



The Journal of Education Research and Interdisciplinary Studies



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❧ From the Office of the Executive Director and Founder ❧



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Ain't I A Woman? African American Women's Identity as Student Athletes at Predominately White Institutions

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Introduction

“Ain't I a woman” is the title of popular speech given by the historical figure, Sojourner Truth. This speech was delivered at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio and criticized many of the antifeminist arguments that occurred during slavery (“Sojourner Truth,” n.d.). Although this speech was delivered in 1851, it continues to serve as a symbol of women's rights and embodies the definition of strong women. Thus, this paper incorporates this title in order to discuss the interesting identities that African American women encounter within the sport environment. Athletics have become one of America's favorite pastimes. From professional sports to T-ball, athletics has captured the hearts of Americans of all ages. Many children grow up having sport icons as their role models as they strive to emulate the success of their favorite sport player. However, when looking at the media today, there are some common trends within sports. For example, sports like the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA), which are sports occupied by men, dominate the American culture. Even at the collegiate level, men's sports are presented as the main attraction. The government became aware of the imbalance in gender-related activities and ultimately created Title IX a law passed in 1972 requiring gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program that receives federal funding (National Women's Law Center, 2012). Athletics are not specifically mentioned in the law, but are considered an educational program and therefore covered by the law (National Women's Law Center, 2012).

Since Title IX legislation has come into effect, there has been an increase in the number of female participants in sport. However, there still appears to be a discrepancy between certain races and their levels of sport involvement. In 2012, the National Women's Law Center indicated that Girls of Color play sports at a far lower rate than White girls. For example, from 2010-2011 the number of females playing sports was 3.2 million and of this population 64% were African American and Latino/a and 76% were White (National Women's Law Center, 2012).

Additionally, Sellers, Chavous and Brown (2002) reported that many African American children might assume that sports are considered one of the few avenues of upward mobility for African Americans in American society because sports give African American students an opportunity to be judged on their ability instead of their skin color. Although African American girls and women are underrepresented in just about every traditional venue for upward socioeconomic mobility in our society (e.g. education), they are significantly overrepresented in particular collegiate sports such as basketball and track (Sellers et al., 2002). The 2013-2014 NCAA Student Athlete Ethnicity Report stated that 32.6% of women participating in basketball at the Division I level were African American and 20.1% of women track athletes were African American (NCAA, 2014).

According to Rhoden (2012), White women play sports at a higher rate due to the fact that their presence in sports occurs across more sports rather than just basketball and track. African American women are all but missing in lacrosse (2.2%), swimming (2.0%), soccer (5.3%) and softball (8.2%). African American women also have an underrepresented rising presence in volleyball (11.6%). In the most recent 2013-2014 figures, White women student athletes comprised 65.7%, 70.2%, and 81% of all women athletes in Divisions I, II, and III respectively (Lapchick, 2015). In contrast, Lapchick reported that African American's comprised 15%, 12.8%, and 5.5% of all women athletes in Divisions I, II, and III respectively.

While all athletes have to balance multiple responsibilities (i.e. being a student and an athlete) it seems that when these identities intersect with race it can cause additional stress for minority athletes. Sellers, Kuperminc, and Damas (1998) studied the overall experiences of African American collegiate athletes and determined that the time demands associated with intercollegiate athletics made it difficult for athletes to become involved in student activities outside of athletics, which has been associated with positive student development. Sellers et al. surveyed 154 African American women athletes and reported that integration within the university community is positively associated with better academic performance for minority college students. In their study Sellers et al. explained that for both African American women and men, the racial climate of the college environment might also affect their feelings of integration and subsequent behavior and academic achievement. They discovered that even accounting for background differences (i.e. SES, high school GPA, SAT score), African American women student athletes' college life experiences differed in meaningful ways from both White women student athletes and African American men student athletes. For example, Sellers et al. (1998), reported that African American women athletes were similar to African American men athletes in terms of their social background and SAT scores, but differed in their high school and college GPA's. This finding indicated that African American women student athlete's satisfaction with their academic performance might be linked to relatively high expectations to succeed within the classroom. Results also demonstrated that African American student athletes were more satisfied with life in general than African American nonathletes (Sellers et al., 1998). This finding might be a result of African American women athletes believing that their athletic status provides them with a greater opportunity to learn social skills, gain opportunities, and be more assertive. Additionally, unlike nonathletes, collegiate athletes enter college with an automatic support system (i.e. their sport team) and successful integration and acceptance on a team may increase overall life satisfaction particularly for minority students.

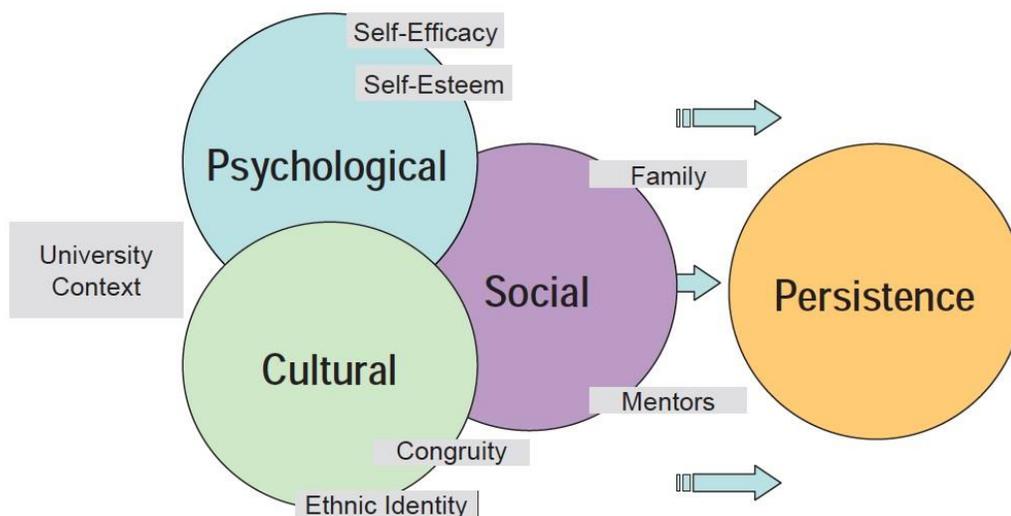
Purpose. This literature review will explore the experiences of African American women student athletes to understand their unique experiences and how to better meet the needs of this student population using Gloria and Rodriquez's (2000) psychosociocultural (PSC) framework. This literature review organizes key factors related to the experiences of African American women athletes within this framework by exploring three aspects of an individual's identity: psychological (e.g. self-beliefs, attitudes, perceptions), social (e.g., networks, connections, role models, mentors), and cultural (e.g., values validation, meaningfulness; Gloria & Rodriquez, 2000). This literature review will explore how these intersecting identities might influence the sport experience for African American women collegiate athletes. It will also provide suggestions for the application of PSC framework for helping professionals as well as athletic departments to provide services for minority athletes and increase success rates.

Understanding the Experiences of African American Women Collegiate Athletes within the PSC Framework

The PSC framework was originally created to investigate cultural phenomena that may contribute to persistence behaviors and psychological functioning, particularly for Latino/a undergraduate students (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). The PSC framework (see Figure 1) takes into account contextual and social factors that influence perseverance of students of color within the college setting. The PSC framework can also provide a framework for designing recommendations for administrative personnel and counseling center staff who work with students of color as a means to promote greater persistence and enhanced psychological functioning (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).

This framework has been extended beyond the experiences of Latino/a undergraduate students to explore the experiences of all students of color within a university setting. For example, Gloria, Robinson-Kurpius, Hamilton, and Wilson (1999) tested the PSC framework by examining the self-beliefs (psychological), social support (sociological), and comfort with the institution (cultural) of 98 African American undergraduates. Results from hierarchical regression analyses provided evidence that the psychological, social, and cultural variables predicted persistence decisions in African American undergraduates. Ultimately, African American students who made fewer nonpersistent decisions experienced greater cultural fit with the academic institution, reported greater social support from family and friends, and had higher levels of self-esteem (Gloria et al., 1999). Given this framework had already been used to explore the experiences of African American students, this framework could also be applied to the experiences of African American women athletes to provide a comprehensive lens from which to study their psychological well-being at a predominately White institution.

Figure 1:
Psychosocialcultural (PSC) Framework



(Castellanos & Gloria, 2007)

Social

This section will explore social factors that impact the experiences of African American women athletes at predominately White institutions. In particular, this section focuses on constructs such as perceived isolation on campus, and social supports for athletes (their team, their families, and their religion).

Isolation. Previous literature has revealed that collegiate athletes may experience periods of isolation within their college environment as they attempt to balance their roles of being a student and an athlete (Bruening, Armstrong, & Pastore, 2005). Carodine, Almond and Gratto (2001) stated “the disconnection to campus that this [the level of commitment] creates can result in a negative experience for the student” (p. 20). Carodine et al. suggested that institutions should create supportive environments for student athletes to reduce feelings of isolation on campus. As racial minorities at a predominately White institution, African American women might encounter additional episodes of isolation. For example, Harmon (2009) indicated that periods of isolation might be intensified when African American women athletes feel as though they cannot fully express parts of their racial identity or do not feel like they are receiving adequate social support.

Thomas, Love, Roan-Belle, Brown, and Garriott (2009) stated that acknowledging barriers that may exist for African American women within higher education settings, such as at predominately White institutions, and ensuring culturally relevant institutional supports are in place have been proven to provide empowering and validating experiences for African American women. When supportive climate factors are present, it allows students to focus more on their studies and their athletic endeavors rather than issues such as discrimination, racism, and sexism, which if left unnoticed may have decreased their motivation to perform well in school (Thomas et al., 2009).

Team Support. Due to the rigorous demands and commitment of a collegiate sport, most athletes’ social support networks consist primarily of people associated with their particular sport. Although, African American women athletes might receive social support by their teammates, the lack of diversity on the coaching staff might impact their athletic experience. Even after the passage of Title IX, it appears women coaching women’s teams still do not represent the majority of coaches in the women’s sports. During the 2013-2014 season, women only held 38.2% of the head coaching jobs for women’s sports in Division I, which was a 0.5% decrease from the 2012-2013 season (Lapchick, 2015). In Division I women’s basketball, African-American women head coaches held 10.6% of the positions in 2013-14 and African- American men held 3.7% of the positions in 2013-14 for a combined percentage of 14.3% African American coaches, which is a significant decrease from the 20.6% that was reported in 2012-13. Nonetheless, the 10.6% of African American women coaches does not compare to the 51.1% of the African-American women student-athletes who played basketball (Lapchick, 2015).

For some African-American women athletes, being highly visible and not having a role model can also add stress and anxiety to their lives (Cokley & Helm, 2007). Therefore, having same-sex role coaches could be beneficial for women athletes. For example, Officer and Rosenfeld (1985) examined the effects of sport team membership and coaches’ gender on the self-disclosing behavior of high school female athletes. They found that although the athletes disclosed the same amount of information to their respective men and women coaches, women athletes perceived their male coach primarily as an authority figure whereas more intimate conversations were shared with female

coaches. Officer and Rosenfeld also reviewed several studies indicating that female athletes are more likely than their male counterparts to disclose personal feelings to coaches whom they perceive as nonthreatening. It is likely that female athletes may be more dependent than male athletes on positive communication with their coaches (Officer & Rosenfeld, 1985).

Another study sought to determine if there were racial differences in the amount of support that students receive while playing a sport, specifically basketball (Harris, 1994). Using a sample from two male high school basketball leagues, 116 African Americans, 59 Whites, and 12 “others” were selected to complete questionnaires that assessed their sport involvement, social support, and sport aspirations. Unlike previous studies that indicated familial support was a major influence for African Americans, results indicated that African Americans were more often encouraged to participate in sports by nonparent significant others (teachers, coaches, friends) than Whites (25% compared to 5% respectively). It was also found that the type of school (private versus public) influenced social support such that African American males in private schools were more supported by their mothers and teachers than White males. Lastly, results indicated that African Americans who attended private schools were more likely to receive support for sport careers than White athletes particularly from parents, coaches, and friends (Harris, 1994). Since this study was conducted using a sample of African American males, future research should be done to analyze if this information holds true for African American females.

Familial Support. Previous studies have also supported the view that parents play a role in the transmission of stereotypes and gender roles to their children (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Fredricks and Eccles used the Eccles expectancy-value model to assess whether parent socialization impacts their child’s perceived competence, value, and participation in a sport. They also sought to determine if a child’s gender was related to three aspects of parent socialization (i.e. role modeling, sharing beliefs, providing emotional support). For their sample, Fredricks and Eccles used a group of primarily Caucasian mothers and fathers and their 2nd, 3rd, and 5th graders from a larger study to complete questionnaires across a year. Results indicated that compared to parents of girls, parents of boys hold higher perceptions of their child’s sport competence and consider sport as more important, even after controlling for children’s actual physical ability. Moreover, parents seem to provide fewer encouragements and sport opportunities to girls than boys (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Further studies should be conducted to assess whether these findings could be applied to African American youth.

Melendez and Melendez (2010) surveyed 27 African American female college students to assess how parental attachment affected college adjustment. The results indicated the affective quality of African American students’ relationships with their parents had a meaningful impact on the students’ success in coping with the educational demands of college (e.g. keeping up with academic work). They also discovered that a relationship with their parents improved their physical and psychological states as well as the degree to which they experienced general psychological distress and/or somatic problems in college (Melendez & Melendez, 2010).

Researchers have also discovered that household configuration and socioeconomic status might impact an African American athletes academic success in college (Sellers, 1992). For example, a survey was distributed to 409 male basketball players and 917 football players across 42 Division I institutions to investigate if racial differences contribute to the academic success of student athletes. Results indicated that a mother’s income seemed to influence the academic performance of African

American athletes more than a father's income. This finding might be possible due to the significant number of African American children who are raised in a single- mother home. According to Sellers, a mother's income can impact the educational opportunities afforded to African American children since an income can affect the quality of schools a student attends.

Additionally, another study also investigated the perceptions of social support minority student athletes receive at a predominately White institution (Thompson, 2010). For this study, eleven minority student athletes (five male and six female) were recruited to participate in individual semi-structured interviews. Using qualitative measures allowed the researcher to gather information pertaining to the types of social support that this population receives. Results suggested emotional support, informational support, tangible assistance, task appreciation support, and esteem support from family members were critical for minority student athletes. Emotional support from family members was beneficial during challenging experiences (e.g. adjusting to college) and informational support encouraged students during times of uncertainty. It also seemed important for the families of minority athletes to attend games as a means of showing their support. The sample also indicated that receiving esteem support from their families was important because it gave the athletes hope and perseverance. Lastly, in addition to the scholarships many student athletes receive in college, it was found that receiving additional tangible (i.e. monetary) support from family members, especially during difficult times, could be beneficial (Thompson, 2010). Overall, these means of support for minority athletes tend to make them feel better about themselves and their athletic performance.

Religious Support. Previous research has shown that another important means for support for African American women is religion. Religious activity and religious organizations often represent ways in which people find social support and a feeling of belonging. Although social support has been found to make a profound impact on health, the uniqueness of African American religious experiences could have special benefits to health (Ferraro & Koch, 1994). Ferraro and Koch reported that religion serves as a social support for African Americans and the link between religion and health is stronger for African Americans than Whites. Additionally, data indicated that nearly eight-in-ten African-Americans (79%) say religion is very important in their lives. Results also indicated that most African American women (84%) say religion is very important to them, and 59% say they attend religious services at least once a week. No group of men or women from any other racial or ethnic background exhibited comparably high levels of religious observance (Ferraro & Koch, 1994).

Conclusions. It is evident that three main social variables may contribute to an African American woman's athletic experience: collegiate environment, support systems, and representations in society can impact their experience as a student-athlete. For example, if an athletic environment is not supportive, particularly for African American athletes, than the athlete may feel isolated on campus and have to discover additional methods of support. To navigate the experience of being an African American women athlete, it seems that this population seeks support from athletic teams, families, and religious affiliations. These social factors may be impacted by the unique intersection of race and gender for African American female athletes.

Cultural

African American women athletes may be exposed to several cultural variables that could impact their experience at a predominately White institution. The intersection of race, gender, and occupation (i.e., being a student athlete) can create unique experiences for this population. Therefore,

this section explores the intersectionality of identities for African American women athletes such as their racial identity, gender identity and their athletic identity. This section also seeks to provide a review of literature about the influence of the media, the idea of hyper- masculinity as well as the objectification of African American women.

Racial Identity. African American women have to contend with historically rooted stereotypes of African American women athletes as masculine and sexually promiscuous (Liberti, 1999). They have wrestled with the challenge of “double jeopardy” or “double consciousness” since slavery due to the reality that African American women have encountered multiple oppressions through race and gender (Collins, 1998). Double consciousness was a term coined by W.E.B Du Bois referring to the “internal conflict in the African American individual between what was ‘African’ and what was ‘American’” (Bruce 1992, p. 301). Since this time, African American women have had to overcome sexist and racist images of African American women such as the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire (Thomas, Hoxha, & Hacker, 2013). The Mammy is portrayed as an obese and dark-skinned woman, who is also nurturing, selfless, and a good problem solver. The Sapphire is seen as nagging, controlling of men, loud, and argumentative while the Jezebel is perceived as seductive, sexy, and always wanting sex.

In a social environment where a particular racial group membership is emphasized, such as at a predominately White institution, the development of a racial identity will occur in some form in every student of color. Given that African American women athletes undertake a range of experiences and strategies to lessen their marginalization, it is important to understand how African American women athletes navigate their racial identity development. According to Cross’s 1971 model of African American racial identity development, there are five stages in the process, identified as Preencounter (characterized by conscious or unconscious devaluing of African Americanness while concurrently valuing White values and ways), Encounter (characterized by two events a) the individual encounters a profound crisis or event that challenges his or her previous mode of thinking and behaving b) the individual begins to reinterpret the world), Immersion/Emersion (characterized by an intense involvement of African American culture), Internalization (characterized by the acceptance of one’s African Americanness), and Internalization/Commitment (characterized by the individuals commitment toward social change, social justice, and civil rights; Sue & Sue 2013). Cross’s Racial Identity Model has influenced other scholars in higher education to explore identity for its students. For example, Banks (1976) created a five-stage model for African American identity similar to Cross’s which is composed of 1) ethnic psychological captivity, 2) ethnic encapsulation stage, 3) ethnic identity clarification, 4) bi-ethnicity, and 5) multi-ethnicity. Stage four and five, like that of focus on the African American students’ ability to function within the dominant cultures society, numerous cultures, and their own cultural environment. Therefore, PWIs, counselors, administrators, and coaches must be able to understand the importance of race identification by enabling African American athletes’ the opportunity to adjust as a subculture within the university populace.

Using the stages of Cross’s Racial Identity Scale, Elion, Slaney, Wang, and French (2012) examined the constructs of perfectionism, academic achievement, self-esteem, and racial identity among 219 African American college students. By using the Almost Perfect Scale – Revised (APS-R) three clusters were created that represented adaptive perfectionists (i.e. individuals who are striving toward perfection), maladaptive perfectionists (i.e. individuals who self-criticize over perceived imperfection), and nonperfectionists. These three groups were compared on their scores on the

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D), the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS), and Grade Point Average (GPA). On the racial identity scales, maladaptive perfectionists had high scores on Pre-Encounter Self Hatred and Immersion-Emersion Anti-White subscales than adaptive perfectionists. Additionally, high Standards (i.e. high standards and expectations one has for her or his performance) scores were positively associated with being multiculturally inclusive (i.e. open to other cultures while holding an acceptance of being African American as a foundation). Additionally, high Discrepancy (i.e. the degree to which one perceives oneself as failing to meet her or his standards) scores were associated with stages where race is more salient, such as Preencounter Self-Hatred, Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, and Afrocentric. Results also indicated that adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists did not have significantly different GPA's; however, they did discover that GPA was positively associated with Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive and negatively correlated with Pre-Encounter Miseducation (i.e. stereotypical views about other Blacks; Elion et al., 2012).

In addition, Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, and Harpalani (2001) surveyed 562 African American youth and discovered that Black students with more Eurocentric and Immersion racial identities showed lower academic performance, whereas high academic achievement was associated with high Afrocentric and low Eurocentric identities. Therefore, results from these studies, illustrated that African Americans who positively identified with their racial group have high scores on measures of academic achievement (Spencer et al., 2000; Elion et al., 2012).

As previously mentioned, there have been other scales developed that investigate racial identity. For example, Chavous, Smalls, Rivas-Drake, Griffin, and Cogburn (2008) conducted a quantitative study with 410 African American adolescents to identify relationships among racial identity, school-based racial discrimination experiences, and academic engagement outcomes. Their study intended to analyze if racial identity could be used as a protective factor against episodes of perceived racial discrimination. Results indicated that adolescent girls with high racial centrality were protected against the negative impact of peer discrimination on school importance and academic self-concept. In this article, racial centrality is defined as “the extent to which youths view their racial group as a defining part of their self-concepts” (Chavous et al., 2008, p. 639). This term originated as a subscale of the Multidimensional Model of Black Identity (MMBI) which was created to explore how an individual's racial identity might academic success by analyzing three scales (centrality, regard, and ideology; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). On the MMBI, centrality is defined as “the extent to which a person normatively defines her or himself with regard to race,” ideology is considered an “individual's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes with regard to the way she or he feels that members of the race should act” and regard is “a person's affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race” (Sellers et al., 1997, p. 806). Therefore, African American girls may show resilience in racially hostile schooling environments due to cultural socialization from families and communities emphasizing higher educational expectations. On the other hand, for adolescent girls who presented low levels of racial centrality, peer discrimination related positively to academic self-concept (Chavous et al., 2008). They also suggested that girls with low racial centrality are not likely to view race as a self-defining factor and viewed the discrimination as directed towards the entire racial group, rather than the individual.

Additionally, Lawrence (2005) conducted a qualitative study exploring the experiences of eight African American athletes. Interviews were used to gather a deeper understanding of race and race discrimination and how it influenced the careers of African American athletes. From the interviews,

five major themes emerged that reflected African American athletes' experiences of race in sport such as being hurt, outrage and shock, team togetherness, being empowered, and differences. Results indicated that African American athletes, regardless of gender, are constantly aware of their visible differences and were hurt, shocked and outraged by the racial incidents they experience on campus. Results also indicated that athletes are aware of the contradictions/expectations that are present among certain people (e.g. coaches, fans, teammates, and administrators) and certain places (e.g. classrooms, in the athletic arena, restaurants). This demonstrated how the perceptions of a student athlete might change from the classroom to the athletic arena (Lawrence, 2005).

Another study also assessed racial identity by using quantitative measures to explore the relationships among Africentric cultural values, self-esteem, perceived social support satisfaction, and life satisfaction (Constantine, Alleyene, Wallace, & Franklin-Jackson, 2006). Researchers surveyed 147 African American girls and found that individuals who endorsed more Africentric values and viewed their racial identity positively had higher self-esteem. This finding suggested that African American girls who adopt more Eurocentric values might have lower self-esteem. Additionally, African American girls with high levels of Africentric values were related to higher levels of social support satisfaction. This might be possible given that "communalism" is an important aspect of Africentric values since many African Americans feel a sense of responsibility for one another and the community (p. 150). Lastly, African American women with high Africentric values also had higher life satisfaction. Researchers stated, "that the more African American girls possess a value system that positively reflects their cultural group orientation, the more likely they are to feel satisfied with their lives" (Constantine et al., 2006, p.150).

Based on the previous studies, it appears that African American women athletes who have a better understanding of their racial identity might be able to handle the challenges of being a minority student at a predominately White institution better than athletes who are still learning and exploring their racial identity. Those minority athletes who view race as a critical component of their identity are likely to have resources to overcome episodes of racial discrimination and use their identity as a tool to be successful in both their sport and in the classroom.

Gender Identity. Cokley and Moore (2007) surveyed 274 African American college students to examine the degree to which gender moderates the relationship between ethnic identity and academic achievement as well as examine whether psychological disengagement (i.e. devaluing academic success) mediates gender differences in the academic achievement. Psychological disengagement is defined as the detachment of self-esteem from outcomes in a particular area (as cited in Cokley & Moore, 2007). For this study, psychological disengagement can decrease academic achievement when a student's self-esteem becomes disconnected from their grades. Results indicated that African American women high in ethnic identity experienced an increase in GPA. Results also showed that African American women do not devalue academic success more than African American men. Cokley and Moore suggested this finding might be accurate as African American women may be exposed to more African American women role models in the classroom than their male counterparts. High racial identity may also be related to high academic achievement for women because African American women do not experience the cool-pose culture that is experienced by African American men. The cool-pose culture indicates that many male Black youth derive respect, self-esteem, and a sense of identity from non-academically oriented activities related to pop culture and athletics, whereas this is not the same for African American women (Cokley & Moore, 2007).

Thomas, Hacker, and Hoxha (2011) also analyzed the racial identity of African American women by researching dyadic focus groups of 17 African American women between the ages of 15-21 to assess their meaning and salience of gendered racial identity. Results revealed that African American women reflected a greater degree of saliency for issues of gendered race more often than experiences of race and gender as single constructs, suggesting high levels of salience to the intersection of race and gender in their identity. Participants also discussed the influence of negative images and stereotypes of Black women and their need to overcome them and engage in the process of self-determination (Thomas et al., 2011).

Researchers have also explored the ways gender roles, racial identity, and self-esteem impact African American adolescents (Buckley & Carter, 2005). Their study consisted of 200 African American high school adolescents who completed questionnaires that assessed factors that might influence positive self-esteem. Results indicated gender role orientation impacted self-esteem such that African American girls who presented more masculine or androgynous (i.e. “both masculine and feminine characteristics”) gender roles reported higher self-esteems (p. 656). Additionally, they discovered that girls with high racial identity scores (i.e. identified as pro-Black or pro all racial groups) had more self-esteem. This finding suggests that African American girls who are proud of their race tend to have higher self-esteem. Lastly, gender orientation and racial identity were related due to African American girls who scored higher on the racial identity scale also presented a more androgynous gender role (Buckley & Carter, 2005).

Athletic Identity. The psychological well-being of African American women athletes can be influenced by the challenges of not only grappling with the development of their cultural and racial identity, but also their athletic identity. However, the development of an athletic identity can be problematic for some African Americans in an athletic context where African American women athletes have to cope with the prejudices and discrimination that can be associated with being a woman and being African American. Therefore, African American women athletes are not only aware of the historical gendered stereotypes of African American women, but also of the stereotypes of being an African American athlete.

Stereotype threat occurs in a situation where there is an expectation that one may be judged on the basis of social group membership and there is a negative stereotype about one’s social identity group (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Hively and El-Alayli (2012) conducted a study with female and male tennis and basketball college athletes to determine the effect of stereotype threat on women’s athletic performance. The participants were randomly placed into either the threat or no-threat condition and were asked to perform either a basketball or tennis task. The researchers were able to manipulate threat by informing the threat group that their task was an assessment of their natural ability while the no-threat group were told that men and women perform equally (Hively & El-Alayli, 2012). After the sport task, participants were asked to complete a survey assessing gender differences on the various tasks that were performed during the study. Results indicated that women often underperformed at an athletic task when told that it was measuring their natural ability. Therefore, it appears that when women are faced with stereotype threat it negatively impacts their athletic performance. (Hively & El-Alayli, 2014).

Hyper-masculinity in African American Women. As previously mentioned, African American women athletes are typically seen in sports such as basketball and track. These sports typically

require a certain body type, which has been defined as non-lean. The term non-lean implies that an athlete is stockier and possesses more muscle mass (Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003). The attraction to non-lean sports for African American women also could present another barrier for African American women athletes known as hyper-masculinity. Hyper-masculinity is a social phenomenon that makes African American women athletes objects of ridicule, weakness, inferiority, decoration, and erotically desirable, yet transgressive (McKay & Johnson, 2008). Hyper-masculinity is a psychological term for the exaggeration of male behavior (Hyper-masculinity, 2013). There are many stereotypes and assumptions that are made about African American women athletes. For example, there is the assumption that if you are good at a particular sport then you are a lesbian. There is a common assumption that the more masculine a woman athlete is, the better they will perform (Liberti, 1999). In a 2014 online article by Paul Thomson, he reported that the president of the Russian Tennis Federation, Shamil Tarpishev, made racist comments about women's tennis superstars Venus and Serena Williams, which caused him to be removed from his position for one year by the Women's Tennis Association and fined \$25,000. Thomson reported that Tarpishev referred to the women as "the Williams brothers," saying it's "frightening when you look at them" during a talk show interview. It appeared that the root of Tarpishev's comments builds off of a history of oppression for African American women as they have been historically desexualized to the point of masculinization or hypersexualized and deemed "exotic" or "other worldly." Therefore, it seems that Tarpishev's comments were not simply about the Williams sisters' size or body types but, rather, directly linked to their race (Thomson, 2014).

Prior to the aforementioned situation, Serena Williams had encountered another situation in which an individual critiqued her physique. In a 2012 online article by Lucette Jefferson, she reported about when Caroline Wozniacki, a Danish professional tennis player, stuffed her chest and shorts with padding to imitate Serena. Jefferson indicated that Wozniacki was received by laughter as she walked on the court with larger breasts and bottom. Although Serena Williams is the top ranked women's tennis player in the world, her importance was reduced to her body shape simply because her physique did not match the majority of her fellow women tennis players. This recent sport event parallels the lived reality of Sara Baartman, a South African woman who lived during the 1800's. In her article, Tillet (2009) retells Baartman's story by describing how Baartman's "Hottentot" body was displayed around Europe. Tillet explains how a British surgeon found Baartman after becoming fascinated with her large buttocks and elongated labia, and she ultimately became a spectacle for people around England.

Media Influence. This idea of being highly visible can be a result of the consistent attention that athletes receive from the media. Ruggiero and Lattin (2008) indicated that despite the number of African American women in collegiate sports, the combination of predominately White media and White coaching staff essentially creates an environment of racialized and gendered representations. For example, Bruening et al. (2005) conducted focus groups with 12 African American female athletes to examine their sport participant patterns. Results of their qualitative study suggested that African-American women athletes' voices were silenced in sport by the media. Bruening et al., referred to the "silencing" that African-American women experience in sport as a lack of voice and also as underrepresentation. Although African American women and men are over-represented as sports figures, Bruening et al. suggested that the portrayal of this image with the exclusion of other positive images could lead to the stereotyping of African American individuals. Through focus groups, participants of this study indicated that the media tends to mainly show African-American women athletes playing basketball or track, and they are seldom shown on television playing other

sports. Results indicated that a lack of exposure and opportunities afforded to African-American women in sport (specifically in non-revenue producing sports) aid in silencing African-American women (Bruening et al., 2005). Ultimately, the media seems critical in the lives of young children because if young African-American women do not see very many African American women playing certain sports, they are not likely to participate in that sport.

Additionally, Ward (2004) surveyed 156 African American high school students (70% female) to analyze the ways media exposure might impact the self-esteem and racial self-esteem of African American youth. Results indicated that exposure to sports programming and music videos predicted lower self-esteem for African American youth. Ward elaborated on this finding by suggesting that sports figures and music artists are typically admired individuals for African American youth. Therefore, it is possible that the sexual desirability, wealth, and lifestyles of these figures may encourage upward social comparisons, making Black youth feel inadequate by comparison (Ward, 2004).

In their study to analyze whether racial and gender stereotyping exist in college basketball announcing, Eastman and Billings (2005) conducted an analysis of 1156 descriptors in sportscaster commentary during 66 televised men's and women's college basketball games. Results of their study indicated that traditional prejudices about African American athletes (e.g. being naturally athletic or lacking leadership abilities) persist in sports announcing despite changing times and the increased number of minority and women announcers in college basketball. Results also indicated that announcers favored White women over African American women in regard to athletic consonance (i.e. the notion that everything comes together at a moment that impacts the athletic experience; Eastman & Billings, 2005).

Poran (2006) addressed the ways the media misrepresents young African American women through focus groups with 15 African American college students. Her study examined these misrepresentations in relation to sexism, racism, and colorism. Results indicated that African American women were highly critical of present imagery of African American women and engaged in analyses of the images of African American women and the ways these images influenced African American women's sense of self (Poran, 2006).

The media also tends to portray the bodies of African American women athletes in a negative manner. In their article, Szymanski, Moffitt and Carr (2011) provide an overview of sexual objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and then expand on this theory to explain various ways sexual objectification can impact women. In athletics, there are many cases of athletes being driven to use illegal substances. Although in sports we typically assume substances are used as a means to enhance performance, Szymanski et al. suggested that sexual objectification may also be a reason that women use/abuse substances due to sexually objectifying media images. Their article reported that women might develop substance abuse problems as well as mental health problems as a result of societal pressures to be thin or if they continuously encounter sexist situations. Szymanski et al. stated that women are more likely to encounter sexist situations in "sexually objectifying environments" (p.20). They defined sexually objectifying environments as places that consist of traditional male gender roles, frequent male contact, gendered power differences, attention to female bodies, and the need of male gaze. Given these criteria, it appears that sports could be considered a type of sexually objectifying environment, specifically when acknowledging that many

women's sports such as ballet, dancing, cheerleading, and track have tighter and shorter uniforms which tend to accentuate the female body.

Objectification of African American Women. This idea of objectification is a concept that many African American women athletes tend to encounter. Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) provides a framework for understanding the experience of being female in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body. For example, Harrison and Fredrickson (2003) surveyed 426 adolescent females to assess the impact of sports media exposure on adolescents' body perceptions. Results indicated that objectification theory might also be used to predict how media messages teach individuals to adopt a specific view of themselves. In their study, Harrison and Fredrickson discovered that reading sports magazines was linked to decreased body shame and disordered eating among participants regardless of body mass or race. A second component of their study allowed participants to watch videos depicting men's sports, women's lean sports, or women's non-lean sports. Their study revealed that participants of color seemed to disregard the skinny look of the lean athletes as personally irrelevant, but linked the larger, fuller bodies of the non-lean athletes to thoughts of their own body shape and size, resulting in increased self-objectification (Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003).

Additionally, Moradi and Huang's (2008) literature review about self-objectification revealed that self-objectification results in low internal bodily awareness, disconnection from bodily functions, decreased flow states, difficulties in task performance, increased body shame, high appearance anxiety, and eating disorders. For example, Buchanan, Fischer, Tokar and Yoder (2008) explored 117 African American college women's skin tone dissatisfaction and body shame (as cited in Moradi & Huang, 2008). Results found that when a person consistently and negatively analyzes their skin tone, it can lead to skin-tone dissatisfaction as well as general shame regarding body shape and size. In addition to skin tone, Falconer and Neville (2000) analyzed body image and skin tone satisfaction among 124 African American women and reported that African American women who were less satisfied with their skin color were also less satisfied with their overall appearance. Skin color satisfaction was also significantly related to an internalized acceptance of societal beliefs of beauty and satisfaction with specific body areas (e.g., hair, hips, and thighs). Unlike previous studies Falconer and Neville found that African American women with higher body mass indices were likely to report satisfaction with specific aspects of their bodies. This may indicate that the African American culture is more accepting of larger women rather than society's thin ideal. Additionally, high levels of Black self-consciousness were related to more body area satisfaction. This finding supports previous empirical research stating that racial identity can influence an African American women's self-perception (Falconer & Neville, 2000).

Watson, Robinson, Dispenza, and Nazari (2012) also conducted a grounded theory analysis to further understand African American women's experiences with sexual objectification within intersecting systems of oppression. Using semi-structured interviews they assessed the experiences of 20 participants. Results created a theory that combined elements of Black Feminist Theory and Objectification Theory. Participants in their study noted experiencing several different forms of sexual objectification including body evaluation, sexualized imagery of African American women, and unwanted sexual advances and/or experiences. These experiences seemed to contribute to many harmful effects among African American women, such as self-objectification, disordered eating behaviors, physical safety, and psychological consequences (Watson et al., 2012). Despite these harmful effects, their theory illustrated that many African American women developed coping skills

and resiliency against these negative consequences. Participants frequently relied upon social support, spiritual and/or religious affiliations, emotion-focused and cognitive coping, and personal responses to objectifies as well as sought avenues for growth within these experiences (Watson et al., 2012).

Previous research has also found that external and internalized sexual objectification is likely to be influenced by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In their review of literature surrounding objectification, Fredrickson and Roberts discussed how women of color might experience objectification differently due to a history of oppression. They referenced how the beauty of women seems to be continuously compared to White women and that women of color have had to create “protective factors” to cope with the objectification they undergo (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 197). Therefore, it seems that minority women’s experiences of sexual objectification occur within interlocking forms of oppression, which may impact both their risk and response to sexual objectification as well as negatively affect their mental health (Szymanski, Mofitt, & Carr, 2011).

Conclusions. It is evident that many historical references and stereotypes of not only African American people, but of also African American women continue to shape how society may view African American women athletes. Throughout this section there were also several references to the ways culture can also impact the psychological well-being of African American women athletes. For example, it appears that factors such as stereotype threat and sexual objectification can impeded an athlete’s performance academically and athletically. Ultimately, it will be beneficial for helping professionals as well as individuals who have direct contact with the student-athlete to create an environment in which all aspects of the athlete’s identity are being supported.

Psychological

This section seeks to explore the psychological factors associated with being an African American women athlete a predominately White Institution. The factors reviewed in this section include coping strategies and motivation.

Coping Strategies. There has been previous research that describes how African American women tend to cope with stress. For example, Matthews and Hughes (2001) indicated that African Americans tend to cope with mental health problems by using informal resources such as church, family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Studies have also found that African American athletes are more prone to utilizing avoidance coping strategies as a means to cope with stress (Anshel, Sutarso, & Jubenville, 2009). Anshel et al. surveyed 332 student athletes (59 African American, 232 Caucasian, and 41 Hispanic) and discovered that African American athletes distance themselves mentally from unpleasant encounters by using one or more of the following avoidance coping strategies: a) discounting, in which the athlete perceives the unpleasant message as unimportant, b) psychological distancing, in which the athlete considers the communicator of the message (i.e. the coach) lacking credibility, or c) spiritual reframing, in which the athlete uses their spirituality as a coping mechanism.

Shorter-Gooden (2004) conducted a qualitative study of 196 African American women to identify coping strategies African American women use to manage the stress of racism and sexism. Findings revealed three immediate coping strategies, three internal coping resources, and one external coping

resource that provide African American women ways to respond to discrimination. The three specific coping strategies that were used to resist the impact of racism and sexism included a) role flexing, b) avoiding, and c) standing up and fighting back (Shorter- Gooden, 2004). These three coping strategies could be transferable for African American women athletes as they try to disprove stereotypes about being an African American woman athlete (i.e. by using role flexing) as well as avoid situations, people, or topics that might illicit biases and prejudices. African American women may also use coping strategies to actively challenge sources of biases and prejudices. The three internal resources included a) relying on faith, b) standing on shoulders (i.e. strength from one's heritage), and c) valuing oneself. Leaning on shoulders (i.e. utilizing social supports) was the one external resource that was used by the participants, which could relate to the ways African American women rely on resources outside of themselves to cope with racism and sexism (Shorter-Gooden, 2004). Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, and Hunt (2012) also analyzed the strategies that African American women use to cope with gendered racial microaggressions. Gendered racial microaggressions refers to negative experiences that attack one's race and gender. This term originated to illustrate the "complexity of oppression experiences by Black women based on racist perceptions of gender roles" (as cited in Lewis et al., 2012, p. 53). Their study involved 17 African American college students, who participated in a focus group. Results from a dimensional analysis indicated the following coping strategies: two resistance coping strategies (i.e., Using One's Voice as Power and Resisting Eurocentric Standards), one collective coping strategy (i.e., Leaning on One's Support Network), and two self-protective coping strategies (i.e., Becoming a Black Superwoman and Becoming Desensitized and Escaping). In regard to being a student athlete at a predominately White institution, it seems that "Using One's Voice as Power," "Leaning on One's Support Network," and "Becoming Desensitized and Escaping" would be beneficial for African American women athletes. For example, when "Using One's Voice as Power" an African American woman athlete could speak up and address microaggressions they might encounter. By "Leaning on One's Support Network" an African American woman athlete could utilize social networks to cope with microaggressions as well as have their experience normalized when they encounter other African American women. Lastly, as previously mentioned there are several barriers and periods of perceived discrimination that African American women might encounter so by "Becoming Desensitized and Escaping" it can make challenging situations more tolerable.

Motivation. Amorose and Horn (2000) conducted a study to examine the relationships among athletes' intrinsic motivation, gender, scholarship status, perceptions of the number of their teammates receiving scholarships, and perceptions of their coaches' behaviors. After surveying 386 male and female student athletes from a Division I institution, they discovered that student athletes, regardless of gender, who are on full athletic scholarships have higher levels of intrinsic motivation than nonscholarship athletes. Therefore, receiving a scholarship may make athletes feel more inclined to perform well academically and athletically so that they can remain on a path towards success (Amorose & Horn, 2000). This finding may also hold true for African American women athletes given that athletics is seen as a route to upward mobility within the African American community.

African American women athletes may perform better in the classroom due to factors that might impact their motivation. For example, current scholars are suggesting that seeking paths of higher education should become a priority within the African American community (Lomotey, 1997). For some African American students, attainment of a college degree may be facilitated through an athletic scholarship. In 2013, the NCAA revealed that 3.7% of African American high school seniors

girls will go on to play women's basketball at a NCAA member institution. However, the percentage of African American women who pursue a career in a professional sport upon graduation decreases significantly from the percentages that played sports in college. For example, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) will only draft 0.9% of NCAA women basketball players by the after their senior year (NCAA, 2013). Knowing that the probability of continuing to a professional sport is very unlikely for most collegiate women, athletics may cause women to be more invested in academics and more aware of their intersecting identities.

Additionally, Gaston-Gayles (2004) surveyed 211 college athletes at a Division 1 institution to examine the ways academic and athletic motivation might predict academic performance. She developed a scale entitled the Student Athlete's Motivation Toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ) that assessed academic and athletic motivation. Results of her study indicated that ACT score, ethnicity, and academic motivation impacted athletic performance. A higher ACT score coupled by increased academic motivation seem to lead to a higher GPA. It was also found that African Americans tend to score lower on their ACT, which ultimately lead to lower academic motivation once they entered college (Gatson-Gayles, 2004).

Lastly, Ting (2009) surveyed 109 student athletes to assess if standardized test scores and noncognitive variables (e.g. acquired knowledge in a field, community service, positive self-concept, and preference for long-term goals) predicted student athletes' GPA and persistence in the first year of college. By analyzing the results of the noncognitive questionnaire, GPA, and standardized test scores, Ting discovered that noncognitive predictors impacted a student athletes' 1st year GPA. Results indicated that helping student athletes to participate in opportunities for their psychosocial development (e.g. adjustment, motivation, and perception), to develop long-term goals, and to understand potential applications of their academic majors are important for academic success. Additionally, participation in community service seemed to be related to student athlete academic success because it allows athletes to see their abilities outside of their sport and make a meaning contribution to society (Ting, 2009).

Conclusions. It seems that juggling the additional role of being an athlete can impact an African American woman's psychological well-being. However, it appears that African American women have developed ways not only to cope with challenges they might encounter, but also ways to perform well academically and athletically. There are many ways that African American women can persevere through these challenges such as through sources of positive internal and external motivation. It seems that enhanced coping strategies and increased levels of motivation may contribute to a more positive collegiate experience.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present literature review seeks to serve as a foundation for research about the lived experiences of African American women athletes who attend PWIs since there is a current gap in the research about this population. Since African American women are considered the "double jeopardy" the PSC framework can be used to analyze the holistic experience of African American women athletes by exploring elements such as the individual, the environment, and their culture (Collins, 1998). Within these categories, several themes have been identified which illustrates the unique experience of African American women athletes. For example, it seems that certain stereotypes about African American women may affect the development of their social support and self-esteem, which

ultimately impacts their psychological well-being. On the other hand, being a student athlete can present areas of perceived growth for African American women. For example, participation in sports may result in the development of skills and competencies that are important in later life such as learning to make commitments, self-control, patience, and discipline (Sellers et al., 1998). It also seems that the intersecting identities of being African American, woman, and an athlete impact the overall collegiate experience.

Given the limited literature on the experiences of African American women athletes, a study using the PSC framework should be conducted to assess how the lived experiences of African American women athletes differ from other athletes and even African American women non-athletes. To gather data about the experiences of African American women athletes, semi-structured interviews should be conducted with the participants that assess psychological, social and cultural aspects of their experiences. Below are examples of questions that could be incorporated in a qualitative study:

1. Psychological: Can you describe a situation where you felt like you discriminated against or treated differently because of your race and gender (or as a African American woman) during your sport career?
 - i. How did you cope with the situation?
2. Social: As an African American woman collegiate athlete, can you describe what your experience has been at a predominately White institution? What has your experience been with your coaches, teammates, peers, and faculty members?
3. Cultural: In today's society, it often seems that women who play sports, especially African American women, are recognized for their physical appearance more than their sport accomplishments. Can you share your thoughts on this topic?

There is a growing appreciation for the use of qualitative research to study the experiences of athletes. Collecting data by talking and listening gives the researcher a personal view of many aspects of being African American and a woman in the collegiate sport setting. Qualitative studies can provide a detailed perspective of the experiences of African American women athletes whose voices can be muffled by traditional studies of women athlete outcomes. Additionally, qualitative studies offer African American women athletes an opportunity to tell their own stories of life and athletic performance, which benefits both the athlete and the entire world. In addition to the PSC framework, it may also be beneficial for future researchers to incorporate elements of African American feminist theory (Collins, 1998) to guide their interview protocol as well as how they view the experiences of African American women athletes. A primary feminist principle focused on by African American women is having a voice (Collins, 1998). Therefore, African American feminist thought emphasizes the importance of the visibility of African American women.

Studies using quantitative measures could also provide additional information about the ways intersecting identities impact the athletic experience for African American women athletes. For example, through quantitative measures a research project could explore additional findings about psychological experiences of African American women athletes by assessing how this population copes with episodes of perceived discrimination at a PWI. Additionally, since only a few African American women continue into professional sports leagues after their undergraduate careers, quantitative measures could also assess social supports that African American women athletes have during their transition from a student athlete to a particular career. Lastly, a study could be created to assess how stereotypes associated with a particular group (e.g. race and gender) can impact how others view employment opportunities that available to that group. For example, researchers could

develop a study where students are instructed to observe a variety of headshots and then designated a job with the particular image. It would be interesting to see how many participants pair the African American woman's face with the career option of professional athlete.

Results from a study using the PSC framework could help Athletic Departments implement workshops or services that can address the psychological, social, and cultural factors of their students, especially minority athletes. For example, to solve some of the problematic issues relating to student athlete academic performance and motivation, a group of former student-athletes, created a nonprofit called Scholar-Baller that utilizes culturally relevant incentive based educational programs at the high school and college levels (Harrison et al., 2010). Harrison et al. indicated that this program helps to bridge the gap between education, sport, and popular culture to help reposition the current role of sport in American society. Implementing other organizations such as this one could improve social support (social aspects) and self-esteem (psychological aspects) for African American women athletes; research is needed to examine this. These supportive environments are important because researchers have found racial inequities present among revenue-producing collegiate sports, especially for African American males. For example, Harper, Williams, and Blackman (2013), conducted an investigation over six years comparing the overrepresentation of African American males in college sports and their graduation rates. Results indicated that across the 76 colleges and universities that they surveyed, African American male student athletes graduate at 5.3 points lower than African American male nonathletes. Although their article highlights the alarming graduation rates of African American men, they also briefly mentioned that there is still an overrepresentation of African American women in collegiate sports. However, the academic statistics of African American women seem to be better than African American men especially in the South Eastern Conference (SEC). Statistics reported the median six-year graduation rate was 74.6% for African American women student-athletes, 72.9% for White women student-athletes and 68.5% for all undergraduate students attending the SEC institutions they surveyed. Although these numbers are much higher than African American men, African American women still encounter the same athletic, personal, and academic challenges as their same raced peers. Thus, a future study should be conducted to determine if African American women athletes face the same challenges in regard to sexism and racism as African American men. Ultimately, the information gathered from a report of this nature could aim to improve the culture for minority athletes at predominately White institutions.

Implications for Counseling Psychology Practice

In recent years, more universities across the nation have hired licensed psychologists to work full time with student athletes. Given that most athletes spend the majority of their time in their institutions athletic department, many Athletic Directions thought it would be convenient to hire a psychologist within the department. Therefore, it is important for counseling psychologists working with collegiate athletes to be aware of policies that govern universities and their student athletes. For example, policies such as Title IX have already been implemented to ensure gender equality for women athletes. The NCAA has also taken additional measures to protect female athletes by recently implementing the Model Pregnancy and Parenting Policy or "Model Policy" (Hogshead-Makar & Sorensen, 2008). The Model Policy is designed to provide information and resources to member institutions and their student-athletes to effectively meet the needs of student-athletes dealing with a pregnancy. It will improve compliance with federal law and NCAA bylaws, and help institutions create a safe, healthy environment while fulfilling their educational missions (Hogshead-Makar &

Sorensen, 2008). Therefore, being aware of athletic policies will protect the student and the counselor.

There are many key roles a psychologist may have when working with athletes. First, it will be important for counseling psychologists to understand the unique experience of being a student-athlete. Student athletes have to balance not only their academics but also the demands of their particular sport. Juggling these two identities may create stress and challenges for some athletes and counseling psychologist should be willing to find ways to help athletes cope with this situation by exploring their family of origins, support systems, and means of motivation. For a psychologist working with African American women athletes, it will be important to assess how the intersections of their race and gender might be impacting their sport and academic experiences. As a therapist, it is imperative to understand that the experiences of athletes within the same race and gender are not all the same and be able to recognize the within- group and individual differences of individuals. Melendez and Melendez (2010) reported that women of color tend to seek mental health services more often than do their male counterparts.

This can have negative consequences for women of color, as they are more likely to be misunderstood and pathologized. Women of color also tend to be placed along a developmental continuum that belittles the importance of cultural values and gender roles that have been stereotypically female (Melendez & Melendez, 2010). Therefore, it is essential that counselors do not fall victim to stereotyping and create a negative environment that might resemble the challenges that African American female athletes might face on campus as well as in society.

Mental health professionals may also need to consult with sport psychologists to gain a deeper understanding of the mental components of sports. Mental toughness is defined as specific ways of viewing the competitive situation and skills relating to self-control and concentration (USA Swimming and U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, 2006). Mentally tough athletes psychologically appraise themselves during intense situations as a means to arouse a positive desire to achieve a particular athletic task. If an athlete is not worried about failing, it allows them to concentrate on the task rather than being consumed with other thoughts. Another specific skill that contributes to mental toughness is the ability to keep physical arousal within manageable limits (USA Swimming and U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, 2006). Sport psychologists can help an athlete reach an optimal level of arousal to optimize their performance.

Therefore, by combining the expertise of a counseling professional and a sport psychologist, a student athlete will be better able to cope with their daily stressors. A counseling psychologist can help with the day-to-day concerns of the athlete, while the sport psychologist can aid in the development of sports related techniques.

Conclusion

The limited research on the experiences of African American women athletes indicates that this is a population that warrants additional exploration. This project encourages a more detailed study of the lived experiences of African American women athletes by using the PSC framework. By exploring the psychological, social, and cultural factors of African American women athletes, researchers would be able to gather a more holistic understanding of the ways intersecting identities (race, gender, and occupation) impact ones experience. Understanding each of these factors is key to

ensuring that African American women are successful in the classroom as well as on the court/field. For example, knowledge about academic outcomes and satisfaction could aid in the recruitment and transition of African American women athletes from high school to college. Additionally, learning about the access and exposure that African American women have to sports could increase the percentages of both athletes and coaches in sports other than basketball and track. The presence of African American female coaches also seems to be important because exposure to female role models and leaders in a context that matters to young people (e.g., sport) may help to change values and beliefs about women in positions of power and leadership. Also, if girls and young women see females in coaching roles, they will more likely think about coaching as a legitimate and attainable career and possibly inspire them to become a coach in the future. Overall, this information will also be beneficial for mental health professionals as well as athletic departments so that they know how to better meet the needs of their student-athletes.

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A PARADIGM SHIFT IN POLICING FROM WARRIORS TO GUARDIANS

~Commentary~

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During the 2016 Maryland General Assembly session both houses of the legislature passed the Maryland Justice Reinvestment Act, and on May 19, 2016 Governor Larry Hogan signed it into law. The intent of the bill was to move away from the zero-tolerance crime control model that inflicted harsh penalties on those arrested, charged, and sentenced to mandatory minimums for non-violent crimes, to one that focused on treatment versus incarceration and worked to reduce the prison population. But a change in policy must be reflective in a change in practice.

That change in practice starts with the men and women on the frontlines of America's law enforcement agencies. A transition to a more community-oriented policing approach would change the current philosophy of policing from "warriors" to "guardians." Historically under the warrior mentality, law-enforcement practices called for a heavy dose of enforcement and punishment to deter crime. But as many have seen, the war on drugs and other failed crime-control models have come up short. As former federal drug czar Barry McCaffrey put it in the context of drug enforcement, "We can't incarcerate our way out of the problem." Treatment programs for drug offenders, he argued, "would be more effective and would save a great deal of money."

A greater reliance on social services such as drug treatment would be a hallmark of a guardian philosophy of policing. But what would policing look like under a new guardian model? In essence, police would need to become the liaisons between everyday people and social and health services, not solely the gatekeepers to America's jails.

Many traditionalists will argue that it is not the job of the police to be social workers. "There are social workers in the city. There are other agencies that provide jobs and other services," former Baltimore police commissioner Edward T. Norris said when he was appointed. "We're the police."

But as every street cop knows, in the real-world police do serve as social workers. More than 90 percent of police calls for service require the resolution of some social problem, and in most cases responders serve as the intake officers with respect to diagnosing the problem and directing residents toward the relevant resources.

The failure of most police organizations is that they have equipped their personnel with the capacity and skills only to enforce laws and not the ones they need to deal with social problems. Going forward, police organizations that see themselves as guardians must provide officers with this education and training. When officers can demonstrate the ability to solve problems and not just make arrests, this will resonate with communities more than anything else.

Municipalities big and small are equipped with agencies and resources to deal with many of the social problems faced by their residents. But many of those resources are underutilized because many citizens don't know they exist. In many cases, even government workers are unaware of them. While police will not be able to resolve every social problem, they should have relationships

with other local-government agencies and non-government organizations to be able to connect people with the resources that they need to receive appropriate services. Through a shift in practice to a guardian approach, police will be able to start repairing broken relationships with the communities they serve.

Promoting Identity Development in Student Athletes: There's An App for That

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Abstract

Ready Athletes, a mobile application, provides guidance on a variety of topics related to healthy identity development. This study measured changes in the identity development of collegiate student athletes using the application. While the quantitative results are not significant, those who participated in the qualitative interviews noted the benefit of the intervention in terms of positive reinforcement, goal awareness, critical thinking, aiding their identity development, and convenience in accessing such knowledge.

Introduction

The need for support of collegiate student-athletes' identity development is readily apparent. Emerging adults are engaged in a variety of developmental tasks such as identity formation, becoming personally competent, developing interpersonal relationships, and planning for the future. Playing a sport adds an unexpectedly complex layer to these stage-related tasks (Heird & Steinfeldt, 2013). Gayles (2015) noted that student-athletes must balance a unique set of circumstances, such as balancing athletic and academic endeavors, social activities with the isolation of athletic pursuits, athletic success or lack of success with maintenance of mental equilibrium, physical health and injuries with the need to keep playing, the demands of various relationships, and reconciling the termination of an athletic career with setting goals for the future. As such, the degree to which one exclusively identifies with the athletic role, also known as athletic identity, can have a variety of implications. Specifically, over-identification with the athletic role has been tied to harmful outcomes, such as decreased college success and lower rates of completion (Harris, 2014; Comeaux, 2013; Kelly & Dixon, 2014). There is a critical need for interventions that promote student athletes' healthy identity development.

This study used Ready Athletes, a mobile application, to promote healthy identity development in collegiate student athletes. Ready Athletes allowed student athletes to instantly and conveniently

access guidance on a variety of topics related to healthy identity development and the research team measured changes in the identity development of student athletes using the application.

Literature Review

According to Berzonsky, Soenens, Luycks, Smits, Papini, and Goossens (2013), a well-integrated identity provides a frame of reference for making decisions and interpreting experiences. Berzonsky (1990, 2004) developed a model of identity formation that suggests three different identity-processing styles: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. Berzonsky et al (2013) suggest that individuals with an informational identity style have a clear sense of commitment and direction; those with a normative identity processing style are conscientious, self-disciplined, and have a strong sense of commitment, but also internalize the expectations and standards of others; those with a diffuse-avoidant style tend to put off dealing with identity conflicts and decisions as long as they can, and when they do act on decisions it is largely determined by situational circumstances and consequences. Berzonsky and Barclay (1981) suggested that these three styles embody what is presented in James Marcia's (1966) four identity statuses: diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, or achievement. Marcia's four categories borrow from Erikson's (1994) conceptualization of identity development as a task involving exploration of various possible positions in the world and ultimately making mature commitments to certain ones, such as religion, career, political affiliation or sexual orientation. Each status category can be defined by the presence or absence of exploration and commitment. The informational identity processing style is associated with the achieved or moratorium identity status; the normative identity processing style is associated with the foreclosed identity status; and the diffuse-avoidant identity processing style is associated with the diffusion identity status (Berzonsky, 2011).

Persons in the diffused category are not actively involved in exploring possible life choices, nor have they made any firm commitments to them. While this may be common in adolescence, it could become problematic later on. Persons whose identity is diffused (i.e., confused) may not trust their ability to find and commit to a meaningful path in life, or they might deny their need to do so. They may also lack a sense of optimism about the future. These individuals may also situate themselves within a highly controlling environment that dictates the conditions of their behavior and the nature of their views. The collegiate athletics landscape, in all its efforts to guide student athletes, has the potential (though preventable) to become that highly controlled environment that the diffused person seeks, which might seem okay for a while until that environment is no longer there. The persons in the moratorium category distinguish themselves from diffusion in that there is more exploration, though still a lack of commitment. The prize to be gained from this adolescent and early adult trial and error is an identity that has been personally constructed. Constructed identity is not based on a predetermined set of expectations—but represents either a personal redefinition of childhood and early adolescent goals and values or perhaps something very different from them. Foreclosure describes a category of individuals who make commitments with little or no exploration of alternatives (Marcia, 1980; Marcia, 1964). It may also characterize young people entering adolescence who incorporate the values and goals of significant others, such as their parents, without reflection. These commitments are, by definition, premature, preordained by or constrained by some circumstance. The identity attained by those who are foreclosed is called a conferred identity, rather than a constructed one. Foreclosure's perspective on the future involves

meeting the expectations of a “prearranged set of ideals.” Identity achievement comprises individuals whose development has been marked by exploration and commitment to certain alternatives (Marcia, 1980; Marcia, 1967).

New technologies open opportunities for innovative approaches to developing healthy identities for student-athletes. The use of technology offers the opportunity for creating high impact and time efficient interventions, which are critical given the time demands already placed on student-athletes. Given the unique time demands that student-athletes endure, a mobile app creates a unique mechanism through which such identity development can efficiently occur. The use of technology maximizes instructional time, which is critical given the time demands already placed on student-athletes (Walker, 2011). Using a mobile app can facilitate and enhance individual and collaborative learning experiences independent of time and place (Biden & Ziden, 2013).

The use of Ready Athletes, a mobile application that can be installed on any mobile device can allow student athletes to instantly and conveniently access guidance on a variety of topics. Such a multidimensional sense of self has been found to protect one’s self-concept in the event of failure in one dimension (Heird & Steinfeldt, 2013).

Research Questions

1. Does the utilization of the Ready Athletes mobile application have an impact on the identity development of collegiate student athletes?
- 2 How do collegiate student athletes make meaning of their use of Ready Athletes mobile application?

Conceptual Framework

Mobile learning (M-Learning) refers to the use of wireless or mobile devices for the purposes of learning while in transition (Park, 2011). M-learning solutions are incredibly useful for making learning more flexible and personalized, enabling education to be provided independent of time and space (Tetard, Patokorpi, and Carlsson, 2008). Transactional distance theory (TDT) is the primary framework through which Ready Athletes is conceptualized and delivered. The learning outcome of this project is identity development, which is understood through the lens of identity status theory, the study’s secondary framework.

TDT is one of the primary theoretical underpinnings in the field of distance education, and generally describes the relationship between three variables: dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy (Moore, 1980, 1993). Moore (1980, 1993) suggests that transactional distance is a psychological and communication space that needs to be crossed by “instructor” and learners. When autonomy is low, the need for structure is high, and when structure is low the need for autonomy is high. Further, interventions with low dialogue require a high degree of learner autonomy, and interventions with low dialogue and structure require a high degree of learner

autonomy. Ready Athletes is structured to provide learners with a high degree of autonomy, thus minimizing the transactional distance (see Figure 1.).

Identity status theory, espoused by Marcia (1967) suggests that there are four identity statuses that individuals can occupy: Diffusion, moratorium, achievement, and foreclosure. Marcia (1967, 1980) suggests that an adolescent's identity is shaped by crises, or the extent to which one's values and choices are being reevaluated, and commitment. Each status category can be defined by the presence or absence of exploration and commitment (see Figure 2).

Figure 1.

A 3D Model of transactional distance

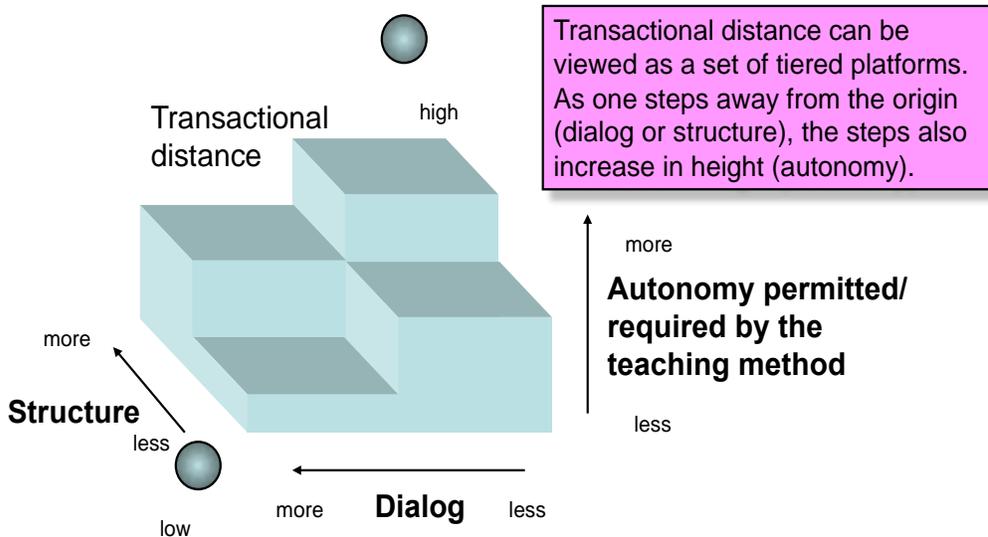
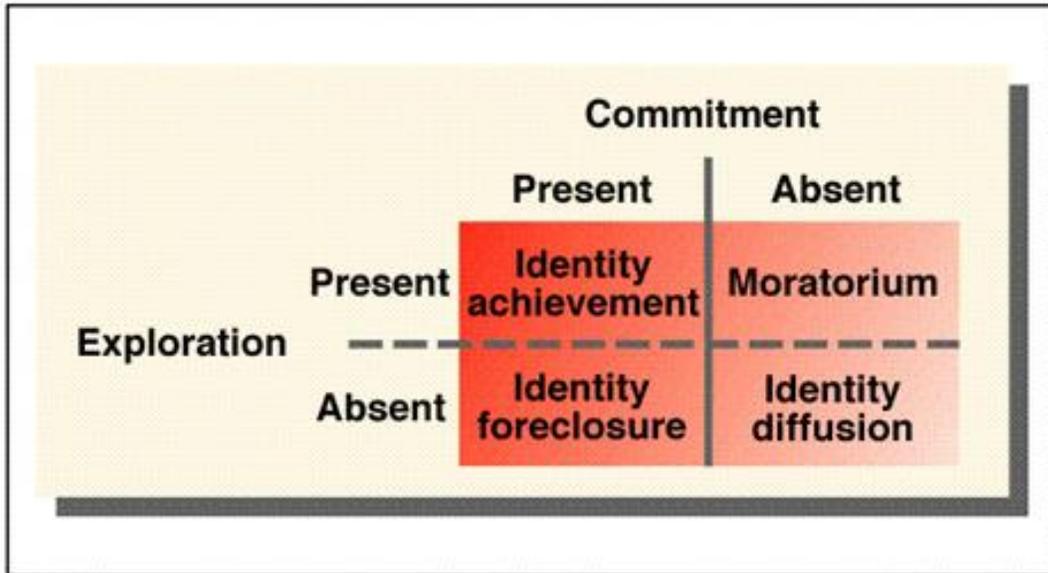


Figure 2.

Steinberg, Adolescence, 7e. Copyright © 1998. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Identity Status Categories



Methodology and Data Collection

Participants

The goal of this project was to develop and assess the impact of Ready Athletes, a mobile application designed to promote the healthy identity development of student athletes. Ready Athletes alerted participants to messages 3 times per week for 5 weeks. The timing of the intervention was determined, in large part, by the timing of the funding for the project.

After IRB approval, the majority of student athlete participants were recruited through a course taught by a co-investigator that had an enrollment of 235 students, 40% of which were student athletes. E-mails were sent to all student athletes at this University, regardless of whether or not they were in this course. Fourteen (14) participants were in the treatment group and had access to the Ready Athletes content. They were sent messages related to identity development on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays throughout the semester. Thirteen (13) participants in the control group received placebo messages through Ready Athletes. Efforts were made to ensure that no student athletes felt compelled or coerced to participate.

Intervention

The messages in the app were written through the framework of identity status theory. Each message is constructed in such a way that encourages the informational processing style which aligns with achievement and moratorium. The treatment group received messages through Ready Athletes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for five (5) weeks. On Mondays, an “Awareness” message highlighted some aspect of identity development. On Wednesdays, an “Advice” message provided a suggestion for how the student athletes could operationalize Monday’s “Awareness” message in their own lives, with the intent of maximizing their ownership of their identity development. On Friday, an “Advance” message provided encouragement and reinforcement that extended Wednesday’s “Advice” message. The participants in the control group were sent messages unrelated to identity development through Ready Athletes.

Data Analysis

The Revised Identity Style Inventory (ISI – 5) was the quantitative measure used in this study, while phenomenological interviews provided a qualitative inquiry into the efficacy of the intervention. This mixed-method approach was embraced to provide as holistic an understanding of the impact of this intervention as possible.

For quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics were assessed as a first step to determine the mean scores and standard deviations for each identity processing style on the pre- and post-administrations of the ISI-5. Reliability estimates of each component of the inventory (pre and post) were also assessed. A split-plot repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the between groups, within subjects, and interaction effects on each of the four component scores in the inventory.

The researchers also utilized a limited number of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with those from the treatment group willing to participate (i.e., 5 participants) to further understand the meaning of the intervention for the participants. Open-ended questions with prompts and follow-up questions were employed in order to elicit both breadth and depth in responses (Breakwell, 1995). The interviews were recorded and transcribed, after which the researchers employed a thematic analysis, a foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The following steps were taken by the research team in conducting the thematic analysis:

- 1) Read through the entire data set at least once prior to coding;
- 2) After producing a list of ideas about what is in the data, generated initial codes from the data, coding for as many potential themes/patterns as possible using NVivo software;
- 3) Sorted the codes into identified potential themes;
- and 4) Reviewed the themes, collapsing themes into others where appropriate, and ensure that data within themes are consistent. Sample questions are provided in the Appendix.

Findings

Quantitative

Reliability estimates on all component scores in the pre-measurement were below normally acceptable levels ($\alpha = .70$) except for the Informational Style component ($\alpha = .75$). In the post measurement all components exceeded normally acceptable levels of reliability except for the Normative Style component ($\alpha = .63$). Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for all four of the identity processing style scores on the pre- and post- administrations of the ISI-5. Table 2 shows the results of the split-plot repeated measures ANOVA models. Figure 3 is a plot of a power analysis conducted to determine the sample size required to detect a significant difference in the interaction effect given the effect sizes and correlations between pre and post scores found in this study.

Table 1.

Means and standard deviations by pre / post test and treatment condition. ($n_{treatment} = 14$ and $n_{control} = 13$)

	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Treatment	Control	Treatment	Control
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Informational Style	35.86 (3.57)	34.39 (4.44)	35.86 (4.60)	34.92 (4.46)
Normative Style	23.64 (3.63)	27.08 (2.90)	24.71 (3.69)	26.54 (3.73)
Diffuse-Avoidant Style	19.50 (3.80)	22.92 (3.82)	19.57 (4.67)	21.08 (4.89)
Strength of Communication	36.00 (3.33)	34.46 (4.41)	35.93 (5.15)	36.46 (4.26)

Table 2.

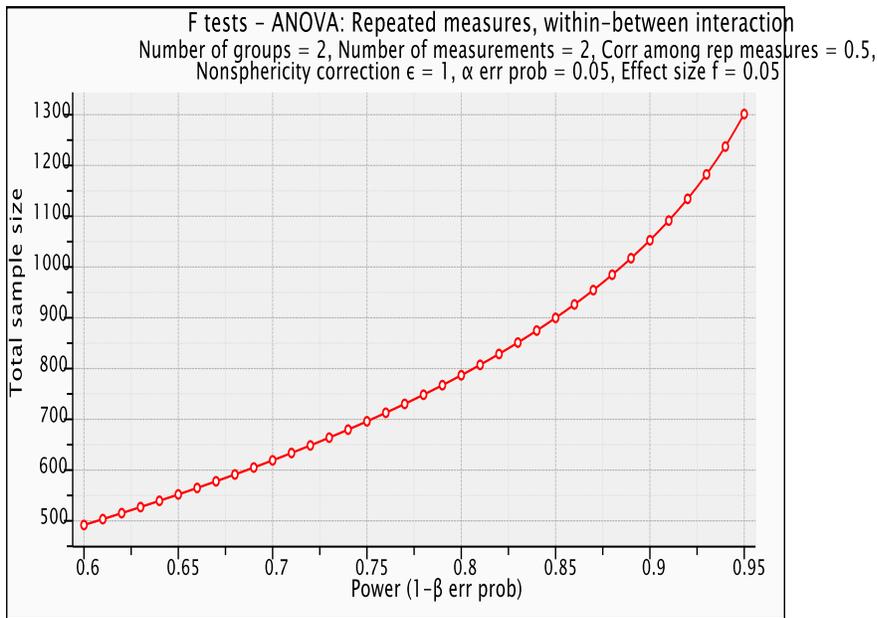
F statistics, *p* values, and eta squared effect sizes resulting from the fixed effect split plot repeated measures ANOVAs.

	Effect	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_{partial}
Informational Style	Group	0.640	.431	.025
	Time	0.158	.694	.007
	Group x Time	0.158	.694	.007
Normative Style	Group	5.680	.025	.185
	Time	0.116	.736	.005
	Group x Time	1.060	.313	.041
Diffuse-Avoidant Style	Group	2.768	.109	.100
	Time	1.373	.252	.052
	Group x Time	1.603	.217	.060
Strength of Communication	Group	0.117	.735	.004
	Time	1.496	.233	.056
	Group x Time	1.726	.201	.065

The power of the significance tests in this study were hampered by the small sample ($N = 27$), but the power analysis provides some guidance as to how many participants would be needed in future research to obtain statistically significant results ($N = 788$ when power = .80). Additionally, increased sample size would allow researchers to confirm the factor structure of the ISI-5, which would enhance the argument for the validity of the measurements. Another limitation was the time of treatment (5 weeks). Since, as Marcia (1967, 1980) suggests, adolescent identity is shaped by

crises that drive the reevaluation of values and choices, sufficient time must be allowed for these processes to occur and future research should extend the length of the treatment. The preferred identity processing style is the information identity processing style, as individuals who embody this style intentionally seek out, evaluate, and utilize self-relevant information (Berzonsky et al, 2013).

Figure 3.



Qualitative

The semi-structured interviews conducted with 5 of the participants yielded five themes from the data: Identity, positive reinforcement, goal awareness, critical thinking, and limited time and the need for convenience. The themes are further explicated below, along with representative quotes from the interviewees.

Theme 1: Identity

Identity was a central theme espoused throughout the interviews with the student-athletes. The purpose of the project was to focus on identity development of student athletes. It was mentioned multiple times throughout each interview and in some cases was a new concept for the student-athletes to learn about and understand.

“And so, and this, reminds you about your identity and like where you came from and like where you are trying to get to. I think it is very beneficial to see that and know that I. That athletics isn’t everything and there is a lot more that goes into just being a good player and I think when you’re feeling healthy and better about the other aspects of your life, you are able to perform on the field at a higher level with more confidence.”

-George, Junior, 21 years old, Male, White, Lacrosse player

Theme 2: Positive Reinforcement

Participants indicated that the messages received through the app helped to motivate them and inspire confidence in themselves. Overall, the messages served as positive reinforcement for the positive activities they were currently doing and the goals they were aspiring to achieve.

“For me it was more of a reinforcement of what I already knew. But I think it was really helpful in the sense that these are not things that I think about all the time or like they might cross my mind but I don’t focus in on it all the time so basically like if I kind of have goals for myself, like I am not a great, I am a good goal setter, I am very goal oriented but I am really great at trying to get myself there. Like sometimes especially a long-term goal. So, there was one day where it came out and said you have to put yourself around people that are kind of going in the direction you want to go. Um, that can kind of help you mold your identity and kind of what you want to see yourself doing in the future things like that. And it was just like a good reminder because sometimes people get wrapped up in the day, what you have to do, what you are doing right here and now.”

-Jackie, Junior, 20 years old, Female, Black, Women’s basketball player

Theme 3: Goal Awareness

Participants did mention that goal setting was a major component of their lives and how the app made them reflect on, reinforce or even re-think the academic, athletic and career goals they set for themselves.

“I think it [the app] was really helpful in the sense that these are not things that I think about all the time or like they might cross my mind but I don’t focus in on it all the time so basically like if I kind of have goals for myself, like I am not a great, I am a good goal setter, I am very goal oriented but I am really great at trying to get myself there.”

-Jackie, Junior, 20 years old, Female, Black, Women’s basketball player

“I just learned to like visualize different things while working, and you know, when I’m tired, I really don’t want to get up in the morning, I really don’t want to do something that I have to do, you just think about your future self and you know if you try to build yourself to be that person. That is just never something I applied in my life until I read some of these things.”

-Richard, Freshman, 19 years old, Male, White, Football player

Theme 4: Critical Thinking

The participants expressed statements that highlighted how the app prompted them to think critically about concepts, situations, and behaviors that were relevant to their lives. As opposed to being just something they read and forgot about, the messages forced the student-athletes to engage with the material and concepts in order to get a better grasp of the ideas.

“You were able to get the messages across...you are able to interpret it in your own way because of the medium you’re getting it under so you like the message could be broad ...and they might take it and say like oh wow, okay this helps me motivate me to keep working on my progress that I am making. Whereas you might have someone that is struggling in classes and [says to themself] “you know what I should put more time into this” so because you’re reaching so many different people and you don’t know what they’re going through and...it was left to interpretation, I think you were able to get to different people and affect them all in unique ways and help them individually.”

-Christina, Senior, 21 years old, Female, White, Softball player

“I feel like it [the app] is prompting you to do the thinking on your own. Which I definitely liked because I feel like a lot of the tutoring or life skills stuff you have to like kind of have the motivation to go there and spend an hour or two like whatever once a week at this set time whereas this kind of just buzzes and you could look at it 40 minutes later and it would still be there. And most of it is just kind of sparking the thought process within.”

-Mike, Senior, 21 years old, Male, White, Soccer player

Theme 5: Limited time and the need for convenience

With the participants being student-athletes, it is assumed prior to the study and confirmed through the interviews that they had a limited amount of time to focus on activities outside of core academic work and sport-related commitments. Participants overall felt that the app allowed them to do activities that would typically take longer in group or individual sessions or classes.

“...through this app you, like you can look back at it or the tasks aren’t daunting or you’re not sitting through an hour-long lecture or an hour-long presentation. But with this [app] it had the ability to reach you and you could go back and check it out another time.”

-Christina, Senior, 21 years old, Female, White, Softball player

“I mean the fact that it came through my phone was super convenient um again, I think if it was one click and you were there, it would be a lot simpler, but the fact that it was still on my phone and I didn’t have to read a book to find it, I didn’t have to go on my computer to find it, the fact that it was in the palm of my hand, I didn’t even have to look it up, it was there for me and it was

something I could still use every message was useful, every message I could apply to my everyday life.”

-Richard, Freshman, 19 years old, Male, White, Football player

Discussion

The quantitative findings suggest that there is promise for the utility of the Ready Athletes mobile application amongst collegiate student athletes. While the sample size proved limiting, the results suggest that use of the mobile application facilitated growth along the information processing style continuum. While designed to facilitate the transition and success of collegiate student athletes, the often-highly controlled environment of athletics departments also increases the potential for student athletes to adopt the diffused-avoidant style. Having an easily accessible, convenient mechanism for knowledge, awareness, and skills to actively promote one’s identity development can be critical for student athletes. Such development has implications for their success in college and beyond.

The student athletes interviewed helped explicate the app’s benefit in terms of their identity development. Specifically, there may be constructive and positive behaviors that contribute to healthy identity development that student athletes are already displaying, but that may go unreinforced, which could lead to discontinuing such behavior. Ready Athletes confirms, via research-based messages, that such behaviors should not only be continued, but increased. It also provides reasons as to why and how such behaviors can translate into success that the student athletes seek during and beyond their playing days.

Further, given the limited time that student athletes have, given their commitments, it proves beneficial to be prompted to reflect upon the type of individual they are and who they want to be. This behavior is critical to their developing autonomy and making decisions that are based on their own exploration. Naturally, then, we can see more success amongst student athletes in their transitions out of their sport, whenever that time comes. To that end, student athletes who have athletic aspirations are more readily amenable to such prompting when they perceive that such guidance is not mutually exclusive of their athletic pursuits. The Ready Athletes intentionally supports the athletic endeavors of student athletes with the encouragement to proactively pursue healthy identity development which will have benefits in and out of their sport. Sports participation, as previous research clearly suggests, can be a critical mobilizing mechanism. It, in and of itself, is not the problem. The organization and delivery of such experiences is what Ready Athletes attempts to augment in ways that mitigate what could be negative effects of participation in an increasingly complex collegiate athletics landscape.

Limitations and Future Research

The potential for the app’s content is limitless. Work on additional content that aligns with identity status theory, as well as learning and study strategies content for the app is already underway by the researchers and will be included in future research.

Further, future research should also increase the sample size and extend the time of treatment such that the results can be more generalizable to the population.

Lastly, future research should include a disaggregation of data, particularly by race and gender. Black male student athletes, for example, have disproportionately negative experiences in comparison to their White student athlete and Black male non-student athlete counterparts (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). For example, it has long been established that Black male student athletes underperform academically at NCAA member institutions (Cooper & Hall, 2016). Critical race theory as a theoretical paradigm within which to pursue such research should also be considered (Carter-Francique, 2015; Singer, 2016). Research that extends this study will add to the growing but small body of work (Martin, Harrison, & Bukstein, 2010) that is devoted to interventions that contribute to the success of Black male student athletes.

Conclusion

All college students are encouraged to engage in self-exploration in order to develop a clear sense of self, commitment, and direction. Playing a sport can either complement or impede this process, and much depends on the supports in place for student athletes.

Ready Athletes, a mobile application, was developed to support the healthy identity development of student athletes in and out of their sport in a time efficient manner. Ready Athletes includes a library of messages that are rooted in identity status theory and provide practical guidance on how to develop a healthy identity.

Our findings suggest that the Ready Athletes allowed for student athletes to access information and guidance on their own time, and that the messages provided specific action steps for the student athletes to implement.

The free Ready Athletes can easily be incorporated into the practices of life skills coordinators, sport psychologists, student affairs administrators, and any other campus level personnel for whom the identity development of student athletes is a priority. Further, content can easily be expanded and updated to align with institutional programs designed to meet the needs of current student athletes. It also has the potential to greatly enhance the efficiency of the delivery of services already received by student athletes. Delivery of such content in this way enables advisors, instructors, and other stakeholders to maximize personal time spent with student athletes, building on the content delivered through Ready Athletes.

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Appendix

I. *Revised Identity Style Inventory (ISI-5)*

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like				Very much like
me				me

1. I know basically what I believe and don't believe.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I automatically adopt and follow the values I was brought up with.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I'm not sure where I'm heading in my life; I guess things will work themselves out.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Talking to others helps me explore my personal beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I know what I want to do with my future.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I strive to achieve the goals that my family and friends hold for me.

1 2 3 4 5

7. It doesn't pay to worry about values in advance; I decide things as they happen.

1 2 3 4 5

8. When facing a life decision, I take into account different points of view before making a choice.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I am not really sure what I believe.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I have always known what I believe and don't believe; I never really have doubts about my beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I am not really thinking about my future now, it is still a long way off.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I spend a lot of time reading or talking to others trying to develop a set of values that makes sense to me.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I am not sure which values I really hold.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I never question what I want to do with my life because I tend to

1 2 3 4 5

follow what important people expect me to do.

15. When I have to make an important life decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen.

1 2 3 4 5

16. When facing a life decision, I try to analyze the situation in order to understand it.

1 2 3 4 5

17. I am not sure what I want to do in the future.

1 2 3 4 5

18. I think it is better to adopt a firm set of beliefs than to be open-minded.

1 2 3 4 5

19. I try not to think about or deal with personal problems as long as I can.

1 2 3 4 5

20. When making important life decisions, I like to spend time

thinking about my options.

1 2 3 4 5

21. I have clear and definite life goals.

1 2 3 4 5

22. I think it's better to hold on to fixed values rather than to consider

alternative value systems.

1 2 3 4 5

23. I try to avoid personal situations that require me to think a lot and deal

with them on my own.

1 2 3 4 5

24. When making important life decisions, I like to have as much

information as possible.

1 2 3 4 5

25. I am not sure what I want out of life.

1 2 3 4 5

26. When I make a decision about my future, I automatically follow what close friends or relatives expect from me.

1 2 3 4 5

27. My life plans tend to change whenever I talk to different people.

1 2 3 4 5

28. I handle problems in my life by actively reflecting on them.

1 2 3 4 5

29. I have a definite set of values that I use to make personal decisions.

1 2 3 4 5

30. When others say something that challenges my personal values or beliefs, I automatically disregard what they have to say.

1 2 3 4 5

31. Who I am changes from situation to situation.

1 2 3 4 5

32. I periodically think about and examine the logical consistency between

1 2 3 4 5

my life goals.

33. I am emotionally involved and committed to specific values and ideals.

1 2 3 4 5

34. I prefer to deal with situations in which I can rely on social norms and standards.

1 2 3 4 5

35. When personal problems arise, I try to delay acting as long as possible.

1 2 3 4 5

36. It is important for me to obtain and evaluate information from a variety of sources before I make important life decisions.

1 2 3 4 5

II. Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience using the app?
2. What if anything, did you learn that you did not know prior to utilizing the app?
3. How, if at all, has your behavior changed as a result of utilizing the app?
4. Did any particular message(s) have a major impact on you? Explain
5. What meaning or impact did this experience and these daily messages have on you?
Academically? Athletically? Personally?
6. Explain in detail your opinion on how the information was delivered to you? Frequency?
Technology? Etc.
7. How can we make this app and intervention better? What do you see as areas for improvement?
8. What other types of (i.e. particular subjects or skills) messages should be added to this app?
9. What areas do you think would be important to your peers? 1st years? 2nd years? 4th years? Scholarship? Walk-On
10. How often did you complete the prompts/assignments that were given to you via the app?
Were these assignments helpful? Explain

11. Would you recommend this app and program to your peers, friends, or colleagues?

Explain why or why not.

12. How does this experience compare to other life skills workshops (in-person, online, conference presentation, one-on-one, group, class) in which you've participated? Explain in detail.

13. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss or any other feedback that you have regarding this experience that we haven't covered?

WHY ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES LEAVING OUR INSTITUTIONS? BEYOND DEVELOPING ANOTHER PROGRAM

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Introduction

For at least the last ten years, Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) have been grappling with an overarching question, why are all the African-American males leaving our institutions? While this is a somewhat exaggerated statement, administrators, scholars, and faculty have continued to discuss the educational plight of African-American males in post-secondary institutions, especially at PWIs. The number of African-American males who do not return after their first-year or graduate from college is astounding; hence, many of these institutional discussions have centered on increasing their preparedness as well as their retention, persistence, and graduation rates. The solutions have typically come in the form of a new initiative or program. The challenge is that these programs are not being used by the African-American male students who actually need these initiatives.

The current research contributes to knowledge about factors related to low-levels of student success among African-American males at PWIs in their first-year. At the same time, the research aims to suggest ways to engage African-American males more in such support programs. A qualitative investigation was conducted to identify factors related to the overall success of these males. The qualitative methodology allows in-depth understanding and exploration of the issues under review as well as allows for the voices of those studied to be heard.

African-Americans at Predominately White Institutions

Generally, Black Colleges and Universities educated more than 90% of all African-American students enrolled in college prior to the mid-20th century (Kim & Conrad, 2006). However, this trend began to change in the early 1960s when pressure to desegregate white institutions of higher education (Kim & Conrad, 2006). This dramatic drop can be attributed to Supreme Court decisions and laws such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

As education integrated, many institutions were not ready to meet the needs of African-American students; as a result, African-Americans struggled at PWIs. Some authors report that there were a high level of dissatisfaction with integration, and protest and demonstrations by African American students was a regular occurrence (Feagin et al., 1996 & Whiting, 1991). According to Pifer (1973), White students were hostile to Blacks and showed it resulting in chaos on many PWIs campuses. African-American students at PWIs became disillusioned by the slow progress of integration and their exclusion from campus social life, social fraternity membership and honor societies, and discriminatory treatment when seeking off-

campus housing (Fleming, 1984). Of all the problems faced by African-American students on predominantly White campuses, the psychosocial problems resulting from alienation and a lack of support from the general environment seemed to be the most severe (Allen, 1981; Fleming, 1984). Consequently, it was noted that African-American students had a higher attrition rate and were not as academically successful as their Caucasian counterparts (Allen, 1981).

A 1972 study conducted by Willie and McCord (Fleming, 1984), claimed that the unanticipated level of prejudice and lack of social integration that African-American students found at PWIs contributed to feelings of anger and despair and the desire to separate and withdraw from Caucasians. Feagin et al. (1996) found that African-American students enrolled at PWIs continued to be dissatisfied to the extent that they believed protests against varied forms of racism were still needed and, thus, they organized events to bring awareness to their plight. In addition, Feagin et al. determined that African-American students at PWIs did not perform academically or adjust psychologically as well as their Caucasian counterparts to PWIs. They attributed this finding to their notion that racial barriers continued to exist at PWIs, where full desegregation of higher education remained more of a goal than reality. The most significant problem found for African-American students at PWIs was the growing feeling of alienation or the inability to feel part of a whole. Often these feelings of alienation seemed to be associated with lack of intellectual gain and a decrease in the level of career aspirations (Fleming, 1984; Feagin et al., 1996).

Students interviewed in a study conducted by Feagin et al. (1996) acknowledged feelings more or less of being unwelcomed at PWIs. When asked to respond to the statement, “X University (a PWI) is a college campus where Black students are generally welcomed and nurtured,” 89% of the students surveyed disagreed with the statement. For students who sensed they were not wanted, the college campus became an unfriendly place and was likely to have a negative impact on both self-esteem and personal identity. African-American students at PWIs periodically experienced racial insensitivity, hostility, and discrimination perpetrated by other students, and a range of campus personnel who sometimes left them feeling invisible (Feagin et al., 1996; Fleming, 1984; Sedlacek, 1987). Feagin et al. asserted that PWIs maintained racialized spaces which encompassed the cultural biases that helped define areas and territories as White or Black. These spaces resulted in feelings of belongingness and control, feelings which Caucasian students enjoyed; yet, were lacking for African-American students at PWIs. Feagin et al. (1996) purported that racial discrimination continued to be well entrenched in higher education in the United States, and for that reason African-American students enrolled in PWIs typically suffered dissatisfying college experiences. They concluded that African-American students enrolled in PWIs were the targets of varied forms of discrimination, ranging from blatant actions to subtle yet destructive practices which rendered it impossible for those students to have a rewarding experience. Jones (2001) concluded that in order for African-Americans attending postsecondary institutions, particularly PWIs, to perform, persist, and graduate, a moderate to high level of social and academic integration into college life must exist.

It is evident that the racial composition of PWIs has made some dramatic changes; however, the curriculum as well as the racial composition of faculty has remained the same for the most part, and as a result, African-American students seek to construct their racial identities from flawed stereotypes portrayed in the media and pop culture (Adams, 2005). A survey conducted by Phillips (2005) measuring marginality compared the environmental perceptions of African American and Caucasian students on a predominantly White campus. He found that African American students felt marginalized and that Caucasian students were unaware of the different challenges faced by African-American students. The most common barriers seemed to be racial, socioeconomic, and academic issues. This marginalization caused great difficulty in a student's ability to become academically or socially integrated in his/her environment (Adams, 2005; Phillips, 2005). Ultimately, Adams (2005) concluded that this feeling of marginalization leads to the perception that PWIs are indifferent, or even hostile, environments as it related to the African-American student experience and this perception attributed to lower retention and graduation rates of African-Americans in PWIs.

Despite African-Americans having increased access to PWIs, increasing their retention, persistence, and graduation rates has continued to be a national challenge. For those who do gain access to PWIs, they face many challenges that often hinder their opportunities for academic success (Cuyjet, 1997; Fleming, 1984; Polite & Davis, 1999). These challenges adversely affect African-American males at PWIs at very high rates (Davis, 1999; Polite & Davis, 1999).

African-Americans Males in Higher Education

While the enrollment rates for African-American undergraduates has risen to 14% in 2008 from 10% in 1976, White males are enrolling at higher proportions than African-American males (Harper, 2006 & Strayhorn, 2008). In 1976, African-American males accounted for only 5% of all undergraduate students in the U. S., and in 2008, the percentage was still only 5% (Harper, 2006). Additionally, African-American males made up 3% of all graduate students in 1976, and the percentage is still currently at 3% (Harper, 2006). All studies seem to indicate that African American males are enrolling, performing, and persisting at lower rates than any other racial group or gender (Noguera, 2003; Roach, 2001). National Center for Educational Statistics' "The Condition of Education 2010" (2010) indicates that collegiate enrollment at the postsecondary level has increased from 13.1 million in 2000 to 16.4 million in 2008. At four-year institutions, female enrollment has increased by 32% and male enrollment by 28%. These increases are impressive, but a closer examination illustrates that, even with the increases, African-Americans lag far behind since only 14% of all college students are African-American compared to that of Caucasian students at 63%. The truncated number of African-American males who enroll in college further complicate a comprehensive understanding of the impact of their attrition rates. So many factors affect their educational experiences that it is difficult to gain an inclusive understanding of their educational difficulties as a group (Allen-Meares, 1999; Blake & Darling, 1994; Bryant, 2000). It becomes even more of a challenge when African-American females are showing great improvement in higher education participation. Of all ethnic groups, African Americans have the lowest female-male ratio (Jones, 2001). African-American females outnumber African-

American males three to one at some higher education institutions (Bryant, 2000). In 2000, only 27.3% of African-American males matriculated to a higher education institution after graduating from high school. These percentages have shown declines since 1990 when it was 34% (Jones, 2001). African-American male higher education participation and academic success are on an unending downward spiral (Allen-Meares, 1999). African-American males who do manage to enroll at a higher education institution run a significant risk of not achieving academic success and obtaining a degree (Cuyjet, 2006).

Quantitative indicators of enrollment and attrition have generally been used to study African American males in education, and there is a need for broader exploration (Cuyjet, 2006). On the contrary, there has been limited exploration about the qualitative experience of African American male students (Ross, 1998). College and university campuses provide a useful context to examine the influence of factors, such as academic success, both within and beyond the bounds of university life (Cuyjet, 2006). In addition to generally using quantitative indicators, most of the research that seeks to understand African-American academic achievement has been comparative studies that tend to compare African-American student performances based on the experience of White American student performances. Although this research has helped to identify some reasons for academic failure, it does little to identify solutions to the issues, and it does not identify factors to contribute to academic success in higher education. This approach to understanding African-Americans in education is defected and problematic (Fisher, 1999).

In a study conducted by Hall and Rowan (2001), African-American male college students at PWIs were given several questions to answer designed to quantify their experiences in college. Overwhelmingly, these students indicated that the factor that most encouraged them to attend college was personal (N=543); familial influence ranked lowest (N=144). When asked about the special issues they faced, Race was the most significant issue (N= 809), followed by campus environment (N= 94). Campus environment, however, was the variable identified as the leading problem they had enrolling and staying in school (N=218). The significance of this study is it illustrates that even in the 21st century, African-American men on college campuses perceive both race and campus climate as obstacles in their collegiate success.

Some research attributed the disparities between African-American male and female gains to the belief that African-American females were more motivated about college attendance than their African-American male counterparts (Cokley, 2001). Others purported that the negative influences and stereotypes of society, exacerbated by the media, have taken hold on African American males (Dancy, 2009; Steele 1992, 1997): “Black male college students feel pressured to fulfill media-spun social expectations to be overly sexual, aggressive and athletic in college” (Dancy, 2009, p. 21). Attempts to live up to these stereotypes pull African-American males further from academic success and collegiate adjustment (Dancy, 2009; Steele, 1992).

Perry (1993) argues that in order for African-American students to achieve academic success in predominately White academic environments they must successfully be engaged with at

least three different groups. The groups that Perry believes to be essential are engagement with a group that has experience with dealing with oppression and discrimination (preferably their own ethnic group), some level of engagement with the majority group, and lastly, engagement with a group that offers an alternative to the majority dominant cultural values (Berry, 2002). According to Perry, engagement with each of these particular groups offers African-American students specific knowledge and skills to promote a sound academic environment that will lead to academic success. African-American student success depends on the student being comfortable in multiple cultures and being able to move between them (Perry, 1993). Typically, educational institutions have disregarded the importance of cultural adaptability as an important contributing factor for academic success (Berry, 2002; Perry, 1993). African-American students who develop adaptive skills and strategies across cultural frames are more apt to be academically successful. In contrast, those students who have difficulty navigating between cultural frames will likely experience academic difficulty (Berry, 2002; Perry, 1993).

In Tinto's (1993) research, he argues that African-American students confront challenges and obstacles that make academic and social integration increasingly difficult at traditionally White institutions (TWI). Many African-American cultural values and social norms are incongruent with the social life at TWIs. This incongruence makes it difficult for students to find supportive communities within these institutions. When African-Americans are unable to find support in the academic environment, it can adversely affect their overall academic performance (Jones, 2001). Tinto (1993) found that African-Americans most often utilized cultural students' organizations as the means by which they were able to begin the process of social integration into the campus community. The findings of several scholars, such as Bird (1996), DeSousa & Kuh, (1996) and Fleming (1984), confirm the importance of cultural organizations, fraternities, and sororities to African-American student retention and matriculation.

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions held by African-American males at a PWI about their experience in their first-year of college as a means to understanding how to enhance their academic success at that particular higher education institution. The guiding question for this qualitative research study was: What is the experience of first-year African American male college students who did not achieve academic success at a public four-year PWI in Southwest Georgia?

This study used African-American male college students who have completed at least one full year of college at a predominately White institution in Southwestern Georgia. The institution had a student population of approximately 3,046 students, of which approximately 868 were African American at the time of the study. The criteria for this sample were African-American males 18 years old and older who have been enrolled for at least one full academic year and

have a grade point average below 2.0. Additionally, the eligible participants only consisted of traditional students or students who began college within two years of graduating high school. This group was selected because the study focused on the experience of African-American males only. African-American male students who were enrolled in any remediation courses in their first-year of college were not eligible to participate in this study.

There were ten African-American males in this qualitative study, each with a grade point average below 2.0 at the end of their first-year of study at a predominately White institution in Southwestern Georgia. A code name was assigned to each participant, and they are as follow: MH3, MH6, MH1, OU12, OU85, OU7, AF84, AF2, AF11 and AF33. The code names represent a building on campus and his favorite number. Each participant ranged in age from 18 to 19 years, attended college full time, and resided in campus housing. Eight of the participants qualified for financial aid while the other two paid tuition and fees out-of-pocket. Only two participants had both parents/guardians who had attained at least an undergraduate degree; four participants had one parent to attain at least an undergraduate, and the others' parents/guardians did not attain an undergraduate degree nor had any college experience.

Findings

Five main themes related to the experience of African-American males who did not achieve academic success in their first-year of college at this predominately White institution in Southwest Georgia. Themes associated with the experience of African-American males not achieving academic success are as follows: (1) Engaging with Others (2) Lack of Support (3) Usage of Resources (4) Unprepared for Transition and (5) Impact of Racism. However, for the purpose of this article, the researchers are exploring the third theme of why African-American males do not achieve academic success.

Usage of Resources

A theme that emerged from the interviews was the usage of the university's resources. The university understands that it is important to have support services for students. This is evident by the number of different services that they provide for students to have the added support needed to perform academically and grow personally. The university's student support services include, but are not limited to tutoring, first-year experience services, counseling services, writing lab and academic skills workshops. Additionally, there are a number of organizations and clubs specifically available for students to join. However, many participants did not utilize these services during their first-year experience.

This theme of usage of the university's resources and its relationship to the first-year experience surfaced from all participants. However, some of the participants were not even aware of many of the services. For example, when asked, "Are you aware of the academic resources available to you on campus?" MH6 shared, "I did not know the school had all of those resources available for students." MH1 answered the same question with this comment:

“All this time I spent struggling and you mean to tell me they have all those resources here, at this school. Man, I spent a lot of time trying to figure out where to get help.”

On the other hand, some participants acknowledged that they knew of the resources, but simply failed to use them. AF84 stated:

Yeah, I am aware of those resources, but I didn't use them. I mean I thought I could manage on my own. The crazy thing is though I use to go over to that building all the time where they do the workshops, but I never even thought about going in and getting help. I thought they probably would be boring.

In reference to the academic resources, OU85 said:

I knew they had these resources, but I never thought about going. When I was in high school only the slow students would get tutoring and all kind of stuff like that. But even if I would have went they probably would not have been able to help me anyway and that would have just frustrated me more.

Then there were the participants who were aware of the resources and actually had some experience with using them. Take OU7, who stated:

I did go to one of the workshops. It was on time management. It helped me somewhat, but the stuff they were telling us in the workshop seemed to be unrealistic. It was like they really wanted your boy to schedule when he gone eat, when he gone sleep, and stuff. Who knows when they are going to fall asleep? So, I did try, but it didn't help too much.

A different point of view about the effectiveness of the resources came from AF2's experience. He expressed his opinion about some of the resources:

The resources that I used did help me especially the note taking workshop that I went to. It provided me with some good ways to take notes. It also helped me learn how to organize my notes too. I went to tutoring a few times as well. My tutor helped me out, but she sometimes didn't show so I stop going. But I can say when she did come she did help me.

Tutoring. Participants were not shy about sharing their experiences about specific services that were provided as resources. Tutoring was the underlying resource on which participants' focused their comments. AF33 had a previous negative experience with tutoring, which tarnished his perception of tutoring all together. He expressed it this way:

When I was in high school I use to go to tutoring every day because my mom had me in this after school tutoring program. I use to get the tutoring for math and me and my tutor went over a whole chapter in a week helping me to prepare for an exam. I really thought I was gone do good because I was working all the problems like my tutor. When I got my test I worked out all the problems with no problem, well at least I thought I did. I made a 22 on that test. It turns out my tutor was showing me wrong the whole time and I vowed then never to go to tutoring again.

OU12 expressed similar concerns about tutoring; he stated it this way: “I am not a big fan of tutors because sometimes they be wrong, but they don’t like to admit it.”

Contrariwise, other participants made positive comments about tutoring. For instance, MH1 expressed his feelings about tutoring by saying, “I know tutoring would have been helpful to me. I always thought tutoring was good a resource, for math especially.” And AF11 stated: “Tutoring probably would have been good for me because I tutored in high school and I know it is probably really good tutors in college.” Yet, OU85 perhaps gave the most elaborate positive comment about tutoring with this expression:

It’s funny that I didn’t use the tutoring services here in my first-year because I know how much tutors can help. Back in my hometown I use to tutor at our boys and girls club and the kids use to always tell me how good they felt after they would get it the concept. On top of that tutoring would have allowed me to begin to interact with other students here on campus. I made a lot of friends through tutoring at that boys and girls club.

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that African-American males who did not achieve academic success in their first-year of college at a PWI had many different experiences. Some of these experiences were directly related to their poor academic performance. For the African-American male participants in this study, describing their first-year experience was based on self-reflection. Participants had to identify experiences that impacted them individually during that first-year of college. No two participants’ experiences were the same. Each of the students described a variety of situations and conditions they had to deal with to convey their experiences. Many of their situations were similar, but none was the same. The conditional matrix for each participant varied as well. Therefore, no single experience could be identified as the underlying factor to the participants’ poor academic performance during the first-year. The researcher came to the conclusion that there are several contributing factors to poor academic performance amongst African-American males at the PWI during the first-year.

Support services for students are a critical component to addressing the needs of students in college. At this PWI, they offer a wide range of support services for students, but the participants did not take advantage of them. Some participants did not know the services existed while others knew, but decided not to use them. Tutoring seemed to stir up mix

feelings with the participants as some of them felt tutoring was a good support service while others did not. Due to a previous negative experience with tutoring, AF33 developed a tarnished perception of the entire idea as a whole. Participants did acknowledge that the use of the provided resources could have enhanced their experience during the first-year as well as help improve academic performance. MH1 stated:

I know if I would have used some of those services you just named I would have done much better in my classes. I probably would have also gotten some good information from those workshops too. Man those resources probably would have made my life a lot easier last year.

Bryant's (2000) article supports the notion that the use of resources or support services will enhance African-American males' academic performance and their overall educational experience.

Transition problems materialized with seven of the ten participants. These participants reported major issues being prepared emotionally and academically for college. Participants reported homesickness and difficulty with the academic rigor of college. Zhang and Smith (2011) found that African-American males have difficulty transitioning to college because of inadequate preparation during high school. MH1 referred to an experience he had with his high school counselor about transition, but he ignored it. He went on to describe how he wished he would have taken advantage of the opportunity. In addition, understanding the responsibility of being a college student was experienced as well. OU7 stated, "...I struggled with getting up for class." The statement went into further detail about how his mother would be the person to wake him up for school at home. In addition, participants found that they were not prepared academically for college. MH3 reported, "... professors expected us to know a lot of stuff that I just did not know." Conversely, participants' academic performance suffered.

The results clearly show that there was a cultural disconnect between the institution and the participants. Participants in this study described their academic environments prior to college as inclusive and engaging. According to Irvin (1990), campus environments influence the overall educational experience a student will have. Participants reported a need to interact with others, build relationships, and connect and engage in social activities during their first-year experience at the PWI. However, during their first-year, they found the environment to be isolating and uninviting. As a result, participants were not prepared to adjust to a foreign environment. Engagement was perceived as a means to build the relationship as necessary to create a learning environment where learning was not seen as menial, but as exciting. According to participants, the desire of the professor to interact with them in the classroom was perceived as their test to determine if communication of any kind was possible—inside or outside of the classroom. AF84 reported trying to connect with his professors in the classroom as well as in the office, but said he still felt a sense of disconnect. He stated, "I did not get the kind of connection with my professors as I would have hoped during class. Most of them weren't engaging even when I was in their office."

During their respective interviews, all participants spoke about resources and student support services that were available to them during their first-year. While there was some degree of divergence when participants utilized the resources, the consensus reported that they were not aware of the services or simply did not use them. Consistent with this notion, Lee and Ransom's (2011) article identifies failure to seek support services and resources as one of the challenges African-American males face in higher education which hinders them from achieving academic success. Similarly, Bryant (2000), Cuyjet, (2006) and Jones (2001) findings were consistent with this present study. They indicated that African-American males who do not seek or use support services have challenges performing academically in college. However, not all participants neglected support services. Some participants actually used some of the support services available to them, but still did not perform well academically. AF2 discussed how effective he felt some of the services he used were; yet, he still did not perform well academically. He stated:

The resources I used helped me out. Especially, the note taking workshop I attended, but I still did not do well as I needed to in my classes. Even the class I had the tutor for I failed it. The tutor was good, but I just didn't do enough to pass the class. I still have to say the services worked for me [sic] cause they helped me.

There is limited literature to support the finding of ineffective support services to the African American male college population and it is hard to generalize; but the researcher found it noteworthy to mention because it contradicts previous literature.

Although there were a number of resources and student support services available to the African American males in this study at the institution, tutoring seemed to surface more than any other specific service being offered. The participants had mixed feelings about tutoring. As mentioned above. AF2 felt that his tutor was very helpful, but others reported negative comments about tutoring. The literature does not speak directly to the effectiveness or helpfulness that tutoring provides to African-American males at PWIs; however, Lee's (2009) study focuses on collaborative learning of African-American males at a PWI, and the researcher considers tutoring a form of collaborative learning. The findings in Lee's study suggest that student collaborations can be effective with African-American males at PWIs.

Recommendations

Having worked in higher education for many years, this is a challenging presupposition; however, with the number of colleges/universities that exist today, students, including African American males, have many options. It is imperative that institutions particularly those that seek to create programs that work with African-American males see them as valuable customers. Based on this research and over a decade of work with African-American males directly, we recommend that colleges and universities consider the following thoughts and recommendations. Why do African-American males not participate in success programs?

1. The program(s) has a negative reputation. Because African-American males are very guarded about being “singled out”, being in a “special program” or needing help, they resist using these success programs often label them with negative terms. The way an institution frames and markets the program goes a long way for its usage.
2. They don’t understand what you do. Though most institutions admit students who are well-prepared for College, the challenge is that colleges/universities are very complex and confusing environments, especially for first-generation African-American male students. Names for offices, such as The Academic Success Center, Center of Student Engagement, Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement, and First-year Student Success, seem obvious for the average student, but can be confusing for new African-American male students.
3. They don’t think you are truly concerned about them. Students, especially first generation African-American males, are very perceptive. They take cue from the administration and staff, especially those who work with them directly. They can easily detect whether a person is really concerned about their success or if they are just doing their job. Because of their environments and experiences, African-American males develop early an ability to read body language, analyze conversations, and assess a person’s motives.
4. They see no value in your services. Most initiatives and services that take place on a campus do so with very little input from the people they serve; hence, the services do not reflect the students’ needs. Asking them to assess the services and make recommendations for improving them would go a long way to increasing the number of students utilizing the services.
5. Your office is not warm and inviting. If an African-American male student comes into an office that is intended to help students and do not see people that either look like or have a shared experience as him, he is very likely not to return to that office in the future. It is important that African-American males find the environment not only useful but welcoming.

The student, regardless of ethnicity or gender, aspect of higher education should be paramount. Rule #1: Students are the life blood of a college or university. They can exist without Presidents, Provosts, Vice Presidents, Directors, etc., but they cannot exist without faculty and students, and faculty members are not needed if there no students. Once we think that way, we realize our institutions are our students. Putting all the attention on new buildings on our campuses, the new system that our institution has purchased, or emphasizing athletic programs, we leave out the most important piece: the student. Keeping students in mind, particularly African-American male students since that is the context of this article, here are some recommendations to retain, persist, and graduate African-American male students.

1. Remember to put yourself in their shoes. Often times we as adults forget what we wore, what types of music we listened to, the types of dances we did, or the things we

said and did when we were young. Nevertheless, we are now advisors, coordinators, directors, vice presidents, provosts, presidents, and professors. African-American male students are on a journey called life. Where they are now is not where they will be in the future. African-American males are looking for relatable not perfect people.

2. Realize that it is important to give them the respect that they deserve. Do you think you can get by providing the least support, ignoring their uniqueness, and treating them as if they are invisible on your campus? It will show in your retention, persistence, and graduation rates. Colleges/Universities do not retain students...people do.
3. Show them your Real Side. If they see you as having done everything right, would they be able to connect to you? Could they identify with your experiences? An administrator who is willing to be transparent with students regarding their challenges, such as financial difficulties, low performance in a course, or other obstacles, while they were in college makes them an asset.
4. See them as on a Journey. Closely linked to #1 is the idea that we see them on the journey to becoming adults. Although they may possess the physical and physiological characteristics of being a “male”, they are still developing the maturity and reasoning ability to be a “man”.
5. Listen to them. The fact that an African-American male student thought enough of you to share his challenge with you is all you need to know in trying to listen to them. Remember you do not want to tell them what to do. You want to ask probing questions to get them to understand the ramifications of and to look at the various issues to their decision.
6. Reward them. Last, but certainly not least, it may be an exception from your university policy, but find some way to just reward African-American males for doing well. For individuals who, as a group, are not typically, positively, acknowledged, it is most meaningful for them to be saluted for their scholastic successes. For example, have a pizza party to celebrate those who were retained from their freshmen to sophomore year or develop a commemorative t-shirt acknowledging their academic success.

Conclusion

This study explored the first-year experience of African-American African-Americans males who did not achieve academic success at a PWI in Southwestern Georgia. The African-American males in this study have strong resolve to overcome their first-year academic mishaps. They have found a place to fit in on the campus by joining one of two African-American male organizations that provides support and direction for these young African-American men. The researcher is hopeful that these men are on the right track to achieve academic success.

The study clearly stated that African-American males need to be nurtured in a culturally inclusive environment and have a strong support system during the first-year of college. It is this researcher's belief that this will be a significant portion of the academic success formula for this population. Furthermore, the grass root of the African-American male's ability to achieve academically, overcome stereotypes, perceptions, and other daily obstacles is the consistent support of family, faculty, staff, and mentors in their lives. Concurrently, these men must believe they can take control of their education despite the odds they are facing. They have to make strategic choices about their priorities and develop long-term and short-term goals for accountability purposes.

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WHY WE NEED CRIMINAL JUSTICE MORE THAN EVER DURING ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING TIMES IN OUR NATION’S HISTORY

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to assert the rationale for a constitutionally sound, fundamentally democratic based, and principle centered criminal justice system. Never in our nation's history has there been a need to promote justice, peace, and tranquility in America and abroad. I cannot think of any segment of society that has not been psychologically, physically, or emotionally affected by the many tragic events that has occurred in our nation over the past twenty years. Many of these events have not only changed the lives of its victims, but challenged the way our criminal justice system interprets the U.S. Constitution. Handgun violence, child abuse, domestic partner abuse, and the constant threat of both foreign and domestic terrorism are just a few important issues that the criminal justice system must attempt to manage. The United States Supreme Court, The Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons are in a constant state of flux when it comes to enforcing our laws at all levels of government. Local and State agencies are also being challenged when it comes to enforcing laws set forth by their legislatures. Also, the biggest challenge that criminal justice agencies must continue to be mindful of is the interest of the American Government to protect society against people who cannot or will not subscribe to its dominant values and individual freedoms and protections set forth in the U.S. Constitution by its framers to ensure that our government is accountable to fundamental fairness in carrying out its duties no matter how complex social and crime issues have become.

Key words: Justice, Crime, Terrorism, Legislation, Policy

Introduction

The terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center in the midtown Manhattan section of New York City, the Pentagon Building in Alexandria, Virginia, and an airliner in the field of western Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, along with the Oklahoma City bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Building on April 19, 1995 have changed the way we view crime and criminal justice in America. No longer do terms such as mere suspicion, reasonable articulable suspicion, and probable cause apply to community or neighborhood incidents. Moreover, no longer can a beat cop be concerned with local criminals and the types of offenses that they commit.

The 21st century police officer and correctional personnel in America and throughout the world must also understand national and international political issues as they relate to economics, religion, and technology. The aforementioned phenomenology affects neighborhoods and communities in most American cities and their surrounding counties. The implications of the new criminal justice phenomenon are many. First, the Bill of Rights has been greatly affected at all

levels of government. Example, as a result of the Oklahoma City bombings, and the attacks on the World Trade Center, the U.S. Congress passed the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, that tightened the standards for habeas corpus in the United States (Doyle, 1996).

Simply put, a writ of habeas corpus demands that a prisoner be taken before the court, and that the custodian, which could be a police official, state or federal agent, etc... Present proof of authority, which allows the court to determine whether the police or agent has the lawful authority to further detain the prisoner. If the police official or agent is acting beyond their scope of authority, then the prisoner must be released. Any prisoner or detainee, or their lawyer or advocate, may petition the court, or a judge, for a writ of habeas corpus to either formally charge the person detained or release the person from custody. Often the writ is sought by a person other than the prisoner because the prisoner or detainee is held in solitary confinement (Doyle, 2006). This means that law enforcement officials, supported by state and federal courts are allowed to detain suspected terrorist for days and even months without having probable cause to formally charge a suspected terrorist with a specific crime. In other words, writs of habeas corpus are now more difficult to obtain as the government in general and the courts and correctional facilities in specific are now allowing suspects to be held under less strict legal standards. Suspects can now be held on reasonable articulable suspicion of terrorism as opposed to the tradition legal standard of probable cause.

Terrorism in our society has opened the legal door to justify detention for other local and state crimes as well. The US PATRIOT Act is probably the most controversial law that gives local, state, and federal law enforcement the authority to bypass several provisions and protections outlined in the fourth, fifth, and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution in order to prevent, disrupt, or dismantle any potential terrorist acts.

These are just a few of the federal initiatives and programs that challenge the conventional wisdom that the framers provided to ensure that the government protects its citizens while preserving the rights that it provided to individual citizens.

Criminal Justice Defined

There is no universal definition of criminal justice, however, there are many definitions associated depending on the scholar and from what perspective it is being defined. Sociologist often define it as an institution of social control, psychologist often defines it along behavioral terms, and lawyers assert the definition along legislative and constitutional language. However, it is defined it always deals with human behavior and how to regulate and control it. For the purpose of this paper, I will define it as an institution of social control whose primary aim is to get individuals to subscribe to the dominant values of society. The primary institutions that comprise the criminal justice system are *the police, courts, and corrections*. However, the criminal justice system is not the only institution that promotes social control. The others are primarily, family, faith-based *organizations, and school*. When family, faith, and school are unable or unwilling to teach, promote, and force those dominant values, then the governments organizations such as the police, courts, and corrections will.

So—given the information thus far, why do we need criminal justice more than ever? The answer is both simple and complex. The simple answer could be that crime has increased in many areas of American society and issues such as handgun violence in our schools, churches, colleges and universities are occurring at an alarming rate and the constant threat of terrorism necessitates the need for a stricter, more vigilant criminal justice system. The complex answer could be that the community, family, our social institutions such as churches, synagogues, mosque, and temples need to demand social justice in the areas of economics, education, equality, and the like.

Society also needs to hold our elected officials more accountable to respond to the challenges that we face in our communities that require a criminal justice response. There are many theoretical underpinnings that explain the phenomenology of crime in the community. Also, there are theoretical perspectives pertaining to the types of political responses to crime. Herbert Packer describes two most prominent approaches to the criminal justice process in his 1968 book, *The Limits of the Criminal Sanction* (Packer, 1968). Packer (1968) describes two models of the criminal justice process, *crime control* and *due process*. According to Packer (1968), due process is the rights of individuals that he asserted is politically liberal. Packer, then described crime control as the regulation of criminal conduct and behavior, a sort of assembly line justice more concerned with prosecution and incarceration for violating government sanctioned behavior, it's politically conservative (Packer, 1968).

Dworkin (1969), in his critique of Packer's book summed it up best when addressing the need for criminal sanction and criminal justice:

*"Packer has said something that needed to be said. Criminal law discussion is filled with too much fuzzy talk about right and wrong with nothing more than feelings to tell people what falls into each category. Because the public thinks about criminal law, it is important that it be provided with a sensible foundation for its thought. In *The Limits of the Criminal Sanction* Herbert Packer has provided such a foundation. Now the rational legislators must build upon it a construct worthy of its base" (p. 498).*

Another criminal justice view that is antithetical to Packer's is *Restorative Justice*. Interestingly, Mantle, et.al (2005), describes the concept of restorative justice and three "restorative justice seeks to include the community much more directly in the delivery of justice, with the ambition of strengthening social ties" (p. 21). Restorative justice draws from the social, communal, spiritual, and retributive ideas to mete out justice and help bring about healing to the victims and perpetrators of the crime(s) that were committed.

Conclusion

There are many theories or explanations of crime and how it affects its victims and the community. Whether one subscribes to a classical theory or positive one, criminal justice is the administration of justice through penal sanction, incapacitation, banishment, and many other forms of punishment. The need for criminal justice is more prevalent than ever. American has one of the highest incarcerated populations in the world. Some major cities in the United States arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate more than 100,000 people a year. Police are generally better trained than at any time in our nation's history with state-of-the-art equipment, prosecutors have more

resources at their disposal, and the government provides funding to build bigger and more efficient correctional facilities and prisons, yet the criminal justice system faces more challenges today than ever before.

We need criminal justice in a different way. America needs a criminal justice system that takes a holistic approach to solving or minimizing crime problems in our communities. We need more elected officials who once served as police officers; we need retired police to become school teachers. We need judges and prosecutors to become advocates for change in the way we educate our children. We need clergy to integrate community involvement in their sermons. We need to promote service as opposed to adventure. So yes, we do need criminal justice. Not justice for the criminals. We need justice for our victims. We need proactive social and political responsibility to our communities. If we do—then victims will truly get justice when they are victimized, criminals will be meted out justice, and the community will get social and political justice.

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