the students were lower-achievers and four were higher-achievers. The data collected on each subject included: grades; SES; family life; schools attended; personal life; peer interaction; and classes taken, both past and present. The questionnaire included items such as: How does a Black person act White? What is a nerd? and Describe a good student?

His results revealed that there appeared to be an absence of motivation from peers toward academic achievement, and that many low achieving students, who have the ability, adopt various expressions to comply with peers. Some examples are cutting classes, having poor attendance,

sitting in the back, not asking or answering questions, taking easy courses, not studying, and so forth.

The higher achieving students develop strategies to cope with high achievement by becoming an athlete, acting like a clown, not studying in public places, tutoring bullies, becoming a good fighter, and becoming raceless (not identifying with any race). Kunjufu (1988) concluded that many of the African American students would rather be popular than smart. Many African American youth believe that working hard and getting good grades is acting white. He proposed that the idea that academic excellence is "acting white" was a part of the brainwashing that began in slavery.

One relevant issue that Kunjufu (1988) did not address, is why peers are so influential in the African American community, and what can be done to positively influence the peer culture. This is not to suggest that peer groups aren't influential on all adolescents, however, there appears to be a substantial influence of peers on the achievement of African American students as a result of fictive kinship.

Again I will review the Fordham (1986,1996) study, because of its relevance to this section. Her longitudinal qualitative study included 33 African American high school students. The study examined the academic success of African American high school students with the "burden of acting white". High achieving students used various

strategies to resolve the tension between desiring to do well academically and pleasing their peers with behaviors and attitudes that validate African American identity. The African American students who chose to pursue academic success were perceived by their peers as "being kind of white" and therefore not truly black. She also discovered that the influence of the fictive kinship system was clearly evident, though officially negated. As the students' primary way of winning approval from other African Americans, the fictive kinship system existed both subversively and in relationship with the individualistic system nourished by the core curriculum, school officials, and the larger society.

Fordham (1996) concluded that the African American students who are encapsulated in the fictive kinship system experience greater difficulty in crossing cultural boundaries, such as, in accepting standard academic attitudes and practices of the school and in investing sufficient time and effort in pursuing their educational goals. While some of the high achieving students do not identify with the fictive kinship system, others do and deliberately adopt strategies to camouflage their academic achievements.

Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) also explored the influence of peers on achievement of various ethnic groups. They compared differences across a sample that

included African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and Caucasian Americans. Their outcome variables fell into four categories; psychosocial adjustment, schooling, behavior problems and psychological distress. Their peer measure included: affiliation patterns, peer crowd membership, perceptions of peer group norms, and time spent in various peer activities. Many of their items asked students directly about the extent to which their friends and parents encouraged them to perform well in school. The students were surveyed and both parents and students were interviewed in the collection of data. During the interviews, the students were asked questions about the peer characteristics of their school and their classmates' position in the peer structure.

They found that in comparison to Caucasian American students, that minority students were more influenced by their peers and less by their parents in academic achievement. Their findings revealed that an important predictor of academic success for adolescents is having support for academics from both parents and peers. They concluded that African American students are more likely than other races to be caught in a bind between performing well in school and being popular among peers.

A review of the literature on peer groups provides evidence that African American adolescents not only have to confront typical peer issues, but peer influence is

intensified through the fictive kinship system. The African American adolescent learns to manipulate skillfully in order to "survive" in both cultures. In this final section, a review of literature on the desire to achieve and achievement of African American students, will substantiate the significance of exploring fictive kinship and racial identity on their desire to achieve.

Desire to Achieve

To explore the desire to achieve, future goals are operationalized in achievement settings. An examination of future goals, is important because previous research has found that students with positive future orientations toward their classes achieve at higher levels than students who do not see the future utility of their classes (Raynor, Atkinson, & Brown, 1974).

In exploring the role of learning goals, future consequences, pleasing others, and perceived ability on the engagement of academic work, Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, and Nichols (1996) found that future consequences were significantly correlated with achievement. They defined future consequences as anticipated and valued distant consequences thought to be at least partially contingent on task performance but not inherent in the performance itself.

Miller et al. (1996) also found that future consequences are a predictor of several cognitive engagement variables that were predictors of achievement. Since goals related to future consequences are linked to achievement, it can be reasoned that a student who has goals for the future has a desire to achieve academically in order to obtain their goals. Therefore I decided to examine future goals as an index of the desire to achieve.

Achievement

In exploring the achievement of African American students, it is important to understand that there are many variables that influence achievement levels. Many theories have emerged that have attempted to explain the underachievement of African American students. While the review below will emphasize reasons for underachievement, it is important to keep in mind that not all African American students are underachieving.

Several studies have reported evidence of lower achievement levels for African American students (NAEP, 1996; Taylor et al., 1994; Steinburg et al., 1992; Voelkl, 1993). In race-comparative literature, African American students tend to have lower scores than others. Stienberg et al. (1992) compared the ethnic differences of four groups; Caucasian American, African American, Hispanic, and Asian Americans. Their sample population was approximately

15,000 students at nine different high schools. The students were administered a 30-page, two part questionnaire with a series of standardized psychological inventories, attitudinal indices, and demographic questions. The four categories of variables measured were: psychosocial adjustment, schooling, behavior problems, and psychological distress. Their study sought to challenge three explanations for the superior school performance of Asian Americans adolescents, and the inferior school performance of African American and Hispanic American adolescents: group differences in (a) parenting practices, (b) family values about education, and (c) beliefs about the occupational rewards of academic success.

Steinburg et al.'s (1992) results indicated that African American students receive the lowest grades relative to others. Further results revealed that the African American students, who were not doing as well in school, tended to be more cavalier about the consequences of poor school performance, devoted less time to their studies, and were less likely to than others to attribute their success to hard work. But, the African American students tended to have a higher sense of awareness that educational failures have negative consequences.

The strengths identified in this study included the large sample size and their measures. Their sample included students from inner-city and suburban schools, various

racial groups, and various levels of socioeconomic status. This heterogeneous population allowed them to easily generalize their findings. The measures included relevant contexts in which the adolescents live. For example, the peer measures included affiliation patterns, peer crowd membership, perceptions of peer group norms, and time spent in various peer activities.

One limitation that I identified was the length of the instrument. They reported that the instrument was a 30-page, two-part questionnaire which is very lengthy. In addition to the length of the instrument, they did not report any reliability information on the instrument. The study proposed here will avoid these limitations while also using similar measures.

Many explanations have been proposed as to the causes of the underachievement of African American students. Parham and Parham (1989) offered that African American children seem to approach their educational lives with cognitive, sensory, and motor skills that are equal to Caucasian Americans their age; however, for African Americans, academic achievement levels seem to decrease with the length of time they stay in school. They asserted that there are several factors that are consistently identified as contributing to or inhibiting academic achievement in African American students. Included in their list are family composition, socioeconomic status, teacher

expectation, values, parental expectations, and self concept, among others.

To address the problem of underachievement among African American students, Haynes and Comer (1990) reasoned that we need to understand the probable causes. They indicated that the cause is deeply rooted in the socioeconomically disadvantaged condition of African American children and the failure of educational institutions to respond appropriately to the needs created by the conditions. Some of the factors that contribute to a disadvantaged condition include poverty, racial discrimination, social inequalities, support groups, the mass media, schools, and business.

According to Jenkins (1989) unsuccessful academic achievement is impacted by the behavior of the home and the school relative to expectations and support. He stated that the incompatibilities between the culture of the home and school are also contributing factors to unsuccessful academic achievement. The behaviors and styles of learning endorsed by the home are often not acceptable to the school.

In concurrence with Jenkins (1989), Hale-Benson (1989) suggested that at the root of achievement and disciplinary difficulties of African American children is a lack of understanding of African American culture and child rearing, as well as a lack of recognition of the mismatch between the

African American culture and the Caucasian American oriented culture of the school.

In his review of the African American school experience, Boykin (1986) implied that when African American children enter school, they naturally tend to apply the cultural and stylistic approach with which they are already familiar. This application is likely to have discouraging consequences and is often dishonored in a school setting. It is reasonable to expect that children will be reluctant to give up the only way they know of interacting with the world and will resist having a different set of styles imposed on them. He reasoned that this can affect the child's will to learn and work against them in deciding that they should learn the material that is being presented.

As discussed earlier, Ogbu (1992) suggested that because of the psychological pressures, an involuntary minority individual who desires to do well in school may also define the behavior enhancing school success or the success itself as "acting White". Because of the differences in cultures, African American students face a dilemma that they may have to choose between "acting White" (i.e., adopting appropriate attitudes and behaviors or school rules and standard practices that enhance academic success but that are perceived and interpreted by the minorities as typical of Caucasian Americans and therefore negatively sanctioned by them) and "acting Black" (i.e.,

adopting attitudes and behaviors that the minority students consider appropriate for their group but that are not necessarily conducive to school success).

The African American students who are academically successful, often have adopted coping strategies (Boykin, 1986; Fordham, 1988, 1996; Kunjufu, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1992). Boykin offered that the children who succeed are in many cases those who have adopted different coping strategies. Since schools can and do function as agents of hegemony in this society, African American children may succumb to that hegemony, and adopt passive coping strategies. These students often try to shed their African American cultural background as fully as possible so they can conform to the Caucasian American system.

Ogbu (1992) submitted that because of the negative peer pressure involved with students who adopt attitudes and behaviors enhancing school success, the students who want to succeed academically often consciously choose from a variety of secondary strategies to shield them from peer pressure. He suggested that some of the strategies employed by African American students are as follows:

1. Emulation of Caucasian Americans or cultural passing, such as adopting "White" academic attitudes and behaviors or trying to behave like middle-class Caucasian American students. These students usually experience

isolation from other African American students, resulting in high psychological costs.

2. Accommodation without assimilation- a student adopting this strategy behaves according to the school norms while at school, but at home behaves according to African American norms. African American students who adopt this strategy do not pay the psychological costs that follow Caucasian American emulators.

3. Camouflage - disguising true academic attitudes and behaviors. One technique is to become the class clown. Since peer group members are not particularly interested in how well a student is doing academically, the student claims to lack interest in school, or that schoolwork/homework or getting good grades is not important. Another way of camouflaging is to become involved in "Black activities" to demonstrate you have not lost your racial identity.

Another coping strategy is proposed by Fordham (1988). She suggested that students who seek to maximize school success may do so by minimizing their relationship to the African American community and attempting to develop a raceless persona. Racelessness, then, is the desired and eventual outcome of developing a raceless persona. The organizational structure of the school values racelessness in students and reinforces the idea that it is a quality necessary for success in the larger society. In becoming raceless, high achieving students often forfeit their strong

allegiance to the African American community and the connection to the fictive kinship system. Fordham (1988) concluded because many of their less successful peers do not share the value of becoming raceless, many successful students find themselves juggling their school and community personae in order to minimize the conflicts and anxieties generated by the need to interact with the various competing departments represented in the schools.

Additionally, Fordham (1996) submitted that African American adolescents who wish to pursue academic excellence are confronted with two overwhelming obstacles: the barriers established by the larger society and implemented in the curricular and structural organization of the school, and intragroup pressures manifested in the fictive kinship system, which reward or confer prestige on those members of the African American community who foreground their connectedness to the imagined African American community. This dilemma is oft times formidable and influences their desire to achieve.

Current Study

This chapter focused on literature that was related to kinship, racial identity and achievement of African American students. In the review of kinship, it is meaningful to note that informal fictive kinship of African Americans is dissimilar from the formalized fictive kinship in Japan.

The distinctiveness of the African American fictive kinship is the collective identity or sense of "peoplehood" in conflict with the social identity of Caucasian Americans because of the way Caucasian Americans treat them in economic, political, social, and psychological domains (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

The fictive kinship system that exists in the African American community is rooted in a cultural history. In her writings, Fordham (1996) offered that the fact that virtually everyone in the African American community understands and is in some way connected to the fictive kinship system, does not mean that every African American person marches in lock-step to the system. There are contested understandings of the dictates of the fictive kinship system, as well as challenges and disagreements concerning both the value and the advantages of belonging to it and the honoring of its principles.

The current study will examine fictive kinship in order to establish its existence among high school students using items that describe a situation that the students must respond by selecting either a Black or a White reference group. The study will also investigate fictive kinship and its relationship to racial identity among African American high school students. The choice of high school students was based on previous research (Fordham 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kunjufu, 1988;) and because high school students

have reached a higher level of identity development.

The literature on racial identity established that, although African American children experience similar identity development as others, their development process is more complex because of the added variable of racial identity (Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Mendelberg, as cited in Adams, Gullotta & Montemayor, 1992). The task of identity formation for African American adolescents becomes especially complex due to intervening factors such as color, behavioral distinctions, language differences, physical features, and social stereotypes (Markstrom-Adams, 1992).

It is a recognized problem that African Americans are confronted with two sets of cultural values, those of their own minority group and those of the mainstream culture, which often clash, causing conflict (Boykin, 1986; Fordham, 1988, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Jenkins, 1989; Hale-Benson, 1989; Mendelberg, as cited in Adams, Gullotta & Montemayor, 1992; Ogbu, 1992). The complexity of the identity development of African American adolescents is also compounded by group identity, peer influence, and fictive kinship.

Racial identity and peer influence will also be explored. The racial identity variable will be investigated by examining four stages of racial identity development (RIAS, Helms & Parham, 1981). Each stage presented indicates a developmental level of racial identity and

suggests progression toward clearer racial identity. Since peer influence has been found to be a dominating factor affecting the academic achievement motivation of African American students (Fordham 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kunjufu, 1988; Steinburg et al. 1992), it will be examined using items that were developed specifically to reveal negative and positive peer influence.

The literature that explored achievement of African American students, helped to explain the notion that many African American students believe that getting good grades is "acting White." (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988, 1996; Ogbu, 1992). In many instances, for African American students to achieve, they adopt coping strategies that allow them to blend into both the African American culture and the Caucasian American school system (Boykin, 1986; Fordham, 1988, 1996; Kunjufu, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1992). As Fordham (1996) indicated, for the African American student, they view the divergent boundaries of the school and their community as making conflicting demands on them. In school, African American students are asked to relinquish their identity and sense of belonging to the African American community in exchange for academic progress.

The desire to achieve, achievement, and attitudes towards school are also variables included in the study. Each one will be examined to determine the relationships

among measures of fictive kinship and racial identity.

From the literature reviewed, it appears that for the African American adolescents, it is difficult to separate identity, fictive kinship, and peer influence. This unique structure creates a difficulty for African American students to achieve to their potential in school without jeopardizing their racial identity and fictive kinship. This study is significant because it will provide educators with a better understanding of fictive kinship that exists within the African American community and the potential effects that it may have on the achievement of African American students in their class.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Design

This correlational study examined six variables; racial identity, fictive kinship, peer influence, attitudes towards school, future goals, and achievement. The study involved the administration of a questionnaire (see appendix) designed to measure the above mentioned variables. The questionnaire was used to specifically address these research questions: 1) What are the relationships among measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, attitudes toward school, influence of peers, and achievement-related goals? 2) Do measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, influence of peers, and attitudes towards school predict the desire to achieve and achievement?

Participants

The sample consisted of 270 African American high school students (79 males, 146 females, and 45 students gave no report) in grades 9 - 12. The sample of students was drawn from three urban high schools in a public school district. The populations of the three high schools are predominantly African American. The students were enrolled in History and English classes. These classes were chosen because History and English are required courses, which allowed a sample of students from various academic levels.

Materials

The variables that were measured included the students' perceptions of racial identity, perceptions of fictive kinship, general attitudes about school, peer influence, future goals, and achievement. The perceptions of racial identity and fictive kinship, influence of peers, attitudes toward school, and the desire to achieve were the independent variables. The dependent variables are achievement, future goals, and attitudes towards school.

Racial identity. The respondents' racial identity was assessed using the Racial Identity Attitude Scale measure (RIAS; Helms & Parham, 1981). The short form, which consists of 30 items, was used with slight modifications (See Appendix A). The questionnaire assessed four aspects of identity: a) pre-encounter, b) encounter, c) immersion, d) internalization. The pre-encounter section illustrates attitudes that predict poor self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, and anxiety. The encounter section illustrates attitudes of positive self-esteem, self-actualizing tendencies, and low anxiety. The immersion section illustrates attitudes that are related to unhealthy affective adjustment as indicated by poor self-esteem, high anxiety, low levels of self-actualization tendencies, and high level of anger or hostility. The internalization section illustrates attitudes that usually tend to correlate with affective measures and attitudes that predict a

rational decision-making style. Each of these stages represents a development of racial identity that progresses toward clear racial identity. The reliability coefficient for each section are as follows: (a) pre-encounter- 9 items, $\alpha=.69$, (b) encounter - 4 items, $\alpha=.50$, (c) immersion - 8 items, $\alpha= .67$ (d) internalization 9 items, $\alpha=.79$ (Parham & Helms, 1981).

The items used in this study were scored using a six point Likert-type format with "strongly disagree " and "strongly agree" as the anchors. An example of an item from the scale is, "I believe that being Black is a positive experience." Each respondent obtained a score on the four subscales (pre-encounter, encounter, immersion and internalization). The scores were calculated by adding together each of the ITEM values chosen by the subjects. The total scores from each subscale were divided by the number of items in the subscale to maintain the scale metric (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Fictive kinship. Fictive kinship was assessed using a variation of the Cornell Reference Group Inventory (CRGI; Little, 1983). The Cornell Reference Group Inventory was developed to assess how one's reference group orientation might influence the resolution of situational dilemmas which placed two reference groups in conflict. The CRGI yielded four indices of reference group identification: an importance ranking of several of the individual's reference

groups, an overall rating of the subjects' favorability toward the groups, ratings of the traits of the groups, and profile distance scores indicating the perceived distance between each subject and members of the group. Although there was no reliability information reported for this instrument, the utility of the inventory was discussed. The instrument was useful in assessing the respondent's degree of identification with different reference groups when presented with conflict situations. The section of the inventory used for this study is the reference group dilemmas with slight modifications for age appropriateness. For this study, the respondents were not required to indicate their reference group because the survey will be given to only African American students.

There were four identification items that included an examination of the respondents' closest friends, with whom they most identified. These responses ranged from 0 to 3.

There were six situation dilemmas that were modified to include circumstances that deal with school related issues. In each of the situations, the subject was required to make a dichotomous choice between the two competing reference groups. An example of an situation item is listed below.

Situation 1

Suppose two students are competing for the position of class president, one African American male and one White male.

The African American candidate, however, has made a number of joking sexist remarks that may show a trace of sexism.

On the other hand, the White candidate is clearly non-sexist and committed to advancing the cause of women as well as the cause of ethnic minorities.

Which candidate would you support?

Black _____

White _____

In the study, the respondents' degree of identification with the different groups is predictive of the existence of kinship. The scoring of the items was based upon the selection of the reference groups. The respondents choices were scored using 0, 1, and 2. A score of 0 was given when the respondent selected the White choice. A score of 1 was given when the respondent selected the Black choice in a situation that does not include a dilemma. A score of 2 was given when the respondent selected the Black choice and the situation does include a dilemma. The strength of fictive kinship was determined by the focus only on the Black choices.

Attitudes toward school. The participants' attitudes toward school was assessed using Bank's Attitude scale (Bank, 1984). Items selected from the 45-item questionnaire assessed general attitudes about school. The subscale of the attitudes towards school consist of 11 items.

The reliability coefficient for the subscale has been reported as follows; a) Attitudes toward school = .77 (Bank, 1984). The items were scored using a six point Likert-type format with "strongly disagree " and "strongly agree" as the anchors. An example of the items include; I like school; My teachers like me; and I get along well with others. The items on the scale were summed to yield a score.

Future Goals. Achievement-related goals were assessed using items from Miller, DeBacker & Greene (1997) instrument. A total of six items that evaluate future goals, were used to assess the achievement-related goals.

The reliability coefficient for the subscale is reported as $a = .69$ (Miller et al., 1997). The items were scored using a six point Likert-type format with "strongly disagree " and "strongly agree" as the anchors. An example of the items include; I do the work assigned in school because my achievement plays a role in reaching my future goals. The items on the scale were summed to yield a score.

Influence of peers. The influence of peers/peer interaction was assessed using 15 items that were developed by Gladney and Greene. These items measured how the students fit in the Black peer group as a whole and their interaction with their personal peer groups.

These items were evaluated for content validity. A sample of seven high school students were chosen to read the items for understanding. Modifications were made based upon their feedback. The items were scored using a six point Likert-type format with "strongly disagree " and "strongly agree" as the anchors. An example of the items include; My friends encourage me to study. The items on the scale were summed to yield a score.

Achievement. Achievement was assessed by students' self report of their nine weeks grade in the core subjects.

Procedure

Students from twelve History and English classes were asked to participate in the study. Parental and student consent forms explaining the study were sent home with the students one week prior to the first administration of the instrument. For purposes of this study, the survey was only administered to African American students. The students who volunteered to participate in the study, were excused from their classes and administered the survey in an area designated by the lead teacher of the project, at each

school. Each student was given a survey and a scanner sheet to record their responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This correlational study examined the relationships among fictive kinship, racial identity, peer influence, attitudes toward school, future goals, and achievement among African American high school students. It also explored whether the measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, influence of peers, and attitudes toward school predict future goals, achievement and attitudes toward school. The participants were 270 African American high school student volunteers from three urban high schools. The sample included students in grades nine through twelve enrolled in History and English classes with a few volunteers from other courses.

The results are presented in four sections. In the first section, the scoring of all variables from the instrument is described. In the second section the descriptive statistics for each variable measured are presented. Each of the variables are presented in separate tables and include the survey items, of which some of items will be discussed in the last chapter. In the third section, the intercorrelations of the variables are presented. In the following section the data for the regression analysis is presented. Each of the sections will begin with a summary of the analysis.

Scoring

The responses for peer influence, attitudes toward school, and future goals were summed over items. The sum was divided by the number of items to obtain a mean score for each variable. The scores ranged from 0 to 5 with a score of 5 indicating strongly agree and a score of 0 indicating strongly disagree. The scoring for the racial identity variable included individual scores given for the four racial identity subscales (pre-encounter, encounter, immersion and internalization) and an overall racial identity score that was calculated combining the four subscale scores.

The responses for fictive kinship were dichotomous with a choice of 0 or 1. The responses were scored using a scale of 0, 1, and 2. A score of 0 was given when the respondent selected the White choice. A score of 1 was given when the respondent selected the Black choice in a situation that did not include a dilemma. A score of 2 was given when the respondent selected the Black choice and the situation included a dilemma. Each participant had a score for each item then an overall score was computed by summing.

The responses for achievement were self reported grades indicated by the participants in four core subjects (English, Math, Science, and History) during the last quarter. Each letter grade was assigned a number, A=4, B=3,

C=2, D=1, F=0, and if no grade was reported for a subject, it was assigned the number 5.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were examined for all variables. The means, ranges, standard deviations, and the reliability coefficients are reported for racial identity, peer influence, future goals, and attitudes toward school. The means and frequencies are reported for achievement. For the categorical data, such as the identification and situation items, only the frequencies are reported.

Achievement. The means and frequencies of achievement are shown in Table 1. The students were asked to report their grades in the four core subjects from the last nine weeks. As shown, History is the subject with the highest mean with around 82% of the students making a C or better. Math is the subject that students reported lower grades with about 18% of the students making a D or below. Overall, the means indicate that the participants are achieving at an average level.

Attitudes. The frequency distributions of attitudes toward school items tended to show a slightly negative skew. As shown in Table 2, on four of the items that would appear to influence a students' attitude toward school, a smaller percentage of the students scored below 3 on the point scale. For example, "liking school" had 19% below the

mid point, "teachers like me" had 20% below the mid point, "getting along well with others" had 10% below the mid point, and "students like me" had less than 12% below the mid point. The overall mean score for attitudes is 3.48 which demonstrates that students tended to score higher on these items which reflects positive attitudes toward school. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is .72, which indicates an acceptable level for internal consistency.

Table 1

Means and Frequencies for Self Reported Grades

Subject	Mean	A	B	C	D	F	No Report
English	2.57	38	96	64	21	1	11
Math(Cal,Geo,Alg)	2.46	49	65	84	35	15	24
History (Gov. Geog, etc)	2.84	89	92	49	14	6	22
Science	2.41	66	72	67	27	3	37

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficient
for Attitudes Toward School

Item	Mean	SD	Alpha
Attitudes toward school			.72
1. I like school	3.39	1.36	
2. Students make me feel diff.*	2.91	1.81	
3. My teachers like me	3.61	1.50	
4. I get along well w/others	4.09	1.22	
5. I feel left out in class*	3.55	1.68	
6. I wish I could go to a different school*	3.00	1.97	
7. The students leave me out*	3.69	1.64	
8. Teachers make me feel different*	3.50	1.70	
9. The students like me	3.87	1.22	
10. I don't like to be called on in class*	2.57	1.75	
11. My classmates make fun of me*	4.07	1.46	

Note. The asterisks indicate the items were reversed scored.

Racial Identity. An examination of racial identity, as shown in Table 3, reported an overall mean of 3.23. Pre-encounter and internal revealed the highest means with a small percentage of the respondents scoring below a three on the point scale with less than 24% and less than 11% respectively. Encounter and immersion report the lower means with 50% and 64% of the respondents scoring below a three on the point scale respectively. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for encounter and immersion were lower than what was expected. In the first reliability analysis, encounter reported an alpha of .24. After item 24 was deleted the alpha increased to .42.

The reliabilities reported by Parham & Helms (1981) were higher for each section: (a) pre-encounter, $\alpha=.69$, (b) encounter, $\alpha=.50$, (c) immersion, $\alpha=.67$ (d) internalization, $\alpha=.79$. The original instrument was developed for college students but was slightly modified for the high school sample in this study. Although the modifications were made for vocabulary appropriateness, they could have affected the reliability of the items.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability

Coefficients for Racial Identity

Subscale	Mean	SD	Alpha
Pre- Encounter	3.49	.86	.67
Encounter	2.83	.94	.42
Internal	3.73	.61	.53
Immersion	2.63	.87	.64
Racial Identity	3.23	.41	.56

Peer Influence. In examining peer influence, the items were divided into positive and negative influences. As shown in Table 4, the frequency distribution for positive peer influence was a more normal distribution with 47% of the respondents scoring less than three on the point scale. In contrast, the negative peer influence tended to show a positive skewness with 97% of the students scoring below a three on the point scale. The mean score for the item that associated getting good grades with "acting White" was only (.53). About 92% of the students responded with a score under three. Although it was slightly higher, the mean for speaking proper grammar with "acting White" (.93) was unexpected. This indicates that the majority of the students scored lower on these variables and tended to disagree with the items. There were low means for items 1 - 4. Although this skewness does not fit within the range of approximate normality (Huck & Cormier, 1996), the correlation and regression analyses are robust enough to handle the deviation from normality. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients reported for positive and negative peer influence is .70 and .67 respectively, which are acceptable levels for internal consistency.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients
for Peer Influence

Item	Mean	SD	Alpha
Positive Peer Influence	2.91	1.03	.70
1. Friends encourage me to study	2.72	1.72	
2. I encourage my friends to study	3.25	1.60	
3. My friends enjoy school	2.78	1.52	
4. When I get good grades I tell my friends	3.74	1.54	
Negative Peer Influence	1.11	.81	.67
1. Good grades w/acting White	.53	1.10	
2. Good grammar w/acting White	.93	1.32	
3. Fit in w/Black culture b/c don't care about grades	.67	1.29	
4. Get good grades, my friends make fun of me	.98	1.50	
5. Friends don't encourage me to do well in school	1.34	1.69	
6. I don't encourage friends to study	1.33	1.63	
7. Friends dislike school	2.03	1.66	
8. Get bad grades I like to tell friends	1.13	1.58	

Future Goals. The frequency distribution for future goals shown in Table 5 tended to also show a negative skewness. There were 8% of the students that scored below a 3 on the point scale. This indicates that the students tended to have high future goals related to achievement. Once again, The Cronbach's alpha is .89, which is sufficient, was higher than what was expected. The alpha reported by Miller et al. (1997) was .67.

Identification. The frequencies reported in Table 6, reveal that although the majority of the students identify most with both Black and White students, they are influenced most by Black people in general, and report that their closest friends are Black students.

Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficient
for Future Goals

Item	Mean	SD	Alpha
1. Achievement plays a role in reaching future goals	4.35	1.05	
2. Performance is important for becoming the person I want to be	4.36	1.08	
3. Achievement is important for attaining my dreams	4.42	1.03	
4. Learning content plays a role in reaching future goals	4.32	1.01	
5. Understanding content is important	4.25	1.12	
6. Learning material is important to my dreams	4.23	1.18	
Future Goals	4.33	.89	.89

Table 6
Frequencies for Identification Items

Item	Black Students	Non Black Students	Blk & White Students	Black People in General
1. Identify most with	52	2	142	72
2. I most often side with	50	3	167	46
3. Closest friends are	110	4	65	90
4. People who are most influential	57	7	77	128

Fictive Kinship. The examination of fictive kinship begins with Table 7. The table illustrates that the respondents chose the Black reference group in four of the six situations which indicates that fictive kinship exists among the students. In two of the situations that involved a dilemma, the students selected the White or student reference group. Even though item number five was associated with a dilemma, almost 59% of the students selected the Black reference group which indicates a stronger kinship.

The results presented in item number four, indicated that the majority of the students sided with the student council, which supports the data reported in Table 6, item number two, where the students also indicated that they most often side with other students.

The overall mean score, as indicated in Table 8, is 4.5. In situation number 5, which reports the highest mean, indicated there was stronger fictive kinship present because the students selected the Black reference group that included a dilemma.

Table 7
Frequencies for Situation Items

Situation	<u>Reference Group</u>		
	Black	White	Student
1. Black sexist or White candidate*	54	209	0
2. Hire a teacher when both are good	242	16	0
3. Attend a Kawanzaa or school party	145	119	0
4. Support a Black principal or student council*	66	0	195
5. Vote for a Black loner or White friendly homecoming queen*	158	103	0
6. As a student debate judge break a tie b/t a Black & White	227	22	0

Note. The asterisks indicate situations that are classified as dilemmas.

Table 8
Means and Standard Deviations for Fictive Kinship

Items	Mean	SD
Fictive Kinship	4.54	1.95
1. Situation #1	.41	.80
2. Situation #2	.93	.24
3. Situation #3	.54	.49
4. Situation #4	.50	.87
5. Situation #5	1.21	.97
6. Situation #6	.91	.28

Correlations of Variables

A correlational analysis was done to determine the relationships among the variables. Ten variables are reported in a correlation matrix including the subscales for racial identity. Intercorrelations among fictive kinship, racial identity, peer influence, attitudes toward school, achievement, and achievement related future goals were examined. Intercorrelations for fictive kinship were examined separately to establish a relationship among each of the situation items.

The intercorrelations among variables are reported as Pearson product moment correlations as shown in Table 8. The data indicate moderate positive relationships between achievement and pre-encounter stage of racial identity development (.31) and attitudes toward school(.34). Achievement also had statistically significant positive relationships with future goals (.28) and the internalization stage of racial identity development (.19).

Fictive kinship was positively and significantly related to the immersion stage of racial identity (.30). The internalization stage of racial identity was moderately positively correlated with immersion (.34), future goals (.30), and positive peer influence (.23). On the other hand, internalization was correlated strongly with encounter (.50). Immersion was correlated most strongly with

encounter (.61), and moderately positively correlated with negative peer influence (.24) and negatively correlated with attitudes toward school (-.20). Pre-encounter was strongly negatively correlated with negative peer influence (-.48) and positively correlated with attitudes toward school (.38).

Future goals was negatively correlated with negative peer influence (-.35) and positively correlated with positive peer influence (.23) and attitudes toward school (.34). Attitudes toward school was negatively associated with negative peer influence (-.38) and positive peer influence (.24).

The intercorrelations among the fictive kinship items shown in Table 9, indicate that four of the items are correlated. Fictive item 1 is positively related to Fictive item 4 (.23). Fictive item 2 indicates a moderate positive relationship with Fictive item 6 (.37).

Table 9

Intercorrelations Among Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Achieve	--									
2. Fictive	-.05	--								
3. Internal	.19*	.02	--							
4. Immerse	-.03	.30**	.34**	--						
5. Encounter	.07	.13	.50**	.61**	--					
6. Pre	.31**	.09	-.11	-.15	-.06	--				
7. Futgoals	.28**	-.14	.30**	-.02	.10	.15	--			
8. NegPI	-.19	.02	-.05	.24*	.09	-.48**	-.35**	--		
9. PosPI	.14	-.00	.23*	.00	.12	-.01	.23*	-.10	--	
10. Attitudes	.34**	.04	.18	-.20*	-.06	.38**	.34**	-.38**	.24**	--

*p<.01 **p<.001

Table 10

Intercorrelations Among Fictive Items

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Fictive1	--					
2. Fictive2	-.07	--				
3. Fictive3	.09	.07	--			
4. Fictive4	.23**	-.08	.06	--		
5. Fictive5	.07	.07	.10	.14	--	
6. Fictive6	.07	.37**	.07	.03	.04	--

*p<.01 **p<.001

Multiple Regression

Three regression analyses were done to examine how racial identity, perceptions of fictive kinship, influence of peers, future goals, and attitudes toward school predict achievement; and how racial identity, perceptions of fictive kinship, influence of peers, and attitudes toward school predict future goals; and how racial identity, perceptions of fictive kinship, influence of peers, and future goals predict attitudes toward school. The multiple regression analyses were computed and are shown in Table 10. The regression equations were the result of a multistep procedure. Originally, two regression analyses were proposed using achievement and future goals as the criterion variables, however, after examining the intercorrelation data, attitudes toward school was included as a criterion variable.

Prediction of Achievement. For the criterion variable achievement, there were nine independent variables used in the equation which included; attitudes toward school, future goals, negative and positive peer influence, the four subscales of racial identity, and fictive kinship. The variables were entered into the equation based upon the strength of the relationships from the intercorrelation analysis. A conservative alpha level of $p < .01$ was selected for judging significance and was chosen over the conventional .05 to reduce the possible number of Type I

errors. An even more conservative probability level was not used to help avoid committing Type II errors.

A review of the correlation analysis indicated that attitudes toward school appeared to be the strongest predictor for achievement, (see Table 8). The attitudes score was entered into the equation first and was statistically significant with achievement. It produced a beta weight of (.21) which indicated the stronger predictor and accounted for 12% of the variance. Pre-encounter, which was the second strongest predictor, produced a beta weight of (.26) and accounted for 3% of the variance and was also significant. Although the other seven variables in the equation did not contribute significantly to the prediction of achievement at the $p < .01$ level, future goals ($\beta = .14$) and internalization ($\beta = .12$) accounted for 3% and 2% of the variance, respectively. The multiple R for the equation was .46 and 21% of the variance was explained by the collection of all nine variables.

Prediction of Future Goals. For the criterion variable future goals, eight independent variables were used. The variables included attitudes toward school, positive and negative peer influence, fictive kinship, and the four subscales of racial identity (pre-encounter, encounter, immerse, and internalization). A review of the intercorrelation analysis indicated that negative peer influence had the strongest relationship with future goals.

Although negative peer influence was entered in the equation first, internalization produced the highest beta weight (.24) and accounted for 5% of the variance. Negative peer influence was the second strongest predictor ($\beta = -.18$) and accounted for 5% of the variance. Although attitudes toward school ($\beta = .16$), fictive kinship ($\beta = -.14$), and positive peer influence ($\beta = .10$), were not significant at the $p < .01$ level, they accounted for 3%, 2%, and 2% of the variance, respectively. The multiple R for the equation was .44 and 19% of the variance was explained by the collection of all eight variables.

Predictions of Attitudes. In the analysis for prediction of attitudes toward school, five independent variables were used in the equation. The variables included positive and negative peer influence, future goals, and two of the racial identity subscales, pre-encounter and immersion. The other variables were not entered into the equation because they were not significantly correlated with attitudes. The equation indicated all five of the variables were significantly associated with attitudes toward school at the $p < .01$ level. Negative peer influence was the strongest predictor ($\beta = -.20$) accounting for 18% of the variance. Pre-encounter was the second strongest predictor ($\beta = -.28$) accounting for 5% of the variance, and Future goals ($\beta = .19$) accounted for 4% of the variance. Positive peer

influence ($\beta = -.17$) and immersion ($\beta = -.15$) each accounted for 2% of the variance. The multiple R for the equation was .56 and 31% of the variance was explained by the collection of all five variables.

Table 11
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for
Variables Predicting Achievement, Attitudes Towards School,
and Future Goals

Variables	B	<u>SE B</u>	β	R ² Change	Sig T
Achievement (R ² = .21)					
1. Attitudes	.17	.07	.21	.13	.01*
2. Pre-encounter	.21	.07	.26	.03	.001**
3. Future Goals	.12	.07	.14	.03	.10
4. Internal	.14	.10	.12	.02	.17
5. Neg. Peer Infl.	.05	.07	.06	.00	.49
6. Pos. Peer Infl.	.008	.05	.01	.00	.87
7. Encounter	.01	.06	.02	.00	.82
8. Fictive	-.03	.02	-.08	.00	.26
9. Immersion	.003	.07	.004	.00	.96
Fut. Goals (R ² = .19)					
1. Neg. Peer Infl.	-.18	.07	-.18	.05	.01*
2. Attitudes	.15	.07	.16	.03	.03
3. Internal	.32	.10	.24	.07	.001**
4. Pos. Peer Infl.	.08	.05	.10	.02	.09
5. Pre-encounter	-.03	.06	-.04	.00	.59
6. Fictive	-.05	.02	-.14	.02	.03
7. Encounter	.01	.06	.01	.00	.84
8. Immersion	.01	.08	.01	.00	.84
Attitudes (R ² = .31)					
1. Neg. Peer Infl.	-.20	.06	-.20	.18	.001**
2. Pre-encounter	.27	.06	.28	.05	.001**
3. Future Goals	.17	.06	.17	.04	.001**
4. Pos. Peer Infl.	.14	.04	.17	.02	.001**
5. Immerse	-.14	.05	-.15	.02	.009*

*p<.01 **p<.001

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

This examination of the relationship among fictive kinship, racial identity, peer influence, attitudes toward school, future goals, and achievement among African American high school students provided evidence for relationships among the variables. The results of the regression analyses indicated that attitudes toward school, racial identity, and future goals were the strongest predictors of achievement. The strongest predictors for future goals were internalization, negative and positive peer influence, and attitudes toward school. Racial identity and negative and positive peer influence, in addition to future goals, were also the strongest predictors for attitudes toward school.

Although fictive kinship was not a predictor variable in any of the regression equations, the data did provide evidence that fictive kinship exists among African American high school students, which is consistent with Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study. Fictive kinship was expected to be an emerging pattern among each of the variables and a predictor of achievement and future goals, but it was not. As anticipated, racial identity was correlated with each of the variables. However, it was not anticipated that pre-encounter would be correlated with several variables.

An investigation into whether the measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, influence of peers, and attitudes toward school predict achievement indicated that attitudes toward school is the strongest predictor. For predicting future goals, internalization was the strongest predictor. Possible explanations for these outcomes will be discussed in this chapter.

The first section of this chapter will include a discussion of the descriptive statistics, including the correlations. The next section will include a discussion of the multiple regression findings. The following section, will report limitations of the study, directions for future research, and implications for educational practice. The last section will close with some final conclusions.

Descriptive Statistics

There appears to be some contradiction in the data as reported in Table 2. About 89% of the students tended to agree that the students liked them, on the other hand, 69% were inclined to agree that students leave them out, and 79% were inclined to agree that their classmates make fun of them. A possible explanation for this difference is when the students reported that they were liked by other students, they responded based upon their inner circle of friends. Oft times the classroom population is made up of several peer groups, which makes it easier to feel isolated.

Perhaps a future study could help to explain these differences.

The relatively high means that are reported in Table 3 for pre-encounter and internalization may be explained because of the complexity of racial identity development for African American adolescents (Alejandro-Wright, 1985; Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992; Porter & Washington, 1979). The pre-encounter stage suggests a preference for the Caucasian race in addition to feelings of inferiority and anxiety. Although these findings may be surprising, this is consistent with the earlier findings (Clark & Clark, 1940; Powell-Hopkins, 1985) indicating that African American children as young as three years old, preferred the White doll. As previously discussed, for ethnic minority adolescents the process of identity formation has an added dimension due to their exposure to alternative sources of identification, their own ethnic group and the dominant culture (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992). This suggests that for African American adolescents, the dominant culture plays a part in their identity development. Some of subtleties in our society that suggest things that are black are bad (black magic, devil's food cake, blackmail etc...) and things that are white are good (angel's food cake, white lie, etc...) may bring about feelings of inferiority and preferences for the other race.

The mean score for the internalization subscale was the highest, indicating that many of the students have internalized being African American and are accepting of Caucasian Americans. According to Taylor et al. (1994), students in this stage have a clear sense of their racial identity and would report higher levels of achievement, which is consistent with this study that internalization is significantly correlated with achievement.

The overall mean for negative peer influence, shown in Table 4, was lower than that for positive influence which suggests that the students disagreed more with items that were associated with negative peer influence than the positive items. These findings indicate that students report more positive peer influences than negative peer influences. As I mentioned previously, the mean scores for the item that associated getting good grades and speaking proper grammar with "acting White", were quite surprising. I anticipated that the majority of the students would report that they felt that getting good grades and speaking proper grammar were associated with "acting White". My surprise is due to personal observations of students, counseling with students, parents, and teachers on this particular issue. I have addressed the problem with students on each side of the issue, those that have verbally expressed that getting good grades or speaking proper grammar is "acting White" and those students that have been accused of "acting White"

because of their grades and/or grammar. Because of my personal experience with students, I found the discrepancy to be quite puzzling.

One possible explanation for the variance is that although some students may verbally admit that they feel that way around their peers and in a one to one situation, they may have felt inhibited to answer the question honestly because agreeing with the question may inadvertently cause African Americans to look bad. This could be further evidence of fictive kinship. Although this survey was anonymous, students expressed the sentiment that they hesitated to answer some of the questions fearing it would make them look bad.

For future goals, the overall mean score shown in Table 5 indicated that the students reported goals for the future and viewed school as important for reaching their future goals. This finding is consistent with the previous study conducted by Gladney and Greene (1996) that indicated that African American students have future goals. These findings also help to argue against the view that African American students achieve at lower levels because of the lack of future goals.

The frequencies for the identification items shown in Table 6 illustrated that while over half of the students reported that they identify with both Black and White students and most often take sides with both Black and White

students, a clearer majority indicated that their closest friends are Black and that Black people influence them more than others. I was pleased to find that many of the students do identify and explore friendships with students of other races, since such relationships help to contribute positively to their social and cognitive development (Hartup, 1993).

In examining fictive kinship, the frequency data presented in Table 7 established that fictive kinship exists among African American students because in the majority of the situations the Black reference group was chosen as opposed to the White reference group. This finding is consistent with Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) research that also found that fictive kinship exists among African American high school students. Fictive kinship was indicated by the selection of a Black response. An indication of stronger fictive kinship was reported when the students selected a Black response that included a dilemma. As discussed below, a slightly stronger pattern of kinship emerged in situation number 5. As expected, the data support that even in a dilemma situation, fictive kinship among African Americans exists.

Situation number 1, which is classified as a dilemma, is the only situation where a White candidate was chosen over a Black candidate. In this situation, because of the blemish in the character of the Black candidate, race was

not the deciding factor. In situation number 4, which is also a dilemma, the students were asked to side with a Black principal that was accused of being unfair and too harsh to White students and the student council who wanted to circulate a petition that would call for an investigation. There was no racial information given about the student council. In this situation the majority of the students sided with the student council. This supports the data reported in Table 5 that indicated the students most often side with Black and White students. The finding suggests that students are more likely to side with each other in situations like this than with an adult regardless of color. Item number 5, which is the last situation classified as a dilemma, clearly indicates the strength of fictive kinship. The students were asked to vote for either a Black candidate that was a loner or a White candidate that hung around with both Black and White students. The majority of the students selected the Black candidate even though she did not associate with anyone. When asked to select between a Kawanzaa party and an intergrated school party, during the survey, several students asked what Kawanzaa was. Because of the lack of knowledge about Kawanzaa, I thought that most of the students would select the school party and was mildly surprised that the majority selected Kawanzaa. In the situation items that were not dilemmas and the choices were

equal in skill but separate in race, the students clearly selected the Black candidate over the White.

This data illustrates that kinship like relationships exist between persons not related by blood or marriage in society, but who have some reciprocal social or economic relationship (Brain, 1971; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fortes, 1969; Norbeck & Befu, 1958). It is interesting to note, that during this portion of the survey, several students commented that they felt by answering these questions, they may be viewed as a racist. Situation number 6 seemed to cause the most discussion for students. Some commented that it was hard to select between two students and a few students stated that they would toss a coin. Once again, this supports implications that I made previously concerning students siding with each other. It appears to be easier to select the Black teacher opposed to the White teacher, but it is a little more difficult to select when students are involved.

Interrcorrelations

The intercorrelation data presented in Table 8 illustrates relationships among the variables. There were significant relationships among achievement and two stages of racial identity: internalization and pre-encounter; future goals; and attitudes toward school. The interesting correlation is found among achievement and the racial identity variables. Finding that internalization and

achievement correlate, although a small value, once again, is consistent with Taylor et al.'s (1994) findings that the students who have a clear sense of racial identity were more likely to report higher levels of achievement. The students in the internalization stage are comfortable with being an African American and are accepting of Caucasian Americans.

It was surprising to find that the pre-encounter stage of racial identity development was positively correlated with achievement. In reviewing the correlation, a couple of inferences can be drawn. First, according to Helms and Parham (1981), a student in the pre-encounter stage experiences feelings of inferiority, anxiety, and may tend to have preference for a Caucasian teacher. The student prefers the Caucasian teacher because they feel that he/she is a "better" teacher because of their race. However, this does not indicate that they feel comfortable with the teacher or the teacher makes them feel comfortable. This inference is supported with the data presented in Table 2 that indicated that the majority of the students agreed that their teachers make them feel different. This deduction is also consistent with previous findings in the pilot study by Gladney and Greene (1996) that indicated that cultural differences between the teacher and the student affects motivation in the classroom which is associated with achievement. A possible second inference is that a student in the pre-encounter stage, who feels that he/she are

inferior, may be inclined to work harder since she/he may feel the need to prove themselves.

The positive correlation of achievement with future goals is consistent with previous research that indicates future consequences are significantly correlated with achievement (Miller et al., 1996). The correlation of achievement and attitudes toward school suggests that the more students like school, the more likely they will achieve at higher levels.

In reviewing fictive kinship, it is interesting to note that it was only significantly correlated with immersion. This correlation can be explained by reviewing the definition of this stage. Immersion implies that one is absorbed with their race, has a preference for African Americans, and has a tendency toward anger and hostility. Fictive kinship, also, indicates that there is a preference for one's own race. Although there were no other significant correlations with fictive kinship, the review of peer influence will help to establish an association.

Internalization was positively associated with future goals and positive peer influence. The internalization stage, representing one's acceptance of others and their own identity, implies that in this stage of development individuals will report higher future goals. Positive peer influence correlated with internalization suggests that students who have internalized their identity, are more apt

to be influenced positively by their peers because they are happy with themselves and with others.

Inspection of results with the pre-encounter stage variable revealed that it was negatively correlated with negative peer influence and surprisingly, positively correlated with attitudes toward school. The negative correlation found with negative peer influence implies that an individual who feels inferior or has low self esteem is not likely to be influenced negatively by their peers. A possible explanation for this finding is the student who feels inferior and has low self esteem, would be more likely to stay to him or herself instead of associating with others.

The positive correlation of pre-encounter with attitudes toward school, implies that the student in the pre-encounter stage will report better attitudes toward school. Although this finding is quite puzzling, a possible explanation is that the student that prefers the Caucasian race would report better attitudes toward school if they associate with Caucasian students or with Caucasian teachers. And in my experience at the schools, the majority of the teachers were Caucasian. Another possible explanation, is since most people think of schools as majority culture institutions, the students in the pre-encounter stage would report positive attitudes about school.

Both negative and positive peer influence are correlated with future goals and attitudes toward school. The negative correlation between future goals and negative peer influence suggests that the less negative peer influence, the higher their future goals. The positive correlation between future goals and positive peer influence suggests that the more the students are positively influenced by the peers, the higher their future goals are. The fairly strong positive correlations between attitudes toward school and peer influences supports theoretical claims that relationships with peers have a strong influence on a student's emotional and motivational responses to school (Wentzel, 1991).

Multiple Regression

Prediction of Achievement. In the first regression analysis, attitudes toward school, pre-encounter, future goals, and internalization provided the best predictors for achievement. In examining the reasons that racial identity scores are predictors of achievement, a conclusion can be drawn. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, racial identity development is a unique and complex process for African American adolescents (Alejandro-Wright, 1985; Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992; Porter & Washington, 1979). Pre-encounter and internalization are stages of racial identity development that are adversely related. The individual in the pre-encounter stage,

experiencing feelings of inferiority and low self esteem, would also more than likely have low perceptions of ability. Since high perception of ability has been correlated with higher achievement and is highly predictive of school grades (Greene & Miller, 1993; Bandura, 1986; Epps, 1969), it can be reasoned that the student with low perception of ability will achieve at lower levels. The individual in the internalization stage of racial development, should have a clearer sense of racial identity, which has been correlated with achievement (Taylor et al. 1994).

Prediction of Future Goals. An analysis of the criterion variable, future goals, indicated that internalization, negative peer influence, attitudes toward school, and positive peer influence were the best predictors. It can be reasoned that students who have internalized their racial identity and feel comfortable with who they are will report higher future goals. Negative peer influence is the second strongest predictor of future goals. The students who allow themselves to be influenced negatively by their peers will report lower future goals, or perhaps, report no future goals. Attitudes toward school was the third highest predictor of future goals. Whether a student likes or dislikes school not only influence how well he/she achieve in school, but also if he/she establishes goals for the future.

Surprisingly, fictive kinship was not a predictor of achievement as was found in previous research (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kunjufu, 1988). A possible explanation of why there was not a direct correlation is that there was a difference in how the data were collected, qualitatively versus quantitatively. Although the current study was quantitative to examine a larger sample, it is more difficult to examine a variable like fictive kinship quantitatively. As previously discussed, I believe that when examining a more complex variable, such as fictive kinship, students will be more likely to verbally express their thoughts which would allow for the researcher to do a more in-depth analysis.

Prediction of Attitudes. Since the attitudes scores were significantly associated with achievement, immersion, pre-encounter, future goals, negative and positive peer influence (see Table 8) it was decided to run a regression analysis using attitudes as the independent variable to examine variables that predict attitudes. The analysis that examined attitudes toward school, indicated once again that the racial identity subscales, pre-encounter and immersion, negative and positive peer influence, and future goals provided the best predictors. These findings continue to support the notion that racial identity, which is defined as the quality or manner of one's identification with the

respective racial group and his or her feelings about self as African American (Helm, 1990; Porter & Washington, 1979), is consequential to development for African American adolescents and influences every aspect of their lives.

Limitations of Study

There were three major limitations to the methodology used for this study. Perhaps the most significant limitation is the lack of assurance that fictive kinship was measured in the best possible way. For African American adolescents, fictive kinship is a complex concept that is connected to racial identity, peer influence, and group identity. Developing an instrument that allows for an in-depth measure of this variable is challenging. As suggested earlier, I believe that examining fictive kinship qualitatively would allow for more effective examination of fictive kinship.

A second limitation identified in the study is the scale used to measure racial identity (RIAS, Helms & Parham, 1981). In all of the subscales, the reliability coefficients were lower than anticipated. In two of the subscales, encounter and internalization, the reliability coefficient was quite low. This indicated low internal consistency reliability. In future research, I would try to find more current instruments with current evidence of both reliability and validity.

The third limitation identified, is the self report achievement. The accuracy of the achievement scores would likely be more reliable if the grades were reported by the teachers.

Directions for Future Research

The results of this study have generated additional questions about racial identity. Since racial identity is such a key factor in the development of African Americans, I believe that studies in the future that examine minority cultures and educationally related variables, should be inclusive of racial identity as a variable to obtain more accurate results.

Other future research in the arena of racial identity is warranted. This research should include a more effective measure for racial identity, an examination of high achieving African American students and their racial identity development and attitudes in comparison to low achieving African American students and their racial identity development and attitudes. This research would allow for additional evidence of the influence of racial identity on achievement.

An additional study could specifically investigate fictive kinship and achievement. This study would merit an instrument designed with items that specifically address kinship and its relationship to overall grade point average.

I would propose that a qualitative study may be able to examine these variables more in-depth since it allows the participant to verbally express their thoughts. Several students would be interviewed, both high and low achievers, to investigate how their race influences their achievement.

Implications for Educational Practice

Today, in most classrooms, educators have heard and perhaps studied about peer influence and are aware of students' attitudes toward school. Yet, there are deeper and more complex concepts which appears to have a greater influence on African American students but they are virtually unknown, racial identity and fictive kinship. Racial identity was correlated with all the variables examined in this study. It is important that teachers are aware of the impact of racial identity development on African American adolescents. An exploration of fictive kinship establishes its existence in the African American community. As discussed previously, it is difficult to separate racial identity and fictive kinship because of their elaborate connection and overall influences on the African American adolescent.

To positively impact racial identity and achievement, some have proposed schools with only African Americans, some specifically for boys. Although this may help some, it is not feasible for all students. However, I do believe that

the environment created in these schools can be re-created in other schools. The environment that exists in "African American" schools helps students progress to the internalization stage of racial identity development by celebrating the African American heritage and encouraging students to feel good about themselves as an African American.

The implications from this study for teachers in the classroom include the following. First, knowing that fictive kinship exists could help to bring more of an understanding of the African American culture, which should help students feel more comfortable in the classroom. Secondly, teachers should also know that racial identity is meaningful in the lives of African American students and can influence their achievement, future goals, and attitudes toward school. Last, I believe that through the awareness of fictive kinship and racial identity teachers can create an environment conducive to learning for African American students that utilizes the fictive kinship system and helps them progress to the internalization stage of racial identity.

Conclusions

The developmental process for all adolescents is influenced by many variables, and for African American adolescents the process is more complex because of racial identity, fictive kinship, and peer influence. The present study examined the relationships among measures of fictive kinship, racial identity, attitudes toward school, influence of peers, and future goals among African American high school students. The findings concluded that racial identity is correlated with all of the other variables.

The study also examined which variables, fictive kinship, racial identity, influence of peers, and attitudes toward school predict future goals and achievement. The results indicate that attitudes toward school, racial identity and future goals are the strongest predictors of achievement. From the study, it can be inferred that fictive kinship exists and racial identity is a important part of the lives of African American adolescents. This unique invisible bond that connects African Americans to each other is a meaningful component in the lives of students. However, future research is needed before we can fully understand the nature and role of this construct.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Racial Identity, Attitudes Toward School, Peer Influence,
Future Goals, and Fictive Kinship Questionnaire

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON SURVEY BOOKLET!

This survey is intended to provide an overview of your outlook on race, identity and school. Please answer each question as honestly as you can. Your responses will not influence your grade in any way and they will be confidential. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to provide your gender, race, grade level and your nine weeks grade in your required classes.

Part 1a--Directions: The following statements represent how you feel about your race.

Read each statement and indicate how much you agree with the statement. Use the 6-point scale below and circle your response on the line following the item.

Strongly Disagree = 0 1 2 3 4 Strongly Agree = 5

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. I believe that being Black is a positive experience. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I know through experience what being Black in America means. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I feel unable to involve myself in White experiences and am increasing my involvement in Black experiences. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I believe that large numbers of Blacks are untrustworthy. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I feel an overwhelming attachment to Black people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I involve myself in causes that will help oppressed people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I feel comfortable wherever I am. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I believe that White people look and express themselves better than Blacks. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I feel very uncomfortable around Black people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I feel good about being Black, but do not limit myself to Black activities. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I often find myself referring to White people in negative terms. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I believe that to be Black is not necessarily good. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. I believe that certain aspects of the Black experience apply to me, and others do not. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. I frequently confront the rules made by White people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

Strongly Disagree = 1 2 3 4 Strongly Agree = 5

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 15. I constantly involve myself in Black political and social activities (art shows, political meetings, Black theater, etc.) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. I involve myself in social action and political groups even if there are no other Blacks involved. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I believe that Black people should learn to think and experience life in ways similar to White people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I believe that the world should be interpreted from a Black perspective. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I have changed my style of life to fit my beliefs about Black people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. I feel excitement and joy in Black surroundings. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. I believe that Black people came from a strange, dark, and uncivilized continent. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. People, regardless of their race, have strengths and limitations. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23. I find myself reading a lot of Black literature and thinking about being black. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. I feel guilty and/or anxious about some of the things I believe about Black people. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 25. I believe that a Black person's most effective weapon for solving problems is to become a part of the White person's world. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 26. I speak my mind regardless of the consequences (e.g., being kicked out of school, being imprisoned, being exposed to danger). | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 27. I believe that everything Black is good, and consequently, I limit myself to Black activities. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 28. I am determined to find my Black identity. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 29. I believe that White people are intellectually superior to Blacks. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 30. I believe that because I am Black, I have many strengths. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

Part 2a--Directions: Read each statement and indicate whether you agree that is how you feel about school. Use the 6-point scale below and circle your response on the line following the item.
Strongly Disagree = 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - Strongly Agree = 5

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 31. I like school. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 32. The students at school make me feel different. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 33. My teachers like me. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 34. I get along well with other students. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 35. I feel left out of things in class. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 36. I wish I could go to a different school. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 37. The students at school leave me out of things. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 38. The teachers at school make me feel different. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 39. The students at school like me. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 40. I don't like to be called on in class. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 41. My classmates make fun of me. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

Part 3--Directions: Read each statement and indicate whether you agree that is how you feel about the sentence. These sentences are designed to find how you generally feel about the importance of success in school. Use the 6-point scale below and circle your response on the line following the item.

Strongly Disagree = 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - Strongly Agree = 5

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 42. I do the work assigned in school because my achievement plays a role in reaching my future goals. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 43. I do the work assigned work in school because my performance is important for becoming the person I want to be. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 44. I do the work assigned in school because my achievement is important for attaining my dreams. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 45. I do the work assigned in school because learning the content plays a role in reaching my future goals. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |

Strongly Disagree = 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - Strongly Agree = 5

46. I do the work assigned in school because understanding this content is important for becoming the person I want to be. 0 1 2 3 4 5

47. I do the work assigned in school because learning this material is important for attaining my dreams. 0 1 2 3 4 5

Part 4 -- Directions: Read each statement and indicate whether you agree that is how you feel about the sentence. These sentences are designed to find how you generally feel about your friends at school. Use the 6-point scale below and circle your response on the line following the item.

Strongly Disagree = 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - Strongly Agree = 5

48. I associate getting good grades with "acting White". 0 1 2 3 4 5

49. I associate speaking proper grammar with "acting White". 0 1 2 3 4 5

50. I associate getting good grades with "acting Black". 0 1 2 3 4 5

51. I fit in with the other students in the Black culture. 0 1 2 3 4 5

52. I fit in with the other students in the Black culture because I don't care about getting good grades. 0 1 2 3 4 5

53. My friends encourage me to study. 0 1 2 3 4 5

54. I encourage my friends to study. 0 1 2 3 4 5

55. My friends enjoy school. 0 1 2 3 4 5

56. When I get good grades I like to tell my friends. 0 1 2 3 4 5

57. When I get good grades my friends make fun of me. 0 1 2 3 4 5

58. My friends don't encourage me to do well in school. 0 1 2 3 4 5

59. I don't encourage my friends to study. 0 1 2 3 4 5

60. My friends dislike school. 0 1 2 3 4 5

61. When I get bad grades my friends make fun of me. 0 1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree = 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - Strongly Agree = 5

62. When I get bad grades I like to tell my friends.

0 1 2 3 4 5

Part 4--Directions: Check the statement that you agree with most.

63. Identify most with (check one)

___ other Black students

___ non Black students

___ other students, Black and White

___ Black people in general

64. When I need to take sides on an issue, I most often will side with (check one)

___ other Black students

___ non Black students

___ other students, Black and White

___ Black people in general

65. How would you describe your closest friends? (check one)

___ other Black students

___ non Black students

___ other students, Black and White

___ Black people in general

66. How would you describe the people who influence you the most? (check one)

___ other Black students

___ non Black students

___ other students, Black and White

___ Black people in general

Part 5 -- Directions: Read each situation carefully, and then indicate your response to each situation in the space provided beneath it. There are no right and wrong answers.

67. Situation 1

Suppose two students are competing for the position of class president, one African American male and one White male. The African American candidate, however, has made a number of joking sexist remarks that may show a trace of sexism. On the other hand, the White candidate is clearly non-sexist and committed to advancing the cause of women as well as the cause of ethnic minorities.

Which candidate would you support?

Black _____

White _____

68. Situation 2

Suppose there was a position opened to hire a new teacher at school. There are two teachers who are interviewing for the job, one Black and one White. Both of these teachers are really good and have a reputation for being nice.

Which teacher would you choose for the job?

Black _____

White _____

69. Situation 3

Suppose that some of your Black friends invite you to a Kwanzaa party. Suppose your other friends want you to attend a party at school where there will be a diverse population.

Which party would you attend?

Kwanzaa _____

School _____

70. **Situation 4**

Suppose that a Black principal was accused of being unfair and too harsh to White students. The student council wants to get a petition circulated that would call for the district office to investigate the charges.

Who would you support?

Black principal _____

Student council _____

71. **Situation 5**

Suppose that two students were running for homecoming queen, one Black and one White. The Black student is very studious and a loner. The White student is also very studious and hangs around with both Black and White students.

Which one would you vote for?

Black student _____

White student _____

72. **Situation 6**

Suppose you are a student judge for the debate contest at your school. When there is a tie between the Black and White student you are asked to decide the winner.

Which student would you choose?

Black _____

White _____

Student Information

Gender Male_____ Female_____

Grade level 9___ 10___ 11___ 12___

Race Hispanic_____ American Indian_____ Asian_____
African American_____ Caucasian American_____
Diverse race (please specify) _____

Directions: Please indicate your semester grade that you have received for each subject listed below.

English _____

Math (Algebra, Calculus, Geometry) _____

History (Geography, World, Govern.) _____

Science _____

Appendix B
Information and Consent Forms

INFORMED CONSENT

Research Conducted at the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus.

You are being asked to participate in a study that is being done by Lawana Gladney, a graduate student of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Oklahoma. Participation will mean filling out a survey. The survey will ask you about your racial identity and attitudes towards school.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. There will be no penalty should you decide not to participate. However, we believe your participation will provide valuable insight to how students feel about school and encourage you to participate. You will be asked to voluntarily report your semester grades in your required courses. Should you change your mind about participation once you have begun, you may withdraw at any point without penalty. You should know there is no psychological or physical risk associated with your involvement in this project.

Your answers to the survey will be completely confidential and will not influence your grade in any way. You will be identified by number, and no information about your individual answers will be given to teachers, school officials, or anyone else.

Please indicate below whether you wish to participate in this project, then sign your name.

YES

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Research Conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus.

Your child is being asked to participate in a study that is being done by Lawana Gladney, a graduate student of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Oklahoma. Participation will mean filling out a survey. The survey will ask your child about his/her racial identity and his/her attitudes towards school.

The purpose of this study is to identify possible motivational factors that contribute to their performance in the classroom. There is no risk to participants. The benefit is that this knowledge of motivational factors may enhance instruction and achievement in all classes.

Taking part of this study is voluntary. In addition to having your permission to participate in this study, your child will be asked to give his or her own consent. Your child may cease participation in the study at any time without penalty. Your child will be identified by a number, and no individual answers will be given to teachers, school officials, or anyone else. All information obtained about your child will be kept confidential.

Please indicate below whether your child has permission to participate in this study, sign this form and return it to the school within the week. Thank you for supporting research to improve Oklahoma schools.

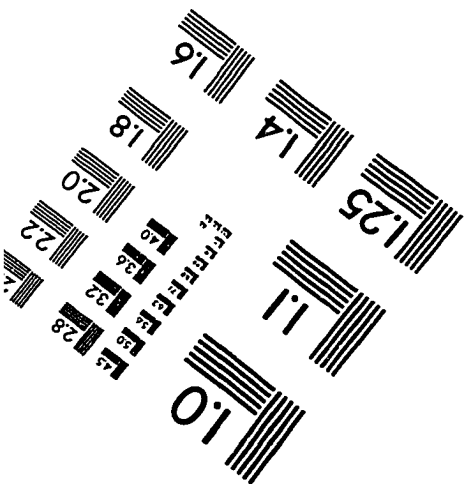
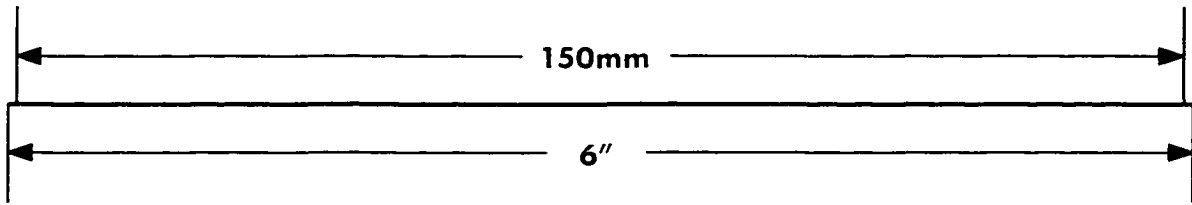
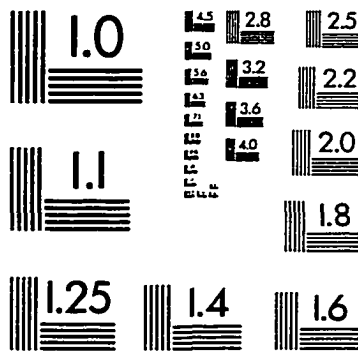
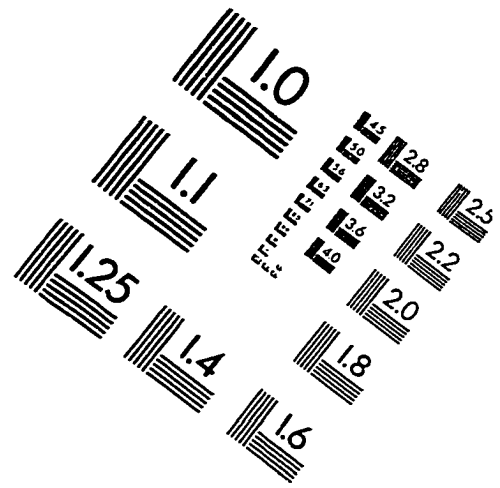
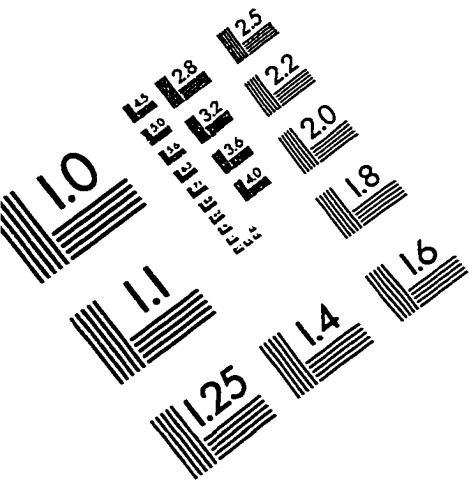
YES my child has permission to participate in the study

Child's name (please print) _____

Sign Here

Date

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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Rochester, NY 14609 USA
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Fax: 716/288-5989

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