THE ROLE OF AFRICENTRISM IN STUDENT STRESS AND SOCIAL STIGMA

CONSCIOUSNESS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN UNDERGRADUATE MALES

ATTENDING AN HBCU

by

CINDY JOSEPH

(Under the Direction of ROSEMARY E. PHELPS)

ABSTRACT

African American males are disproportionately underrepresented in college in comparison to Whites, Asians, and their counterparts, African American females. Despite this, little research focuses on the college experiences of African American students, especially those attending an HBCU. Joseph and Chambers' (2010) study evaluated the impact of Africentrism on perceived stress levels for African American students attending an HBCU. Results indicated significant gender differences that concluded that African American males endorsed higher levels of Africentrism, and that Africentrism impacted stress level for African American males. To further explore the results of Joseph and Chamber's (2010) study, this study explored the impact of Africentrism on different types of stressors related to being a student (i.e. student stress). Furthermore, African Americans males are a demographic that encounters unique experiences of social stigmas that are be similar *and* different to African American females. These social pressures are likely to impact stress levels while in college.

Therefore, the aims of this study are to (a) evaluate the relationship between Africentrism, social stigma, and student stress (i.e., interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, and environmental stress), and (b) evaluate the role of Africentrism in the relationship between social stigma and student stress. Correlational and hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. There were no significant correlations among the variables; however, correlations evaluating the interaction between Africentrism and social stigma revealed that overall student stress and academic stress were correlated to the Africentrism and social stigma combination. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis evaluating academic stress indicated a significant model. Follow up analysis revealed a disordinal interaction between Africentrism and social stigma. This demonstrated that when African American males have a low level of social stigma, Africentrism decreases academic stress. When African American males have a high level of social stigma, Africentrism increases academic stress. Implications for this study are further discussed.

INDEX WORDS: African American male college students, Historically Black

College or University, Stress, Academic Stress, African Values,

Social Stigma

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CINDY JOSEPH

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CINDY JOSEPH

Major Professor:	Rosemary E. Phelps	
Committee:	Edward Delgado-Romero	
	Brian Glaser	

Electronic Version Approved:

Julie Coffield
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2014

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To the matriarch of my family, my grandmother, Sylvia Joseph: Thank you for your wisdom, guidance, prayers, and nurturance. As I reflect, you are one of the first people I remember as a child, and the first person I think of when I need inspiration. In your absence, your spirit will continue to illuminate in my heart. I love you, Gran! To my father Daniel Joseph: Your hard work and dedication to our family continue to serve as a guide and inspiration for my work ethic. Thank you for loving me unconditionally and being the best father a girl can have! I love you, Daddy! To my siblings: I love you with all of my heart! Your humorous ways keep me smiling. I think of you all of the time, especially with your persistent inquiries of this graduate process!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

National data indicate that African Americans are completing college degrees at lower rates

than Whites and Asians. In 2012, African Americans made up 8.1% (3,516,000) of bachelor's

degrees earned in comparison to 8.5% earned by Asians (3,661,000), and 81.5% (35,278,000)

earned by Whites; Hispanics made up 7.4% (3,230,000) of bachelors' degrees earned in 2012

(US Census Bureau, 2012). These numbers highlight a fraction of the academic lag faced by

African Americans in comparison to other races (Blake & Darling, 1994; Davis & Jordan, 1994;

Jackson & Moore, 2006).

Also well documented in the literature is the gender gap in educational attainment of African

American college students. For instance, nationally in 2012 African American females made up

nearly 60% (58.8%; 2,067,000) of bachelor's degrees earned by African Americans (US Census

Bureau, 2012). At Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs), African American

women made up 65% (22,167) of recipients of bachelor's degrees (National Center for

Education Statistics; NCES, 2012). These national data call attention to not only the discrepancy

in college degree attainment for African Americans, but also a more prominent issue with

college degree attainment for African American males. In this introduction, factors that influence

discrepant completion rates for African Americans are explored with a specific focus on African

American males.

Educational and Cultural Considerations

African American students are likely to be first-generation college students and of low

socioeconomic status (Cho, Hudley, Lee, & Barry, 2008). Further, African American students'

reasons for attending college include cultural factors that are likely to influence retention.

Phinney, Dennis, and Osorio's (2006) study indicated that reasons for attending college for African American students included assisting one's family, validating self-worth, and mentorship influence. African American first-generation college students also consider parental input important in college choice (Choa et al., 2008). Hopes of achieving financial security is also influential in college choice for African Americans (JBHE Foundation, 2006).

Minority students who are first-generation college students indicate a welcoming feeling on campus and acceptance of racial diversity as important factors in university choice (Choa et al, 2008). One study on African American males suggested that they exceled when they were more academically integrated into their institution (Davis, 1994). That is, African American male college students reported a positive experience when feeling more connected with professors and peers in both academic and social regards (Davis, 1994). Further, African American undergraduate males at HBCUs tended to report more positive and welcoming institutional support and climate than those at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) (Davis, 1994). This may be due to the fact that African American students at a HBCU tend to report better grades, higher academic achievement, and higher educational aspirations than those at a PWI (Davis, 1994; Greer & Chwalisz, 2007).

Racial Factors and Stereotypes

The effects of stereotypes of African American males on academic performance are seldom considered. Uneducable, dysfunctional, and dangerous are a few stereotypes faced by African American males (Jackson & Moore, 2006). Stereotypes that challenge African American male students' intelligence and work ethic play a crucial role in their ability to become successfully integrated in an academic environment (Chavous, Harris, Rivas, Helaire, & Green, 2004; Steele, 1997), and thus negatively impact academic achievement (Chavous, et al., 2004). Claude M.

Steele introduced the concept of stereotype threat which he define as "the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one's self definition" (Steele, 1997, p. 616). Steele explained that if stereotype threat is experienced in the area of performance, then the emotional reaction experienced from stereotype threat interferes with performance (Steele, 1997). For this reason, Steele posited that African Americans may develop a dis-identification with academics as a means of coping, which would ultimately negatively influence academic self-concept and self-efficacy.

Stereotype threat is further explained as Steele presented a concept of social identity contingencies, which are perceptions, stereotypes, and treatments that are tied to one's social group in a given setting (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlman, & Crosby, 2008). Purdie-Vaughn and colleagues (2008) noted that a given setting may present nuances of devaluation of one's group identity. In understanding the tenets of stereotype threat, it is also important to consider the racial and gender composition of postsecondary institutions, as African American male students represent a small percentage of students entering college both at HBCUs and PWIs. This may create a sense of hypervisibility for African American males that is likely to create different racial and gender experiences as a result of classroom contexts, exacerbate negative perceptions of stereotype expectations (Chavous, et al., 2004) and create a lack of trust (Purdie-Vaughns, et al., 2008).

Stress in College

In addition to combating pressures from racial and gender stereotypes, African American males reported experiencing stress from familial sources (extended or nuclear), as well as

academic, financial, interpersonal, and intragroup relationships (i.e., notions of being "too white" or not being "black enough") (Watkins, Green, Goodson, & Guidry, 2007). Stress due to a nonsupportive family unit is linked to severe psychological distress (i.e., depression, and suicidal ideation) for African American students, thus underscoring the importance of a supportive family in the African American culture (Kimbrough, Molock, & Walton, 1996).

Watkins, Green, Goodson, and Guidry (2007) provided insightful considerations for other experiences of stress among African American male students at both an HBCU and a PWI. In a qualitative study, participants described stressors that stemmed from stereotypes. For African American males attending a PWI, socialization was described as a mechanism for surviving their institutional climate (e.g., experiences of racism and discrimination); however, for African American males attending an HBCU, socialization was seen as a strategy for surviving *'America'* (Watkins, et al., 2007).

Distinct stressors faced by African American males at an HBCU are further explained. Although African American males at an HBCU report fewer direct experiences with racism or discrimination on campus (Watkins, et al., 2007), being a student at an HBCU does not preclude experiences of racism or discrimination on a societal level (Chavous, et al., 2004). In the Watkins, et al., (2007) qualitative study of African American males, the researchers asked participants, "What kind of things lead to stress in your life?" (p.109). African American males at an HBCU reported stress from societal pressures to be the *ideal* African American male, stress from a lack of resources for advancement, and general academic stress (Watkins et al., 2007). One participant highlighted stressors from not being accepted by "White America", and "…the legacy of slavery, money, classes, and knowing how much 'weight' is put on Black men to succeed" (Watkins, et al., 2007; p. 109). These excerpts illuminate the desire to succeed while

balancing a number of pressures and stressors that stem from acculturation, stigma, family and community expectations, finances, and academic performance.

African American males also indicated stress related to concerns of seeking employment and anticipating experiences of discrimination (Watkins et al., 2007).   To further illustrate this concern for discrimination in employment, Stokes, Murray, Peacock, and Kaiser (1994) found that in a community sample of African Americans with a higher income, they were more likely to face more personalized racism, which is likely the result of increased interactions with Whites or experiences of the glass ceiling effect in employment. These individuals, compared to African Americans with a lesser income, ascribed to a higher endorsement of racial identity. Such factors may increase African American male students' endorsements of cultural values that promote communalism, collective effort, and cooperative economics, in addition to self-affirming values of creativity, self-determination, faith, and purpose, as outlined in the principles of the Nguzo Saba.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the college experiences of African American male undergraduate students attending an HBCU. Specifically, this study was intended to explore (a) types of stressors (i.e., interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, and environmental) experienced by African American male students and their perceptions of social stigma, and (b) the role Africentric cultural values play in experiences of stress and perceptions of social stigma. Africentric cultural values were examined as a potential moderator of stress and perceptions of social stigma among African American males attending an HBCU. The experiences of African American male college students have not been extensively explored in psychological research (Davis, 1994; Harper, 2003; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011;

Smeadley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Even more pronounced is the paucity of literature that examines the experiences of African American males attending an HBCU (Jackson & Moore, 2006; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011).

Rationale for Current Study

Smeadley, Myers and Harrell (1993) noted the concept of *student role strain*, and defined it as stressors that evolved from multiple responsibilities as a student, (e.g., relationships, academic responsibilities, financial obligations). They also indicated that these stressors are "a generic pathway of influences and contribute to college maladjustment for all students." (p.435). Lindsey, Reed, Lyons, Hendricks, Mead, and Butler (2011) added that stress associated with being a student is compounded by stress inherent in the transitional period of entering college. Lindsey, et al. (2011) highlighted that student stressors would include "academic load, being away from home, family obligations, work, maintaining personal relationships, time management, financial obligations, and becoming acclimated to a new environment" (p. 750). However, few studies have examined sources of stress for African American students at an HBCU (Lindsey, et al., 2011). Smeadly, et al. (1993) also noted that in addition to stressors from student responsibilities, minority students encounter a unique experience that adds to the student role strain and further impacts their college experience. They categorized this as *minority status stress*. These stressors include negative experiences as a direct effect of minority group membership, and indirect effects of social, familial, and economic stressors (i.e., pressures from home, academic weaknesses, and economic disadvantages) (Smeadley, et al., 1993). Among ethnic minority groups, African American college students and individuals of lower socioeconomic status reported higher levels of stress (Smeadley, et al., 1993).

In comparison to African American college students' experiences at a PWI, African American students at an HBCU are likely to have better grades, a more positive academic climate, and additional social support (Davis, 1994; Greer & Chwalisz, 2007). Further, African American students at HBCUs also reported having less minority status stress levels than African American students at PWIs (Greer & Chwalisz, 2007). Although this may be true, no significant difference was found in race-related stress and academic stress (Greer & Chwalisz, 2007). Solorzano, Ceja, and Tosso (2006) stated "understanding and analyzing the collegiate racial climate is an important part of examining college access, persistence, graduation, and transfer to and through graduate and professional school for African American students" (p.62). In research studies that examine college experiences, African American students are often underrepresented. Even more pronounced is the underrepresentation of African American males in college experience literature (Smeadley, et al., 1993).

There are a number of factors likely to negatively impact African Americans' investment and motivation in pursuing postsecondary education. Early middle and high school experiences are likely to impact African American male students' self-efficacy and their investment in academic systems (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Noguera, 2003). For example, African American males in middle and high schools have been found to have disproportionately lower academic achievement, behavior problems, suspensions, and expulsions than any other race or gender group (Davis & Jordan, 1994). Moreover, Blake and Darling (1994) pointed out several areas of difficulty faced by African American males, including stereotypes (i.e., lazy, violent, mentally deficient, hypersexual, athletic, and criminals), and discrimination. Blake and Darling (1994) also described economic challenges for African American males such as high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Other challenges noted were include substance use,

increased suicide rates, health issues and academic concerns (Noguera, 2003). Hence, African American males in college may experience unique challenges in achieving college success (Strayhorn, 2008).

Self-concept is a significant predictor of academic achievement for African American students at HBCUs (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005). Racial and ethnic identity has been found to be more important to minority group members than for Whites (Branch, 2001; Miville et al., 2005). Further, Pope's (2000) study reported that racial identity is essential for African Americans' psychosocial development. Racial identity has been shown to have significant positive effects on psychological outcomes (i.e., adaptive psychological defenses) (Mague, 1999; Miville et al., 2000; Newman, 2005; Nghe & Mahalik, 2001; Walker, Wingate, Obasi, & Joiner, 2008). Grills and Longshore (1996) posited that the utilization of African values is an important framework for assessing racial and ethnic identity of African Americans. In addition, Joseph and Chambers' (2010) study demonstrated that in comparison to African American females, Africentrism was found to have a significant inverse effect on stress levels for African American males at an HBCU, such that African American males who reported a low level of Africentrism also indicated higher levels of perceived stress.

This researcher investigated the experiences of African American male undergraduate students at an HBCU in relation to social stigma, student stress, and Africentrism. This study has the potential to add to the scholarly literature the experiences of a specific population within a specific context.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

Research Question 1

What are the relationships among Africentrism, Social Stigma Consciousness, and Student Stress among African American male students at an HBCU?

1a. What is the relationship between Africentrism and Social Stigma Consciousness?

> *1a Null Hypothesis.* There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999).

1b. What is the relationship between Africentrism and subscales of Student Stress?

> *1b Null Hypotheses*

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Interpersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Intrapersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Academic stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Environmental stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

1c. What is the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness and subscales of Student Stress?

1c Null Hypotheses

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Interpersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Intrapersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Academic stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Environmental stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

Research Question 2

To what degree does Africentrism influence the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness and Student Stress?

Null Hypothesis

Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) will not demonstrate statistically significant influence on the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999) and Student Stress, as measured by the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

Definition of Terms

Definitions of the following terms are important in understanding this study.

African American students- African American students across the African Diaspora who identify as Black, African American, Negro, or Afro American (US Census Bureau, 2010). This includes, but is not limited to, students with cultural heritages in Jamaica, Haiti, and other Caribbean countries.

Historically Black College or University- institutions categorized by Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as an accredited college or university constructed prior to 1965 whose principal mission was to educate African American students (Higher Education Act 1965, sec. 1061).

Student Stress-general student stress as assessed by the Student Stress Survey (Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999). Subscales include Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Academic, and Environmental stress.

Stereotype Threat- "the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one's self definition" (Steele, 1997, p. 616).

Social Stigma-" social categories about which others hold negative attributes, stereotypes, and beliefs, or which, on average, receive disproportionately poor interpersonal or economic outcomes relative to members of the society at large because of discrimination against members of the social category" (Crocker, & Major, 1989; p. 609).

Social Stigma Consciousness- the awareness that social stigma exists for one's social group. Social stigma consciousness is assessed by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999).

Africentric Cultural Values- A value set derived from African collectivistic worldview. This includes having an identification with the African race, and striving for the betterment of the community (Grills & Longshore, 1996).

Africentrism- Africentric cultural values as measured by the *Africentrism Scale* by Grills and Longshore (1996). These values are the seven principles of Kwanzaa's Nguzo Saba: umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity), and imani (faith) (Grills & Longshore, 1996).

Limitations

1. Findings from this HBCU may not be generalizable to other HBCUs because each HBCU is unique given differences in demographic makeup; social climate; economic standing; and academic, housing, and psychosocial support.

2. Participants are students enrolled in an institution in the southeastern section of the U.S. For this reason, it is important to note that findings may not be generalizable to other HBCUs in other geographic locations in the US.

3. This study is limited to findings of a concentrated population: African American males attending an HBCU. Therefore, findings are not generalizable to African American women attending an HBCU.

4. This study is cross-sectional; therefore, the effects of student stress, Africentrism, and social stigma consciousness across time will not be assessed. Consequently, results are limited to data collected in one time period.

5. Instruments to measure the constructs of Africentrism, student stress, and social stigma for students attending an HBCU were limited.

Assumptions

1. The selected self-report measures will adequately measure Africentrism, stress, and social stigma consciousness.

2. Endorsement of Africentric values is a protective factor for African Americans.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature examines studies of college experiences of African Americans as a basis and frame for conceptualizing the experiences of African American males. This literature review begins by examining the conceptual framework of racial identity as it relates to African Americans. Additionally, the effects of social stigma for African Americans in an educational setting are also reviewed. Lastly, the college experiences, including stressors, of African Americans are examined. Subsections examining the historical underpinnings of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and the college experiences of African American males at HBCUs are also presented.

I. African American Racial Identity

Research has shown that race and ethnicity are more important to minority group members than for Whites with regard to identity development (Branch, 2001; Fisher & Hartmann, 1995; Miville et al., 2005). Miville et al. (2005) explained their reasoning:

That is, because of the history of sociopolitical subordination that students of color have experienced, and the ensuing psychological work in which they may engage to create a more positive racial or cultural identity, collective identities based on these group memberships may become a psychologically central or salient part of the overall self-concept. Indeed these collective identities may serve as psychological guides for defining one's overall self-concept. (p. 160)

Nevertheless, what is racial identity? How is it defined for African Americans? This section will provide a discussion on racial identity and factors that are considered when conceptualizing racial identity. It is important to note that this discussion will report psychological studies on

both racial and ethnic identity. In order to maintain consistency and for the purpose of this dissertation, this author will utilize the term racial identity.

To better understand racial identity for African Americans, Anderson (1991) highlights the works of Black social scientists and historians who have found that African Americans are more similar in beliefs, behaviors and values of an Africans than another racial group. This cultural values system is referred to as African worldview. An African worldview operates from the tenets of collectivism, and is also identified as emphasizing spirituality, communalism, and social responsiveness. In comparison, European worldviews operate from individualism, and is identified as having an emphasis on individualism, materialism, and mastery. To further illustrate this Markus and Kitayama (1991) explained individualistic and collectivistic worldviews with regard to self in this way: individualistic worldview emphasizes independence; whereas, collectivistic worldview emphasizes *inter*dependence. For African Americans who value an Africentric worldview yet live in a Eurocentric society, this presents concerns of acculturation and potentially further complicates a simple definition for racial identity. Anderson indicated that although it seems that African Americans have assimilated into American society, this may not have occurred on all levels, for all Blacks, and without cost. Consequently, African Americans living in a majority European culture may face challenges of acculturation that may result in stress. Hence, African Americans who identify more with African worldviews or have a high Africentric racial identity may express higher levels of stress related to acculturation.

It is also important to note that the ambiguity in defining parameters of racial identity specifically for African Americans may be due to the attack of the African race during slavery and thereafter. African Americans have struggled to remain true to their ancestral identity. Unlike other groups of people who came to the United States in search of freedom, many African

Americans were brought to the United States for the purpose of forced labor. Erikson (1968) noted that Africans' separation from Africa robbed them of the identity of "immigrant". Due to strategic methods of depersonalization the imposed identity of being subordinate took the place of Africans' sense of self-pride. Authors such as Ralph Ellison (1980) have demonstrated how African Americans struggle with identity because of their race. Ellison illustrated how African Americans were often overlooked and never considered, and so assimilated their identity to *invisibility*. Further, W.E.B. Dubois (1994) coined a concept of double consciousness in his book, *Soul of Black Folks,* which further illustrated the shattered identity post slavery. He discussed double consciousness as this:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in an amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals on one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 3)

Although African Americans are not a homogenous group, as a minority group culture is likely to play a large role in the way they are perceived in today's society. Further, this perception is also likely to influence how they perceive themselves. Having a strong sense of self or racial identity has been associated with having a mature psychological defense (Nghe & Mahalik, 2001). Thus, it would be important to know how the endorsement of Africentric cultural values impact psychological functioning. Ascribing to Africentric cultural values has also been shown to impact quality of life, interpersonal relationships (Constantine, Alleyne, Wallace, & Franklin-Jackson, 2006), and ego strength (Abu-Rayya, 2006; Mague, 1999; Miville et al., 2000; Newman, 2005). Further, collective work and responsibility and cooperative

economics were significant indicators in influencing drug intolerance in African American youth (Belgrave & Townsend, 1997).

Overall, Pope's (2000) study posited that racial identity is essential for African Americans' psychosocial development. Pope (2000) also indicated that for this reason, student affairs professionals should not make assumptions about a student's level of psychosocial development without evaluating the student's level of racial identity, and his/her individual history, cultural values, and perspectives of other racial groups.

Racial Identity and Academic Achievement of African Americans

Due to the constant attacks on African Americans' intellectual capabilities, when exploring the components of racial identity for African Americans there are inconsistencies regarding the saliency of the association between academic achievement and racial identity.

The ambiguity of whether or not academic achievement would be a part of the conceptualization of racial identity for African Americans can be explained in multiple arenas. Cokley and Moore (2007) categorized the various theories that would explain why academic achievement for some African Americans might not be considered a component in their perspective of African American racial identity: sociological perspectives, as in the *cool pose* theory; anthropological perspectives, as in the "oppositional identity"; and related psychological perspectives, as in academic dis-identification and psychological disengagement.

Sociological Perspective. Osborne (1999) identified the notable work of Majors and Billson's (1992) *cool pose* phenomenon often adopted by African American males. This concept emphasizes being emotionless, fearless, and aloof as a method of coping with social oppression and racism. These behaviors are often exhibited to counter poor self-confidence and damaged

pride. It can be characterized as a type of reaction formation. Consequently, individuals that conform to the "cool pose" phenomenon are not motivated to be diligent, hard-working students.

Anthropological Perspective. Osborne (1999) identified the concepts of Ogbu (1997) that separate minorities into two groups, immigrants and involuntary immigrants. Immigrants are identified as individuals who reside in the United States voluntarily, usually for reasons of freedom or economical gain. However, Ogbu (1997) asserted that involuntary minorities are those who reside in the United States involuntarily (i.e., African Americans). Due to the involuntary state of these immigrants, they tend to function in opposition, hence possessing an oppositional identity to the majority group by rejecting or de-valuing the majority's values. Therefore, this group may dis-identify with academics as a part of their identity development. Contrary to the involuntary immigrants' reaction to the majority group, the voluntary immigrant group tends to assimilate the majority's values as a method of advancement (i.e. education attainment). Perceptions of conforming to the majority culture in the African American social realms sometimes breeds the 'tag' of 'acting white'; many times this means performing exceedingly well in academics and speaking properly.

Psychological Perspective. Osborne (1999) discussed that many have found that identification with academics is necessary for the acquisition of success and learning. Hence, those who identify with academics connect academic success with self-esteem, and the failure in such results in lower self-esteem. However, those who do not self-identify with academics tend to be less motivated to succeed academically and/or low academic performance does not seem to damage their self-esteem. When this occurs, it is identified as academic dis-identification.

Cool pose, oppositional identity, and academic dis-identification presents an important concern for considering academic self-concept in defining racial identity for African Americans.

However, Cokley & Moore (2007)'s study indicated that academic self-concept is more of a concern for African American males than African American females. In fact, his study revealed that with increased GPA, African American women endorsed higher levels of racial identity, but African American males maintained a high level of racial identity despite having lower GPA (Cokley & Moore, 2007). Cokley & Moore points to the theories of cool pose, oppositional identity, and academic dis-identification to provide some explanation for their findings. Cokley & Moore concluded that this finding adds to the notion that the relationship between racial identity and academic achievement is inconclusive.

However, the relationship between racial identity and academic achievement is not best conceptualized as a direct linear relationship (Cokley & Moore, 2007). Other factors may influence this relationship. In fact, cluster analysis studies (i.e., Chavous, et al., 2003; Matthews, 2014) have utilized profiles to illustrate a clearer explanation of the relationship between racial identity and academics. For example, Chavous, et al. (2003)'s longitudinal study found that African Americans adolescents who had a higher racial group pride and positive beliefs about society's view of African Americans also had more positive academic beliefs. Furthermore, this study demonstrated that these qualities had a significant impact on educational attainment; such that African Americans students with a higher sense of racial group pride were also more likely to attend a university after high school. Specifically for African American males, Matthews (2014)'s cluster analysis study concluded that factors such as academic intrinsic value, school belongingness, self-regulated learning, and self-efficacy positively impact academic self-concept. Therefore for African Americans, the relationship between racial identity and academic self-concept is influenced by a number of factors, including group pride, positive social

perceptions about one's racial group, positive academic environment, and behaviors and beliefs that support academic success.

The above-mentioned factors all play a role in the complexities of racial identity research findings. Differences in racial identity research findings may also be a function of the diversity in African Americans' identity perceptions. Hence, these factors influence how racial identity is defined and measured. Is academic success a vital component of the overall composition of the identification process of African Americans' racial identity? Researchers in Black or African Psychology, (e.g., Kambon, 1992), would assert that a true African American identity would be one that motivates one's optimal self. This would include academic success or the accumulation of knowledge, for which African tradition identifies as necessary for the betterment of oneself and its community (Kambon, 1992; Grills & Longshore, 1996). To this point, Komarraju and Cokley (2008) found that collectivism is related to academic achievement for African Americans.

In order to further conceptualize racial identity, it is best to investigate the paradigms in which researchers have used them. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will address the complex entity of racial and ethnic identity for African Americans. Burlew and Smith (1991) produced an overview and proposed framework for measures of racial identity for African Americans.

Burlew and Smith (1991) emphasized that researchers should not endorse one racial identity measure over another; instead, researchers should examine which aspect of racial identity their research program would like to utilize or operationally define for the purpose of their study. Consequently, Burlew and Smith (1991) advised that due to the fact that differences

among the various measures' orientation is substantial, two similar studies that utilize the same measures may exhibit vast differences in research findings.

Burlew and Smith further proposed four grouping orientations for racial identity measures for African Americans: a) developmental measures; b) Africentric measures; c) group-based measures; and d) measures of racial stereotyping. The *Nigrescence Model (Cross, 1971)* and the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS; Parham & Helms, 1981) are examples of a developmental theory and measure, respectively. The *African-Self Consciousness Scale* (Kambon & Bell, 1985), and the *Africentrism Scale* (Grills & Longshore, 1996) are examples of Africentric measures. The *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)* (Phinney, 1992) is an example of a group-based measure, and the *Nadanolitization Scale* (NAD; Taylor & Grundy, 1996) is an example of a racial stereotyping measure. For the purposes of this study, the researcher will focus on Africentric measures.

Africentric Measures

African Self-Consciousness Scale. Kambon (1992), a pioneer in African psychology, observed cultures through worldviews. He explained that within each culture are worldviews; it is the paradigm in which one operates. For example, worldviews can be defined as values (e.g., relationships) for which a culture would view particular customs important. Hence, in order for one to evaluate culture in respect to identity, it is important to examine how culture informs identity. For the African community, Kambon (1992) argued that the African worldview values intricate relationships between kinship and community, social affiliation, shared participation and communal experience, religion, symbolism and spiritual association. Kambon's African Self-Consciousness Scale (ASC) measures the African worldview. Kambon argued that these

views are the same for Africans despite their geographical location (e.g., African Americans) (Kambon, 1992).

      Africentrism Scale. Grills and Longshore (1996) also believed that utilizing African values is an important framework for assessing racial identity of African Americans. Grills and Longshore (1996) employed the Kwanzaa's Nguzo Saba's Seven Principles to assess African Americans' adherence to African values. The authors emphasized that the seven principles represent the *minimum* set of values needed for African Americans to "build and sustain an Afrocentric family, community and culture" (p.88), and offers guidelines for daily living (Grills & Longshore, 1996). These principles are as follows:

1. Umoja (Unity)- to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race;

2. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)- to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for, and spoken for by others;

3. Ujima (Collective work and responsibility)- to build and maintain our community together and make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and to solve them together;

4. Ujamaa (Cooperative economics)- to build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together;

5. Nia (Purpose)- to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community to restore our people to their traditional greatness;

6. Kuumba (Creativity)- to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it; and

7. Imani (Faith) - to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Grills and Longshore (1999) applied these principles in their *Africentrism Scale.* The authors believed that this scale would have implications for the client assessment and service targeting, especially for African Americans. For example, this instrument can be used to identify individuals' level of adherence to the seven African principles, in that they may likely benefit from African-centered approaches or treatments (Grills & Longshore, 1996). The authors emphasized that this measure provides a sound assessment of a client's level of Africentrism. Additionally, the *Africentrism Scale* (Grills & Longshore, 1996) also has a neutral voice in its assessment of one's adherence to the Nguzo Saba's Seven Principles (Cokley, 2005). For example, some items on the Africentrism Scale read: a) My family's needs are more important to me than my own needs, and b) I am doing a lot to improve my neighborhood. Collectivism, the regard of self in a collective sense (e.g. family, community, or tribe) in one's personal goals (Triandis, 1996), is a keen aspect of Africentrism. Explicit in these principles are the values of family and community.

II. African Americans and Societal Perceptions

Social perceptions play a significant role in how one views himself/herself. As illustrated in the previous section, social perceptions about one's racial group significantly impact academic achievement (Chavous, et al, 2003). In this section, the concepts of stereotype threat and social stigma, and their effects on psychological functioning and academic performance will be explored.

African Americans and Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat is defined as "the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one's self-definition" (Steele, 1997, p. 616). For African Americans, negative stereotypes regarding academics impacts academic performance (Steele, 1997; Davis, Aronson, & Salinas, 2006), thus posing a threat to academic achievement. Additionally, stereotypes challenge African American students' intelligence and work ethic/effort; hence stereotype expectations play a crucial role in academic integration for one's overall identity. Steele (1997) explained that if stereotype threat is experienced in the area of academic performance, then the emotional reaction experienced from stereotype threat interferes with one's academic functioning (Steele, 1997). For this reason, Steele stated that African Americans may begin to dis-identification with academics as a means of coping, which would ultimately negatively influence academic self-concept and self-efficacy.

African Americans and Social Stigma

Stigma consciousness, the expectation that one's group membership determines how he/she will be perceived, resembles the construct of stereotype threat (Pinel, 1999). Pinel explained that this holds true in situationally-bound experiences. However, Pinel also noted a difference in the constructs. Stereotype threat refers to concerns of one's personal actions; whereas, stigma consciousness is considered when there is an expectation of being stereotyped despite one's actual behavior. Frost (2011) made a further distinction that stereotypes exist at the psychological level and is commonly the product of social stigma. Social stigma is defined as the "social categories about which others hold negative attributes, stereotypes, and beliefs, or which, on average, receive disproportionately poor interpersonal or economic outcomes relative to

members of the society at large because of discrimination against members of the social category" (Crocker, & Major, 1989; p. 609). Both Crocker and Major (1989) and Link and Phelan (2001) agree that the concept of social stigma is applicable when discrimination co-exists in a power scenario.

Stigma-related stressors are experienced at various societal levels (i.e., institutional, group, and individual) and in the form of event-based experiences (i.e., isolated discriminatory situations) or everyday discrimination (i.e., discriminatory treatment and service at retail or restaurant venues) (Meyers, 2003). For African Americans, stigma- related stressors have been associated with psychological distress (Brown, et al., 2000; Krieger, Smith, Naishadham, Hartman, & Barbeau, 2005; Neville, Heppner, Ji, & Thye, 2004) and depression (Brown, et al., 2000; Krieger, et al., 2005), thus inhibiting positive psychological growth (Brown, 2004). Stigma-related stressors have also been shown to negatively affect physical health (i.e., blood pressure, heart condition) for African Americans (Brown, 2004; Krieger, et al., 2005).

Gender differences in social stigma for African Americans should also be noted. African American males specifically face unique challenges related to social stigma. Douglas (2012) provided an example of African American gender differences in social stigma with regard to parenting, character, and intelligence:

Unlike the Black woman, who in spite of her horrific experiences at the hands of systematic oppression, is believed to have maintained her parental instincts, the Black man's instinctual capacities have been misappropriated and his intentions misunderstood; he must not only overcome the dominant ideology that paternal instincts (for any man) are void of the capacity to nurture, but he must also prove that his instincts (as a Black man) are not animalistic, anarchic, and anti-intellectual. (p. 392)

Further, Gary's (2005) findings revealed that African American males who are young, single, racially conscious, masculine, and exposed to daily stressors significantly experienced racial discrimination more than those who do not fit that profile. Watkins, Hudson, Caldwell, Siefert, and Jackson's (2010) study also demonstrated that for African American males, stigma-related stressors are negatively associated with psychological distress and depression.

Internalizing Social Stigma. A number of authors have addressed the concerns of internalizing social stigma for African Americans (i.e., Bryant, 2011; Cross, 1971; Jones, 2000; Speight, 2007; Watts-Jones, 2002; Woodson, 1999). However, Crocker (1999) challenged the notion that stigmatized groups internalize devaluation and distortions of their social groups. This notion is supported by the looking glass self-hypothesis of social interactionists (see Cooley, 1956; Mead, 1934), which postulated that humans receive impressions of themselves by feedback of others. Instead, Crocker (1999) clarified that the consequences of stigmatization is dependent upon the social context and an individual's interpretation of the social context. She further indicated that stigmatization threat on an individual's self-worth is dependent upon the derived meaning of the social context. Pinel (1999) explained that it is possible that individuals who are high in stigma consciousness may reject stereotypes of their social group due to increased awareness, and this awareness is utilized in processing the social context. Hence, Crocker (1999) encouraged the study of the experiences of the collective representations that the stigmatized bring to situations.

A self-protective property of social stigma is one's tendency to make in-group comparisons. That is, individuals avoid self-depreciation by comparing themselves self to others within their social group, thus attributing experiences of social stigma to a collective experience instead of a result of personal qualities and characteristics (Crocker, & Major, 1989; Harper, 2003; Noguera,

2003; Woodcock, Hernandez, Estrada, & Schultz, 2012). "Proximity" effect is examined as a feature of in-group comparisons, and therefore considered a protective element (Crocker & Major, 1989). An example includes African Americans attending schools that have predominately African American students (i.e., an HBCU). Woodcock, et al. (2012) found that in experiences of academic stereotype threat, African American college students in science-related majors discounted the validity of performance feedback and this feedback did not result in academic dis-identification. Woodcock et al., explained that in their sample African American students may have benefited from contextual variables such as critical mass. They further noted that, "…when in the numerical majority, a stereotype-threatened individual may become more likely to maintain a positive domain-specific self concept given the existence of a positive in-group identity" (p. 643). Highlighted in the theory of in-group comparison are the importance of critical mass of the stigmatized social group and the benefit of a positive in-group identity as protective factors. Hence, protective factors for African American students include attending an HBCU and/or having a positive racial identity.

III. College Choice and College Experiences for African American students

Having explored psychological literature on racial identity and social perceptions, this section will explore a) the factors that influence African Americans to choose to attend college and college choice (HBCU vs. PWI), and b) their experiences in college with regards to stress, and academic and social integration.

Influences of the Decision to Attend College and College Choice

Cultural Considerations. Factors that influence the decision to attend college and college choice are important to consider in evaluating the attrition and retention of African American students. African American students are more likely to be first generation college students and of

low socioeconomic status than their European American counterparts (Bui, 2002; Cho, Hudley, Lee, & Barry, 2008). Generational status and economic disparities help to provide context and understanding of the types of stressors and challenges African American college students are likely to face. First-generation college students are more likely to feel uncertain about decisions related to college, (i.e., major choice), apprehensive of feeling satisfied with the college experience (e.g., feeling accepted by peers and institution), and worry about academic success than students of parents with some or more college experience (Bui, 2002).

Cultural-specific factors, such as collectivism, are considered by African American students during the college choice and application process. For example, family has been shown to have a significant influence on African American students considering college (Herndon & Hirt, 2004). The decision to attend college for African American students include bringing honor to the family, and assisting with family financial obligations after completing college (Bui, 2002; Phinney, Dennis, & Osorio, 2006). Further, African American first-generation college students consider parental input important in college choice (Choa et al., 2008). Other contributors for college choice among African American students include validating self-worth, mentorship influence (Phinney, et al., 2006), and personal financial security (JBHE Foundation, 2006).

Stressors in College for African Americans at PWIs vs. HBCUs

Stress is inevitably a part of the collegiate experience. However, for African American college students, pressures to acculturate to the majority society may exacerbate stress. Although this may be true, Joiner and Walker's (2002) study found that African Americans at an HBCU exhibited less acculturative stress than African Americans at a PWI. However, acculturative stress levels were found to be different from participants' *daily* stress (Joiner & Walker, 2002).

Further, it should be noted that this study was not evaluated in the context of including a protective factor such as racial identity or Africentric cultural values.

African American students have been reported to have fewer experiences with racism/discrimination at HBCUs (Watkins, et al., 2007). In fact, African Americans at PWIs have reported social alienation (James, 1998) and mistreatment by faculty (D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993) occurring frequently. James (1998) indicated that effects of stressful academic environments and strained social relationships include feelings of powerlessness, devastation, and exclusion. Neville, Heppner, Ji, and Thye (2004) found that among African American students at a PWI, general and race-related stress are related to psychological stress. Further, Neville, Heppner, and Wang (1997) found that racial identity attitudes were significant predictors of general and cultural-specific stressors for African American students at a PWI. Sellers and Shelton (2003) found that racial ideology and having the belief that others have positive feelings toward African Americans moderated the positive relationship between perceived discrimination and race-related stress. Neville and colleagues (1997) noted that further research is necessary for investigating complex models of stress for African Americans (i.e., moderators, mediators, and indirect effects).

Lindsey, Reed, Lyons, Hendricks, Mead, and Butler (2011) identified five of the highest reported areas of stress for African Americans at an HBCU: "important decisions about your education", "peers respect what you have to say", "too many things to do at once", "a lot of responsibilities", and "financial burdens". Negga, Applewhite, and Livingstone (2007) also highlighted interpersonal (i.e., death of family member, girlfriend/boyfriend problems) and academic difficulties (i.e., misses classes, low grades, time management) as areas of stress for African Americans at an HBCU. Douglas' (2012) study suggested that students experience

academic, spiritual, and social 'renovation' as a result of the nurturing environment of an HBCU. Albeit, African American college students attending HBCUs may experience different stressors than African American students who attend PWIs (Nottingham, Rosen, & Parks, 1992). Nottingham, Rosen, and Parks (1992) found that African American college students at HBCUs reported dissatisfaction with environmental perceived stress (i.e. living conditions related to financial difficulties). Overall, despite the protective factors that attending an HBCU provides for African American students (i.e., social and cultural support; Nottingham, et al., 1992), racial and ethnic-related stressors remains as a strong predictor of perceived stress (Greer, 2008).

College Social Climate. The collegiate social climate is a significant influence of academic achievement (Allen, 1992; Anglin & Wade, 2007; Cokley, 2002; Furr & Elling, 2002; Herndom & Hirt, 2004; Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005;) and student development (Flowers, 2004) for minorities. In fact, Allen (1992) concludes that "the way a student perceives *and* responds to events in the college setting will differentiate his or her college experience and shape his or her college outcomes" (p. 39). African American students who indicate a positive relationship with faculty and higher social engagement demonstrated higher academic achievement (Allen, 1992). Additionally, academic achievement was highest for African American students who had higher educational aspirations, strongly believed their college choice were correct, and reported positive relationships with faculty (Allen, 1992). Further, campus racial composition was found to be the strongest predictor of student outcomes (Allen, 1992). Campus racial composition was correlated with academic achievement, high school grades, and relationship with professors (Allen, 1992). Given these findings, African American students who attend HBCUs reported better academic performance, more social engagement, and higher occupational aspirations than those who attend PWIs (Allen, 1992). Moreover, positive faculty-

student interaction was a significant predictor of academic self-concept for African Americans at HBCUs (Cokley, 2002). Conclusively, Allen (1992) states that HBCUs provide a collegiate environment in which African American students are more able to "take risks associated with intellectual growth and development" (p.40).

IV. HBCUs: Educational opportunities for African Americans

"The American dream lies at the very heart of the American cultural ethos. At the center of the American dream is the emphatic convention that, in this society, education opens the door to success" (Allen & Jewell, 2002; p. 241). Post civil war is when this American dream became tangible for African Americans, as they looked back at a deleterious history of 400 years of slavery, and forward to educational opportunities that would shed hope in forging a brighter future. For African American adults this hope began with historically black colleges or universities (Jackson & Moore, 2006). This section will explore the history and contributions of HBCUs for African Americans.

HBCUs' Early Beginnings

A historically Black College or University is categorized by the Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as an accredited college or university constructed prior to 1965 whose principal mission was to educate African American students (Higher Education Act 1965, sec. 1061). Under this act, HBCUs were also defined to include institutions with at least 50% of first-generation and low-income college students. After the Civil War, 90% of African Americans were illiterate, and therefore, formal education for African Americans mainly targeted providing basic reading and math skills (Albritton, 2012). These institutions were also sites of empowerment and social uplift (Brown, Donahoo, & Bertrand, 2001; Douglas, 2012). Allen &

Jewell (2002) further describe that education provided African Americans an opportunity to have a distinct separation from a past of slavery and subordinate society status.

African Americans' enrollment into HBCUs were not just for educational gain, but was also viewed as an opportunity to advance the African American community through advocacy for civil equality and justice. This is exemplified through the success of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an organization of African America college student activists. HBCUs provided a medium for educational gain, social responsiveness, and community awareness. Further without question, HBCUs aided in fostering a positive self-concept. Albritton (2012) stated that "The HBCU experience offered Black students the opportunity to realize their potential in ways that affirmed their identity and challenged them to use their education to demand justice for both themselves and their community" (p. 314).

Historically, African American and White churches funded HBCUs (Albritton, 2012). Religious leaders of White churches sought to train individuals who would ultimately bear the responsibility to spread the gospel. Although African Americans appreciated the financial support received from white religious organizations, many African Americans sought to separate themselves from the continued discriminative practices that were fueled by stereotyped perceptions of African Americans (Albritton, 2012). HBCUs received some government funding at the state and local levels. However, despite the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) Supreme Court ruling of 'separate but equal', HBCUs experienced limited funding from southern states, thus limiting these institutions' capacity to provide equitable resources as compared to PWIs (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Albritton, 2012). However, there were educational legislations that aided in the development of HBCUs, such as the funding under the Freedom Bureau, and the Higher Education Act of 1965. Despite continued financial hardships HBCUs face, they have

demonstrated to be just as effective in developing academic abilities in reading, math, and writing as PWIs (Kim, 2002).

HBCU Relevance

Prior to the *Brown vs. Education* decision of 1954, 90% of African Americans attended HBCUs. After this court ruling, the number of African Americans attending HBCUs deceased as they were increasingly admitted to PWIs, thus eliminating the idea that HBCUs were the only post-secondary education option for African Americans (Allen & Jewell, 2002). By 1980, 20% of African Americans who attended college were students of HBCUs.

Today 20% of African American students receive their bachelor's degree from an HBCU, and more than a third of African American students with degrees in natural sciences received their degrees from an HBCU (United Negro College Fund). Additionally, 33% of African Americans with a PhD in science or engineering received their undergraduate degrees from an HBCU (Burrell, & Rapoport, 2008). Further, 75% of all Africans Americans with PhDs, 46% of African American executives, 50% of African American engineers, 80% of African American federal judges, and 65% of African American medical doctors completed their undergraduate studies at HBCUs (Wilson, 2008). Wilson also pointed out that about one-third of African American graduates are products of HBCUs. HBCUs not only provided educational and career opportunities for African Americans, but also for first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented groups (Bettez & Suggs, 2012).

HBCUs' Role and Mission

Notwithstanding increased opportunities for African Americans to attend PWIs, HBCUs continue to remain an option for minorities who may be economically or academically disadvantaged (Albritton, 2012). For this reason, many HBCUs have an "open" admission

policy, and their mission reflects that of educating students across the spectrum of academic preparedness (Brown, Donahoo, & Betrand, 2001). Albritton (2012) stated that, "consequently, HBCUs have had to engage in the mission-critical task of providing ongoing support to ensure that Black students have the option for higher education despite the numerous social, political, and economic barriers that plague members of the Black community" (p.326). At HBCUs, the empowerment of African American students is fostered through a culturally and spiritually sensitive academic environment (Douglas, 2012; Thompson, 2008). HBCUs are also expected to provide a curriculum that is reflective of culture-specific pedagogy (Brown, et al., 2001).

HBCUs' academic mission also includes the empowerment of African American students and a commitment and involvement in social engagement and advocacy. Douglas (2012) noted that HBCUs and the African American community are heavily connected and share triumphs and trials; this relationship is rooted in the justice and hope that HBCUs served for African Americans during an era of civil inequality. Embedded in the social environment of HBCUs are the ideologies of community accountability and service (Douglas, 2012).

African American students attending HBCUs

Evaluating college students' reasons for choosing to attend HBCUs provides useful insight for student affairs and administrative personnel of HBCUs (Freeman & Thomas, 2012). Conclusions of Freeman's (1999) qualitative study revealed that background characteristics (i.e., neighborhood racial composition, high school grades) were not different for African American students who choose to attend HBCUs and those who choose to attend PWIs. Decisions to attend HBCUs were found to be strongly influenced by peers, teachers, family, and mentors. HBCUs were also viewed favorably due to lower tuition costs (Freeman & Thomas, 2012). Further, cultural influences such as learning of one's 'roots' and increasing cultural knowledge and

awareness were also highlighted. Notably, Freeman (1999) mentioned that African American students who were isolated from their cultural heritage sought to gain a deeper understanding of their heritage, and thus were more motivated to attend an HBCU and become more connected to the African American community. While, African American students who attended predominately African American high schools seem to favor attending PWIs to gain more diverse experiences that would reflect interactions that would resemble the 'real world'.

Understanding the historical underpinnings of HBCUs provides a context for the importance of communalism and collectivism as protective factors for African Americans, and more specifically African American males in college.

V. African American Males in College

Chavous, et al. (2004) explained that the framework in which race and gender are considered in education assumes that boys have more social power than girls. This framework is flawed when considering African American males in education. Owens, Lacey, Rawls, and Holbert-Quince (2010) described African American male students as a unique population in that they are likely disadvantaged by inadequate educational preparation, low high school and college attendance rates, in addition to high unemployment and incarceration rates. Diemer (2002) explained that African American males are often seen as "social problems", and in this capacity, Cuyet (1997) highlighted that African American males may develop a sense of powerlessness. For this reason, career counselors and student affairs personnel are faced with a unique challenge of understanding the academic experiences of African American male students (Hargrow, 2001).

Noguera (2003) encourages a focus on social and cultural influences on academic achievement for African American males. Theories such as the "cool pose" and "acting white" phenomenon have provided speculations for academic disengagement of African American

males (Cokley & Moore, 2007; Majors & Billson, 1992; Osborne, 1999; see Section I for more details). Cuyet (1997) highlighted that peer influence encourages academic disinterest for African American men. However, African American men in college also reference social stigma as a stressor. One African American male participant of Watkins, et al.'s (2007) study explain social stigma's impact on psychological well-being:

"The fact that (Black men) have to go into so much processing to try to figure out the different dynamics and different perceptions kind of let's me know that I'm dealing with a lot more psychological pressure and stress than the average person would be" (Watkins, et al., 2007; p. 111).

Accordingly, Cuyjet (1997) stated that having a strong African worldview is a positive developmental outlet for African American males. For example, spirituality is found to contribute to African American males' persistence in college (Herndon, 2003). Additionally, some studies have shown that African American males have a higher sense of Africentricity than African American females (Fhagen-Smith, Vandiver, Worrell, and Cross, 2010; Joseph & Chambers, 2010). Supplementary, African American males find the pursuit of educational attainment as an "insurance" against social stigma and a means of acquiring financial security for their families (Diemer, 2002). To this point, African American men in college report higher occupational aspirations than African American females (Allen, 1992).

African American Males attending an HBCU

Very few studies have focused on the experiences of African American males at HBCUs (Davis, 1994). In fact, studies found exclusively on African American males at HBCUs are primarily qualitative studies (Strayhorn, 2008). This may be for a number of reasons, including that the small percentage of African Americans at HBCUs may not make for statistical

significance in a quantitative study, or that research on African American males at HBCUs are in an infancy stage requiring a more explorative, narrative approach. Despite this, given African American males' history of academic, economical, and sociopolitical challenges, it may be argued that HBCUs are a viable college choice.

   Social and Academic Engagement. Reportedly, African American male students at PWIs are better prepared for college in that they have higher high school GPAs and college entrance exam scores, and have better study habits in college than African American males at HBCUs (Davis, 1994). However, African American males at HBCUs academically perform better and have higher degree aspirations than those at PWIs (Davis, 1994). A common assumption is that the curriculum of HBCUs does not compete with the academic rigor of PWIs; however, the graduate admissions and graduation rates of African American from HBCUs undermine this assumption (Davis, 1994). Results of Davis' study also demonstrated that in comparison to African American males at a PWI, those at an HBCU were more socially and academically integrated, and perceived their college as providing institutional support. Spurgeon and Myers (2008) found African American males at HBCUs score higher on social and coping wellness than those at PWIs. In fact, Spurgeon and Myers (2008) concluded that African American males at PWIs are at greater risk for developing psycho-social wellness than those who attend HBCUs.

   Despite this, it is important to understand the distinction that although African American males fare better at HBCUs with regards to social and academic integration, the need for socialization for African American males differs at each institution type. At PWIs, African American males expressed the importance of socialization on campus, whereas African American males at HBCUs expressed a need for socialization as a means of surviving America

(Watkins, et al., 2007). 'Surviving America' includes overcoming the social stigma placed on African American males regarding the lack of educational attainment, employment, and economic stability. One participant states,

> "One of the biggest stresses that I have is do I go out there and chase my dreams or do I take what society gives me? I can just go to college get a degree and then get a job, but then again will I truly be happy? Or should I take the risk to get out there and do the things that I truly want to do and try to become who I want to become. That stresses me out because I know so many Black people before me have tried to get somewhere and they didn't' succeed. Plus I know many people who didn't have a chance to get a college degree and now they are trying to be entrepreneurs and they are just barely making it." (p. 109)

This participant seems to be responding to negative social perceptions about educational and economical outcomes for African American males. Also evident in this excerpt is that his indecisiveness seems to be reflective of both social stigma and self-efficacy.

Additionally, when African American male students are compared to African American females at HBCUs, they report less academic rigor (i.e., academic preparedness, study habits, etc.), but more engagement with faculty (Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayesk, 2004). Similarly, Cokley and Moore (2007) found that African American men were more likely to devalue academic success, and report less academic self-concepts and GPA in comparison to African American females at an HBCU.

Community/Family Influence. African American males who attend HBCUs are more likely to have attended predominately African American high schools, and lived in predominately African American communities (Davis, 1994). Davis' study also demonstrated

that the more students' home communities' racial composition matched their college environment, the more positive their academic achievement. African American males at HBCUs expressed stressors related to their contribution to their family, including taking care of nuclear or extended family members and being role models for family members (Watkins, et al., 2007). Further, coping strategies for assessing and dealing with stressful events are modeled from family members (Watkins, et al., 2007). Watkins et al., (2007) also reported other stressors including balancing life with regards to money, grades, women, and pressure to stay in school.

Altogether, Watkins, et al. (2007) noted that African American males at PWIs report stressors stemming from school-related events; however, African American males at HBCUs report stressors not school-related. Specially, African American males at HBCUs students have reported societal/social stressors related to how society views African American men (Watkins, et al., 2007). Finally, results of Douglas' (2012) qualitative study concluded that HBCUs are practical environments that assisted with resisting stereotypical perceptions of African American males.

Conclusion

Still, Lundy-Wagner and Gasman (2011) question the literature that touts African American males at an HBCU are 'better off'. These authors consider the lack of literature and research that focuses on African American males specifically. They highlighted the statistical non-significance of the representation of African American males in literature that reviews the college experience of African American students as a whole. This is demonstrated in the stark numerical difference of African American male subjects in comparison to African American female subjects in research studies. However, this is quite reflective of the college enrollment rates of African American males and females. For this reason, research focusing on African American males'

college experiences is needed in order to shed light on their individualized experiences. This is especially important in considering the unique challenges that African American males face, including combating social stigma (e.g., stereotype threat, discrimination/racism), college stressors (e.g., academic, environmental), and relational stressors (e.g., familial and other interpersonal relationships). It is also equally important to investigate protective factors (i.e., Africentrism) that assist in buffering negative stressors and experiences.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study was designed to explore (a) types of student stressors (i.e., interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, environmental) and perceptions of social stigma experienced by African American male students, and (b) the role Africentrism plays in experiences of stress and perceptions of social stigma. Africentrism was examined as a potential moderator of student stress and perceptions of social stigma among African American males at an HBCU. This chapter provides information on the university, sample, instrumentation, data analysis, and data collection procedures that were used in this study.

Profile of the University

The university selected for this study is classified as a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University. This university is identified as one of the 150 Historically Black Colleges or Universities initiated as part of Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

This university was founded on October 3, 1887 as the State Normal College for Colored Students. Average enrollment is approximately 12,000 students from the United States and more than 70 other countries, including India, Egypt, Trinidad, Bahamas, Jamaica, and Brazil. Undergraduate student enrollment is approximately 10,000 students, with 3,500 male students. This HBCU offers 62 bachelor's degrees, 39 master's degrees, and 10 Ph.D. programs housed in 13 schools and colleges. Top undergraduate programs include architecture, journalism, computer information sciences, and psychology. This institution boasts a number of top academic rankings including #1 public HBCU (2012), college ranking for HBCUs in *U.S. News* and *World Report*, one of the "Top 100 National Universities" in two consecutive years (2012, 2011) in the *Washington Monthly* magazine, one of the "Best Colleges in the Southeast" in the *Princeton*

Review 2012 edition, and #1 producer of African American baccalaureate degree holders in 2008 by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education.*

Evident in the university's mission is the application of skills, knowledge, and innovation to serve society. This is consistent with HBCUs' historical academic mission (Douglas, 2012) and Africentric values (Grills and Longshore, 1999) for utilizing personal gain to serve others. An excerpt of the university's mission statement is provided below:

"The University provides a student-centered environment consistent with its core

values. The faculty is committed to educating students at the undergraduate, graduate,

doctoral and professional levels, preparing graduates to apply their knowledge, critical

thinking skills and creativity in their service to society."

Brown, et al., (2001) noted that HBCUs' curriculum is reflective of culture-specific pedagogy. This is also true for this university, which includes an African American History course as a requirement for all students. Students usually take this course along with other core courses during their freshman year.

Data Analysis

A power analysis was conducted to determine appropriate sample size. The power analysis for conducting a moderator analysis using three predictors, assessing for a small to medium Cohen's f^2 effect size (.08-.10), and a power of .80, established a sample size of 81-100 participants.

Participant Information

The researcher collected data from university classrooms and male residence halls. Participants included 577 individuals, specifically 69% female (n=398) and 31% males (n=179). Of this number, there were 87.9% (n=507) African Americans, 1.4% (n=8) Whites/Caucasians,

2.1% (n=12) Hispanics, 3.6% Bi-racial individuals (African American/ Caucasian; n=21), .5%

Asians (n=3), 4.2% identified as Other (n=24), and 2 individuals who did not report ethnicity.

See Table 1 for the racial/ethnic makeup of the participants. For the purpose of this study, the

researcher only utilized data from participants who identified as African American males.

Subsequently, the data presented in all remaining tables will be reflective of the African

American male participants.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Makeup

Gender	Race	Frequency	Percentage
Male	African American	146	82.5
	White/Caucasian	3	1.7
	Hispanic	6	3.4
	Bi-Racial (African American & Caucasian)	9	5.1
	Asian	1	.6
	Other	12	6.8
Female	African American	361	90.7
	White/Caucasian	5	1.3
	Hispanic	6	1.5
	Bi-Racial (African American & Caucasian)	12	3
	Asian	2	.5
	Other	12	3

African American Male Participants

One hundred and forty-six participants identified as African American males. Their ages ranged from 18-40, with the majority of the participants (44.5%; n=65) reporting ages between 18-19 (See Table 2). Representations of classification among the participants were fairly well distributed: 32.2% (n=47) freshmen, 23.3% (n=34) sophomores, 18.5% (n=27) juniors, and 26% (n=38) seniors (See Table 3). Participants also provided information on their parents' highest level of education (See Table 4). Mother's highest level of education results indicated 6.8% (n=10) below high school, 21.2% (n=31) high school graduate, 24.7% (n=36) some college, 26.7% (n=39) two-to-four year college graduate, and 16.4% (n=24) graduate education; and 4.1% (n=6) of participants reported uncertainty of their mother's highest level of education. Report of father's highest level of education included 13.7% (n=20) below high school, 32.9% (n=48) high school graduate, 13.7% (n=20) some college, 13% (n=19) two-to-four year college graduate, and 11% (n=16) graduate education; and 15.8% (n=23) of participants reported that they were unsure of their father's highest level of education. First generation college students are identified as students in which either parent does not have a four-year college degree (US Department of Education, 1998). According to this definition, about half of the students reported indications of being a first generation student.

Table 2

Age Groups

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
18-19	65	44.5
20-21	43	29.5
22-23	26	17.8
24-25	10	6.8
26-27	5	.9
28-29	1	.2
30-40	4	.7

Table 3

Classification

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Freshman	47	32.2
Sophomore	34	23.3
Junior	27	18.5
Senior	38	26.0

Table 4

Parent Education Level

Parent	Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Mother			
	Below High School	10	6.8
	High School Graduate	31	21.2
	Some College	36	24.7
	Two-to-Four year College Graduate	39	26.7
	Graduate Education	24	16.4
	Don't Know	6	4.1
Father			
	Below High School	20	13.7
	High School Graduate	28	32.9
	Some College	20	13.7
	Two-to-Four year College Graduate	19	13.0
	Graduate Education	16	11.0
	Don't Know	23	15.8

Other demographic information included relationship with caregiver, upbringing-neighborhood makeup, and religious/spiritual orientation. Most participants reported having an overall extremely close (51.4%; n=75) or close (30.8%; n=45) relationship with their caregiver (See Table 5). About half of the participants (51.4%; n=75) described the neighborhood that they lived in while being reared as predominately Black (See Table 6). More than half of the

participants indicated that they were very strongly (35%; n=52) or somewhat (43.8%; n=64) religiously/spiritually oriented (See Table 7).

Table 5

Relationship with Caregiver

Nature of Relationship	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Close	75	51.4
Close	45	30.8
Fair	22	15.1
On/Off	1	.7
Extremely Distant	3	2.1

Table 6

Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Frequency	Percentage
Predominately White	24	16.4%
Predominately Black	75	51.4
Relatively even mix of races	38	26.0
Other	8	5.5

Table 7

Religious/Spiritual Orientation

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Very Strong	52	35.6
Somewhat	64	43.8
Weak	21	14.4
Not at all	7	4.8

Instrumentation

Demographic Questionnaire. This questionnaire included questions pertaining to age, classification, race, gender, parents' level of education, relationship with primary caregiver, neighborhood racial makeup, and religious/spiritual orientation of the participants.

The Africentrism Scale. The Africentrism Scale (AS-Form B; Grills & Longshore, 1996) is a 13-item questionnaire that evaluates one's endorsement of the Seven Principles of Nguzo Saba of the Kwanzaa tradition. Six items of the scale were reverse scored before summing up the total for a composite score. High scores denote one's high level of Africentrism. Grills and Longshore (1996) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .62 for African Americans. In a sample of African American college students at an HBCU, Joseph and Chambers (2010) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .68. In this study, AS yielded a reliability Cronbach's alpha level of .60 (n=140) (See Table 8). When compared with the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), African Americans who scored higher on Africentrism also reported scores that positively correlated with the ethnic identity achievement (r=.53), ethnic behavior (r=.56), and affirmation (r=.59) subscales of the MEIM (Grills & Longshore, 1996).

Student Stress Survey. The Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999) was initially constructed to gather information on the major stress areas experienced by college students. The developers first administered this scale to 100 undergraduate students attending a mid-sized Midwestern university (Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999). Students were recruited from a co-ed service fraternity. The items on this measure include indications of daily stressors (i.e., financial difficulties) or major life events (i.e., starting college) (Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999). The items on this measure were not in sentence format, but rather short statements (e.g., "fight with girlfriend/boyfriend", "increased workload").

The SSS consists of 40 items categorized by four potential areas of stress: interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, and environmental. Interpersonal stress (6 items) represents sources of stress that result from interactions with others (e.g., fight with boyfriend/girlfriend). Intrapersonal stress (16 items) represents areas of stress that stem from internal sources (e.g., changes in eating or sleeping patterns). Academic stress (8 items) is categorized as stress associated with school-related activities (e.g., increased class work load). Environmental stress (10 items) focused on stress outside of academics (e.g., car problems). Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with anchors ranging from "not a problem at all" to "very much a problem". Higher values denote greater levels of stress.

The developers of the instrument did not report psychometric properties of this scale. Nonetheless, the Student Stress Survey was utilized in Negga, Applewhite, and Livingstone's (2007) study with an African American college student sample; however, reliability values for their sample were not reported. In this study, the reliability scores of the SSS's four subscales were as follows: Interpersonal stress ($\propto = .55, n = 144$), Intrapersonal stress ($\propto = .83, n = 139$), Academic stress ($\propto = .80; n = 142$), and Environmental stress ($\propto = .80, n = 142$). See Table 8.

Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire. The Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999) is a 10-item scale that evaluates the expectation of being stereotyped because of group membership. This scale measures items on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with a midpoint of 3 (neither agree nor disagree). Initially developed to measure the stigmatized experiences of women, the developer has also created versions for use with gay men and lesbians, and five racial groups (i.e., Blacks, Whites, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans). Phrasings for the various versions were changed to reflect the stereotyped group and the associated outgroup. All items are reverse coded, with the exception of three test items (i.e., 3, 8, 10). Higher scores denote high social stigma consciousness. Cronbach's alphas of the SCQ ranged from .64 to .84, with an average alpha of .77 (Pinel, 1999). Wilton, Sanchez and Garcia (2013) utilized the race-based SCQ, with an alpha of .79 (bi-racial students). In this study, the SCQ produced a reliability score of .63 ($n = 118$) (See Table 8).

Table 8

Cronbach's Alphas Reliability Scores for Current Study

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha	N
Africentrism Scale (AS)	.60	140
Student Stress Scale (SSS)	.92	134
Interpersonal Stress	.55	144
Intrapersonal Stress	.83	139
Academic Stress	.80	142
Environmental Stress	.80	142
Social Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ)	.63	118

Procedures

Recruitment

Emails were sent to professors, university housing director, and residence hall directors at the university to solicit potential participants. This email provided general information pertaining to the study in order to solicit their assistance with the study. Professors were asked to provide time and dates the researcher could administer the survey in their classes. The housing director and residence hall directors were asked to provide permission to solicit students' participation in their hall's lobby area. Two weeks after the initial email was sent out, the researcher sent a reminder email. The researcher visited the university to collect data based upon the recruitment activities of the professors and residence hall directors, who set up times and dates for the researcher to collect the data.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected in the Spring semester of the 2013-201 4academic year. Before the surveys were administrated, potential participants were given an informed consent and explained their rights regarding this study, and they were given an opportunity to ask questions. The informed consent was distributed separately from the survey. Participants were given a booklet consisting of the demographic questionnaire, the Africentrism Scale, Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire, and the Student Stress Survey. Students were also given a scantron sheet to record their responses. After the completion of the survey, students turned in both their booklet and the scantron. Scantrons were placed in a manila envelope. The data collection process lasted approximately 25 minutes. This data collection procedure was consistent for both the classroom residence hall administrations. However, in the residence hall a private room or space was designated for students to complete surveys. The researcher collected data from students across a span of one week. No research incentive was associated with this study.

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Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

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Research Question 1

What are the relationships among Africentrism, Social Stigma Consciousness, and Student Stress among African American male students at an HBCU?

1a. What is the relationship between Africentrism and Social Stigma Consciousness?

1a Null Hypothesis. There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999).

1b. What is the relationship between Africentrism and subscales of Student Stress?

1b Null Hypotheses

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Interpersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Intrapersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Academic stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Environmental stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

1c. What is the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness and subscales of Student Stress?

1c Null Hypotheses

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Interpersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and

Intrapersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Academic stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Environmental stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

Research Question 2

To what degree does Africentrism influence the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness and Student Stress?

Null Hypothesis

Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) will not demonstrate statistically significant influence on the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999) and Student Stress, as measured by the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

A hierarchical regression was conducted to analyze a moderator relationship. This analysis evaluated the relationship pf the moderator (Africentrism) on the relationship of the predictor variable (Social Stigma Consciousness) and the criterion variable (Student Stress and its subscales: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Academic, and Environmental stress). SPSS was

utilized as the statistical software package to conduct the moderation analyses to establish the following relationships: (1) social stigma predicts stress, (2) Africentrism predicts stress, and (3) Africentrism and social stigma predict stress.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This research study examined a) types of student stressors (i.e., interpersonal, intrapersonal, academic, and environmental) and perceptions of social stigma experienced by African American undergraduate male students attending an HBCU, and (b) the role Africentrism plays in experiences of stress and perceptions of social stigma. This chapter provides the statistical results of this study.

Preliminary Analyses

Instrumentation

Psychometric data for this study are reported in this section. Table 9 provides means and standard deviations for the instruments used in this study. The averages of the instruments were used in the analyses presented below.

Africentrism Scale. The Africentrism Scale, Form B (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) is a scale that measures Africentric values according to the Nguzo Saba of Kwanzaa. Responses are provided according to a Likert scale from 1 (strongly Disagree) to 4 (strongly Agree). The sample mean of the AS was 2.96 (SD=.36). This scale yielded a reliability Cronbach's alpha level of .60 (n=140). The Cronbach's alpha level of this scale is below acceptable standards of reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). For this sample, the AS was determined to be normally distributed, indicating no significant concerns for skewed distribution of scores among the sample.

Student Stress Scale. The Student Stress Scale (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999) measures stress levels in four areas: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Academic, and Environmental stresses. Responses were provided on a Likert scale from 0 (not a problem at all) to 4 (very much

a problem). The sample mean of the SSS was 2.64 (SD=.67), and subscale means were as follows: Interpersonal (M=2.29; SD= .69), Intrapersonal (M=2.63; SD=.73), Academic (M=2.91; SD=.95), and Environmental (M=2.66; SD=.81). This scale produced a reliability Cronbach's alpha level of .92 (n=134). This Cronbach's alpha level is within an acceptable range for reliability. The reliability scores of the SSS's four subscales were as follows: Interpersonal stress ($\propto= .55, n = 144$), Intrapersonal stress ($\propto= .83, n = 139$), Academic stress ($\propto= .80; n = 142$), and Environmental stress ($\propto= .80, n = 142$). All the subscales, with the exception of the Interpersonal stress subscale, produced an acceptable level of reliability between .7 and .9 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Likewise, a test of normality indicated that all of the subscales, with the exception of the Interpersonal stress subscale, indicated a normal distribution among the sample. The Interpersonal subscale was negatively skewed among the sample ($p \geq .01$). Transformation analyses were conducted to reduce skewedness. Reflections using both square root and logarithmic transformations were used (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In both attempts, the Interpersonal stress subscale remained negatively skewed. It should be noted that an examination of the subscale's histogram did not appear visibly skewed.

Social Consciousness Scale. The Social Consciousness Scale (SCQ; Pinel, 1999) measures social stigma consciousness. This scale's responses ranged from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The sample mean for SCQ was 3.41 (SD=.98). This scale also fell below acceptable standards for reliability($\propto= .63, n = 118$). A test of normality indicated that the scale was normally distributed among this sample.

Table 9

Instruments' Means and Standard Deviations

Instrument	Mean	Standard Deviation
Africentrism Scale (AS)	2.96	.36
Student Stress Scale (SSS)	2.64	.67
Interpersonal Stress	2.29	.69
Intrapersonal Stress	2.63	.73
Academic Stress	2.91	.95
Environmental Stress	2.66	.81
Social Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ)	3.41	.98

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

Research Question 1

What are the relationships among Africentrism, Social Stigma Consciousness, and Student Stress among African American male students at an HBCU?

1a. What is the relationship between Africentrism and Social Stigma Consciousness?

1a Null Hypothesis. There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999).

1b. What is the relationship between Africentrism and subscales of Student Stress?

1b Null Hypotheses

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Interpersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Intrapersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Academic stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) and Environmental stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

1c. What is the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness and subscales of Student Stress?

1c Null Hypotheses

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Interpersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Intrapersonal stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Academic stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

There will be no statistically significant relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel, 1999), and Environmental stress, as measured as a subscale of the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, & Heckert, 1999).

Results. Pearson Product-Moment correlations were conducted to analyze Research Question 1. Results indicated non-significant results for 1a-1c.: There were no significant relationships among the variables AS, SCQ, and SSS and its subscales. However, significant inter-correlations were only found among SSS and its subscales. See Table 10 for details.

Table 10

Correlations Between Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. AS	1						
2. SSS	-.05	1					
3. Interpersonal	-.06	.70**	1				
4. Intrapersonal	-.08	.93**	.64**	1			
5. Academic	.05	.88**	.54**	.75**	1		
6. Environmental	-.05	.82**	.41**	.63**	.66**	1	
7. SCQ	.13	.03	.15	.02	.02	-.04	1

Note. $*p < .01$

Research Question 2

To what degree does Africentrism influence the relationship between Social Stigma
Consciousness and Student Stress?

Null Hypothesis

Africentrism, as measured by the Africentrism Scale (AS; Grills & Longshore, 1996) will not
demonstrate statistically significant influence on the relationship between Social Stigma
Consciousness, as measured by the Social Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (SCQ; Pinel,
1999) and Student Stress, as measured by the Student Stress Survey (SSS; Ross, Neilbling, &
Heckert, 1999).

Results. To test the hypothesis of whether AS moderated the relationship between SCQ and
student stress, five hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed. Either SSS or its

subscales (i.e., Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Academic, and Environmental stress) served as the criterion variable. AS and SCQ were predictor variables.

Variables that explained stress levels were entered in two steps. In Step 1, the predictor variables were entered. In Step 2, the interaction term of AS and SCQ was entered. To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, the predictor variables were standardized and multiplied to create the interaction term.

In the first analysis, SSS served as the criterion variable. Results of Step 1 indicated that the predictor variables did not significantly impact SSS, $F(2, 124) = .16, p = .85.$ In Step 2, results indicated that the interaction term did not significantly impact SSS, $F(3,123) = 1.91, p = 13.$ Despite a non-significant model in Step 2, the addition of the interaction term accounted for 4.2% $(p = .02)$ of variance in SSS above and beyond the predictor variables (see Table 11 for additional details). This indicated that the introduction of the interaction term was significant above and beyond the predictor variables; however, when this introduction of the interaction term was tested on the model in Step 2, the interaction term did not significantly impact SSS.

In the second analysis, results of Step 1 indicated that Interpersonal stress was not significantly impacted by the predictor variables, $F(2, 124) = 1.18, p = .18.$ Results of Step 2, indicated that Interpersonal stress was not significantly impacted by the interaction term, $F(3, 123) = 2.17, p = .10.$ Results of the second analysis indicated that the predictor variables and the interaction term produced non-significant impact on Interpersonal stress. See Table 12 for additional details.

In the third analysis, results of Step 1 indicated Intrapersonal stress was not significantly impacted by the predictor variables, $F(2, 124) = .61, p = .54.$ Similarly, results of Step 2 also

indicated a non-significant model of the interaction term, $F(3, 123) = 1.54, p = .21.$ Results of the third analysis indicated that the predictor variables and interaction term did not significantly impact Intrapersonal stress. Notably, the addition of the interaction term seemed to approach significance ($\Delta r^2 = .03; p = .07$) (see Table 13 for additional details).

In the fourth analysis, results of Step 1 indicated a non-significant model of the impact of the predictor variables on Academic stress, $F(2, 124) = .25, p = .78.$ However, results of Step 2 indicated that Academic stress was significantly impacted by the interaction term, $F(3, 123) = 2.70, p < .05.$ The interaction term accounted for 5.8 % $(p = .01)$ of variance in Academic stress, with the interaction term having a beta weight of $.243$. Thus, the interaction term produced a significant impact on the Academic stress of African American males (see Table 14 for additional details). Examination of the interaction plot demonstrated that when African American males have a low level of SCQ, a high level of AS decreases Academic stress. Additionally, when African American males have a high level of SCQ, a high level of AS increases Academic stress (see Graph 1).

In the fifth analysis, results indicated that in Step1, Environmental stress was not significantly impacted by the predictor variables, $F(2, 124) = .08, p = .92.$ Results of Step 2 also indicated that Environmental stress was not significantly impacted by the interaction term, $F(3, 123) = 1.09, p = .36.$ See Table 15 for additional details. In this analysis, the predictor variables and the interaction term did not significantly impact Environmental stress levels for African Americans.

Table 11

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting SSS

(N = 127)

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*
AS	-.09	.18	-.05	-.04	.18	-.02
SCQ	.02	.07	.03	.01	.07	.01
AS*SCQ				.13	.06	.21
R^2		.00			.05	
F for change in R^2		.16			5.38*	

*Note: *p < .05*

Table 12

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Interpersonal

Stress (N = 127)

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*
AS	-.14	.18	-.07	-.10	.18	-.05
SCQ	.12	.07	.16	.11	.07	.14
AS*SCQ				.10	.06	.15
R^2		.03			.05	
F for change in R^2		1.72			3.01	

Table 13

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Intrapersonal Stress (N = 127)

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*
AS	-.21	.19	-.10	-.17	.19	-.08
SCQ	.02	.08	.03	.01	.08	.01
AS*SCQ				.12	.06	.16
R^2		.01			.04	
F for change in R^2		.61			3.37	

Table 14

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Academic Stress (N = 127)

|	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*
AS	.17	.25	.06	.25	.25	.09
SCQ	.02	.10	.01	-.01	.10	.01
AS*SCQ				.21	.08	.24*
R^2		.00			.06	
F for change in R^2		.25			7.58*	

*Note: *$p < .05$

Table 15

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Environmental

Stress

(N = 127)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*
AS	-.02	.22	-.01	.02	.22	.01
SCQ	-.03	.09	-.03	-.05	.09	-.05
AS*SCQ				.12	.07	.16
R^2		.00			.03	
F for change in R^2		.08			3.11	

Graph 1

Moderation Effect of Interaction Term on Academic Stress
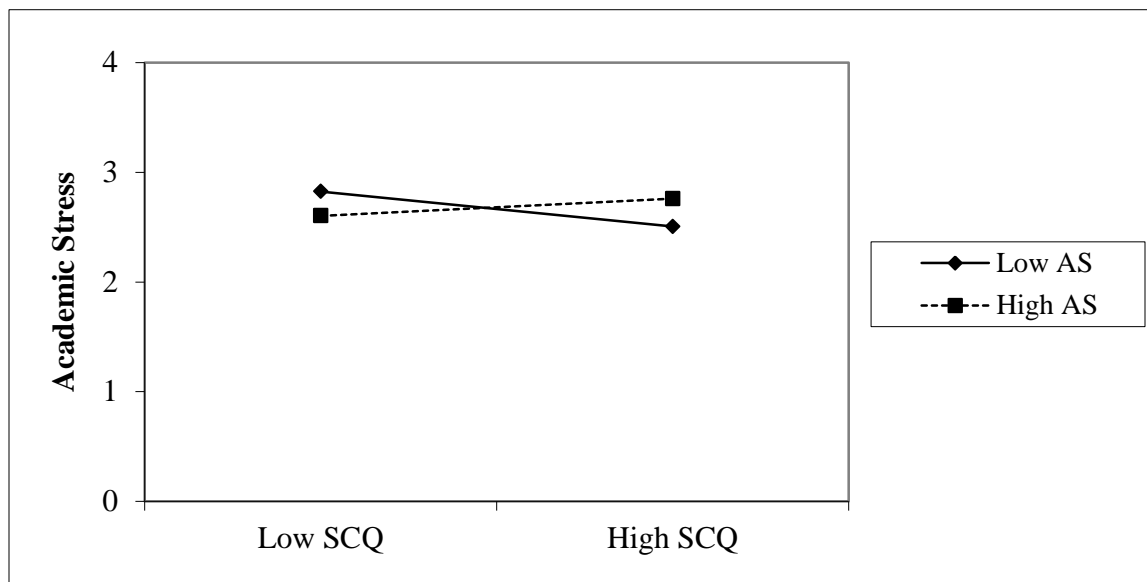
Supplemental Analysis

Results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlations in Research Question 1 indicated non-significant correlations among AS, SCQ, and SSS. This also indicated that there was a lack of significant relationships between the independent variables (AS and SCQ) and the dependent variables (SSS and its subscales). However, the hierarchical multiple regression evaluating the impact of the interaction term (AS*SCQ) on Academic stress produced statistically significant results. Consequently, an explorative supplemental analysis investigating the relationship between the interaction term and SSS and each of its subscales was conducted. Results indicated that SSS and Academic stress were statistically significantly correlated with the interaction term (see Table 16). Consequently, SSS and Academic stress were found to be significantly related to the combination (or interaction term) of AS and SCQ, but not the variables separately.

Table 16

Correlations Between Variables and Interaction Term

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. AS	1							
2. SSS	-.05	1						
3. Interpersonal	-.06	.70**	1					
4. Intrapersonal	-.08	.93**	.64**	1				
5. Academic	.05	.88**	.54**	.79**	1			
6. Environmental	-.05	.82**	.41**	.63**	.66**	1		
7. SCQ	.13	.03	.15	.02	.02	-.04	1	
8. Interaction Term	-.12	.21*	.17	.17	.23**	.15	.08	1

Note: $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of Africentrism in Student Stress and Social Stigma Consciousness among African American male college students attending an HBCU. College attendance for African American males is lower than for African American females and White and Asian racial groups (US Census Bureau, 2012). A number of studies have evaluated the college experiences of African Americans, but few have studied the experiences of African Americans at an HBCU; and even more pronounced is the lack of studies evaluating the college experiences of African American males at an HBCU. It was the intent of this study to evaluate whether cultural values moderate the relationship between social stigma and stress levels.

The research questions that guided this study were: a) What are the relationships among Africentrism, Social Stigma Consciousness, and Student Stress for African American male students at an HBCU? ; and b) To what degree does Africentrism influence the relationship between Social Stigma Consciousness and Student Stress?

The sample consisted of 146 African American males who attended a southeastern historically Black institution. The sample was fairly evenly distributed by among classification, and the majority of the students were traditional aged college students (i.e., 18-25).

Preliminary analyses revealed reliability concerns for AS, SCQ, and the Interpersonal stress subscale of SSS. Each of the aforementioned instruments' reliability scores fell below the threshold of acceptable reliability. This poses a threat to the extent to which the instrument is able to measure its construct consistently (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Furthermore, test of

normality indicated that the Interpersonal stress subscale of the SSS was significantly negatively skewed among the sample. Therefore, results of the analyses should be interpreted with caution.

To address Research Question 1, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation was conducted among AS, SSS, SSS's subscales (Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Academic, Environmental stress), and SCQ. Results indicated non-significant correlations among AS, SSS, and SCQ. However, SSS was significantly positively correlated with its subscales: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Academic, and Environmental stress. The correlations among SSS and its subscales demonstrate strong indications that SSS and its subscales measure a similar construct.

To address Research Question 2, five hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted using SSS and its four subscales as criterion variables, and AS and SCQ as predictor variables. An interaction term of the standardized predictor variables was used as the moderator variable. Results indicated that although the interaction term did not significantly impact SSS, there was a significant r^2 change ($p = .02$) when the interaction term was introduced in Step 2, indicating that the interaction term accounted for 4.2% of variance on SSS. Results also demonstrated that the interaction term significantly impacted Academic stress ($p > .05$). In this model, the interaction term accounted for 4.8% of variance ($p = .01$). Follow-up interaction plots revealed that when African American males have a low level of SCQ, AS decreases Academic stress. Additionally, when African American males have a high level of social stigma consciousness, Africentrism increases Academic stress. Analyses examining the impact of the interaction term on Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Environmental stress were non-significant; however, there appeared to be a trend towards significance for r^2 change when the interaction term was introduced for Interpersonal ($\Delta r^2 = .02, p = .09$), Intrapersonal ($\Delta r^2 = .03, p = .07$), and Environmental ($\Delta r^2 = .03, p = .08$) stress . Supplemental correlation analyses indicated that

SSS ($p < .05$) and Academic stress ($p < .01$) was significantly correlated with the interaction term. These results demonstrated moderate, but nuanced relationships with the interaction term ($SSS, r = .21,$ and $Academic$ $stress, r = .23$).

Conclusions and Discussion

Preliminary Findings

In the preliminary analyses, the internal reliability scores for AS, SCQ and the Interpersonal subscale of the SSS fell below an acceptable level. There are a number of factors that can contribute to a low internal reliability score, including test length, group homogeneity, poorly written items, and excessively broad content area of the measure (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). It is also important to mention that internal reliability scores on instruments can differ based on specific samples of participants (Henson, 2001; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Below, specific possible contributors to low reliability scores for the aforementioned measures are addressed.

AS. The reliability score of the AS fell below acceptable considerations. The AS was initially constructed to assess the use of Africentric values in clinical service delivery (i.e., outpatient psychological treatment) (Grills & Longshore, 1996). It is important to note that the construction of the AS also served to address the greater agenda of African/Black Psychology to create cultural-specific instruments that better served the African American community. The AS is currently the only psychological instrument that "explicitly operationalizes Afrocentric values using what is arguably the most commercial and accessible understanding of Afrocentricity, the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba" (Cokley &Williams, 2005; p. 827). During scale construction, Grills and Longshore (1996) produced two forms of the AS (i.e., Form A & Form B). Form B, used in this study, is distinguished from Form A as the set of questions that were

race-neutral. Said differently, test items in Form A identified a group name (i.e., African Americans), however, in Form B no group name was specified (i.e., My people). This researcher desired a scale that allowed participants to self-identify (i.e., African descent, Afro-Caribbean, African American, Black) while answering questions in the questionnaire. However, in retrospect, a specified group name would have likely assisted the participants in utilizing a consistent construct in self-identification. A specified group name may have also assisted with those individuals with multiple identities (e.g., individuals of Haitian descent who also live in the United States, and therefore have dual experiences when provided with questions that reference "My people"). Consequently, in retrospect, utilizing Form A might have been more helpful. Additionally, Form A produced more sound reliability scores (e.g. Cokley & Williams, 2005; Grills & Longshore, 1996; Kwate, 2003) than Form B. Still, in a previous exploratory study, Joseph and Chambers' (2010) use of the AS-Form B, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .68. For this reason, the author proceeded with Form B. Nonetheless, in this study given the low reliability score of .60, caution should be given to the interpretation of results due to the use of AS-Form B.

SCQ. The SCQ also produced a low reliability score. The SCQ was constructed to assess social stigma in women, men, gay men, lesbian women, Whites, Blacks and Hispanics. Despite this, the scale was validated on women, and generalized to the other demographic groups (i.e., men, gay men, lesbian women, Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics; Pinel, 1999). While SCQ was tested on African Americans, gender and institution-type was not specified; thus presenting some concern for the generalizability of this scale to African American males attending an HBCU. It should also be noted that the SCQ items were the final items of the survey packet; consequently more students omitted this portion of the survey than in earlier parts of the survey packet.

(SSS) Interpersonal Stress. The Interpersonal stress subscale of SSS also produced a score below acceptable limits of reliability. Additionally, a test of normality demonstrated that this subscale was negatively skewed. This indicated that scores of the Interpersonal stress subscale were not normally distributed among the sample. A reliability coefficient score produces an average of the inter-correlations of the measure's items (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Therefore, test length can significantly impact the reliability score, such that "if a test length is short, the value of alpha is reduced" (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; p. 53). The Interpersonal stress subscale consisted of 6 items. Furthermore, it is also important to consider that the less the scores are normally distributed among the sample, the less likely it is to find inter-correlations among the measure's items (Sheng, & Sheng, 2012). For these reasons, a low reliability score of the Interpersonal subscale is likely a function of low item count and/or a lack of normal distribution of scores among the sample.

Findings regarding Pearson Product-Moment Correlations (Research Question 1)

The researcher failed to reject the null hypotheses for Research Question 1. There were no statistically significant correlations among AS, SCQ, and SSS. It is possible that AS, SCQ and SSS were not statistically significant due to low reliability scores of AS and SCQ. That is, it is possible that stronger correlation scores among the variables could have been produced had AS and SCQ produced stronger reliability scores.

The lack of psychometric literature on SSS initially posed a concern for its use in this study. However, Pearson Product-Moment correlations revealed that SSS and its subscales were statistically significantly positively correlated. This revealed inter-correlations with SSS's general and specific construct of stress in this sample.

Findings Regarding Hierarchical Multiple Regressions (Research Question 2)

The researcher failed to reject the null hypotheses regarding the hierarchical multiple regressions of SSS, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Environmental analyses of Research Question 2. This indicated that the interaction term model did not significantly impact SSS, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Environmental stress levels. Additionally, the introduction of the interaction term approached a significance level of .05 for Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Environmental stress analyses. It is appears that the introduction of the interaction term on the Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Environmental subscales could not individually produce significant variance on the subscales.

However when considering the subscales collectively, the introduction of the interaction term was significant for SSS. It is possible that this result could be explained this way: Of the four subscales that make up SSS, the Academic stress subscale was the only subscale that produced a statistically significant r^2 change when the interaction term was introduced; while in the analyses of the remaining subscales, the interaction term r^2 change seemed to approach significance at a .05 level. Consequently, the significance of the interaction term r^2 change on Academic stress, and the near significance of the interaction term r^2 change on Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Environmental stress are likely to collectively contribute to the statistically significant status for SSS. Despite the fact that the introduction of the interaction term produced significant variability on SSS, this finding did not significantly impact the interaction model for SSS.

The hierarchical multiple regression analyzing the impact of the interaction model on Academic stress was statistically significant. The interaction plot revealed that when African American males have a low level of social stigma consciousness, a high level of Africentrism decreases Academic stress. Additionally, when African American males have a high level of

social stigma consciousness, a high level of Africentrism increases Academic stress. These findings are supported by the literature that emphasized the relationship between racial identity and academics is best understood in clusters or profiles (Chavous, et al, 2003; Matthews, 2014). Consequently, in order to attempt to provide an explanation for these findings, explanations will be presented separately.

When African American males have a low level of Social Stigma Consciousness, a high level of Africentrism decreases Academic stress. The outcome of having lower Academic stress when African American males have a low level of social stigma consciousness and a high level of Africentrism is supported by literature. Social stigma has been associated with higher levels of stress that produces adverse effects (i.e., Brown, et al., 2000; Krieger, Smith, Naishadham, Hartman, & Barbeau, 2005; Meyers, 2003; Neville, Heppner, Ji, & Thye, 2004). Therefore, an individual with a low level of social stigma consciousness is predicted to have low levels of stress. In evaluating stigma-related stress as it pertains to academic stress, the lack of academic achievement for African American males is a stereotype that negatively impacts academic performance (Steele, 1997; Davis, Aronson, & Salinas, 2006). In considering the conditions for which an individual would interpret experiences of social stigma, Crocker (1999) proposed the notion that an individual's self-perception would have a direct effect on his/her perceptions/thoughts of social stigma, such that a strong identity serves as a protective factor against the potential negative effects of social stigma. In this case, when African American males have a low level of social stigma consciousness, a high level of Africentrism decreases Academic stress. Said differently, it is the assumption of this researcher that in utilizing the literature to interpret this finding, social stigma would normally produce increased stress; particularly academic stress for African American males due to the stereotype often ascribed to

their race/gender of having a lack of academic achievement. However, for African American males for whom there is an awareness of social stigma, the interpretation of those experiences produced lower scores of social stigma consciousness due to having a strong sense of self (i.e., higher scores of AS); thus this combination attributed to lower Academic stress. Noguera (2003) postulated a similar idea that having a strong sense of self and appropriately interpreting negative social experiences enhances academic performance for African American males. Another way of interpreting this finding is that African American males with low social stigma consciousness had positive beliefs about how society views African Americans. Additionally, this notion coupled with a strong sense of self produces lower academic stress. This explanation is supported by Chavous et al., (2003)'s study that indicated African Americans that had a higher sense of group centrality, group pride, and positive beliefs about society's view of African Americans also had a stronger sense of positive academic beliefs. In fact, these individuals who had a positive societal view of African Americans demonstrated stronger school attachment.

When African American males have a high level of social stigma consciousness, a high level of Africentrism increases Academic stress. The outcome of having higher Academic stress when African American males have a high level of both Africentrism and social stigma consciousness is supported by literature. It is expected that individuals with a high level of social stigma consciousness would also have higher stress levels, particularly in the area of academics because African American males are often stereotyped for having a lack of academic achievement (Steele, 1997). However for African American males, having a heightened awareness of social stigma coupled with high endorsements of Africentric values of valuing one's contribution to family and community can foster increased pressure to perform well academically. Watkins et al., (2007)'s qualitative study of African American males at an HBCU

indicated that stress stemmed from societal and community (i.e., family and friends) pressures to be *ideal* African American males. To further clarify, these students revealed stress from a) pressures to succeed academically so as to counter negative perceptions of their race and gender, and b) personal pressure to acquire accolades that strengthen family and community. African American males in this study, who responded in a manner as to endorse the combination of high levels of social stigma consciousness and Africentrism, may also experience pressure at levels that negatively impact Academic stress.

Participants' Profiles

It is important to evaluate the profile of the participants; that is, the manner in which the information the participants provided in the demographic questionnaire assisted in understanding the results of Research Question 2. This will be demonstrated in two ways: a) factors that impacted heightened awareness of academic-related stigma, and b) factors that influenced a sense of community and high endorsements of Africentrism.

Heightened Awareness of Academic-related Stigma. More than half of the participants in this study provided indications of being a first generation college student. Bui (2002) reported that first generation college students are more likely to have academic concerns, such as a) feelings of uncertainty about decisions related to college (i.e., choosing a major), b) apprehension related to feeling welcomed and accepted by peers and institution, and c) worry concerning achieving academic success. Consistent with Bui's findings, African American males in this study endorsed higher levels of Academic stress than any other type of stress. Furthermore, Academic stress for African Americans is likely to be exacerbated due to gender role expectations. Males are socialized to be "bread winners" and to value themselves by their economic gain (Diemer, 2002). For African American males enrolled in college, it is likely that

education is viewed as an opportunity to obtain financial security (Diemer, 2002), thus contributing to higher academic stress. However, all of these factors are also likely to heighten the awareness of academic-related stigma (i.e., unintelligent, low educational attainment, low academic performance) for African American males.

   Sense of Community and Africentrism. The institution utilized in this study is an HBCU that employs a culturally sensitive curriculum. Previously indicated is that students attending this HBCU are required to take an African American History course during their freshman year. Considering that data for this study were collected in the Spring semester of the academic year, presumably many students were either presently enrolled in the African American History course or had previously taken this course. Additionally, many students utilized in this study included students taking courses in Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Sociology courses. Included in the curriculum of each of Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Sociology majors are race-related required courses (i.e., Black Psychology; Race, Class, and Justice; and Sociology of Black Experience, respectively). Although it is less clear whether participants had taken these courses, it is evident that the topic of race appears to be an open, in-depth, and perhaps regular conversation for students attending this HBCU. This is important because for many students these courses may be their first exposure to curriculum that reflects their heritage. This environment- an institution that has a high percentage of African American students, requires an African American History within the first year of enrollment, and offers majors that also require race-related courses- is likely to foster community and self-pride. This institution also creates an environment in which students are more likely to endorse values that promote community, as explicit in the Africentrism Scale. Considered all together, these factors are likely to support the

fact that on average participants in this study reported a "3", indicating the "Agree" anchor (on a Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, to 4-strongly agree).

Implications

The results of this study support the notion that African American males in college are a unique population (Strayhorn, 2008) that requires specialized empirical investigations (Davis, 1994; Harper, 2003; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011; Mathews, 2014; Smeadley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993), especially of those that attend an HBCU (Jackson & Moore, 2006; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011). Disordinal interaction results of this study further highlight the complexity of the experiences of African American males.

African American males' exposure to experiences of social stigma cannot be controlled, even at an HBCU. However, important findings of this study include: a) higher levels of Academic stress than any other types of stress, b) endorsement of Africentrism, and c) the impact of Africentrism on the relationship between social stigma and stress. Implications for these findings will be discussed in this section.

Africentric values of community are concepts that can be introduced in homes, community agencies (i.e., YMCA, afterschool programs), and institutions of higher learning (Noguera, 2003). Highlighted in the findings is the need to educate African American males in ways to manage societal and community pressures while being academically successful. One suggestion is to have community-based discussions that explicitly address the unique experiences of African American males as it relates to social stigma and its impact on psychological functioning. These dialogues can assist in establishing a safe space to process difficult experiences and foster a sense of community and support. Additionally, it is important to point out that having a strong sense of self can positively influence how social stigma is interpreted. Africentric values,

particularly those of the Nguzo Saba, encourages pride in one's self, community, and heritage. These values include umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity), and imani (faith). Additionally, Osbourne (1999) postulates that these values of regard for self and community assist to increase a strong sense of self and to diffuse a dis-identification with academics.

HBCUs can participate in efforts to increase Africentricity by continuing to support programs that facilitate community service, mentorship, and increase knowledge and awareness of the historical contributions of African Americans to our current society to foster a higher sense of Africentrism. In addition, academic, social, and psychological support can also assist in providing meaningful ways in re-addressing perceptions and experiences of social stigma so that these experiences are not internalized (Crocker, 1999; Osborne, 1999). HBCUs that hold an "open door policy" for admissions face a unique challenge in accepting students of a broad range of academic preparedness (Brown, Donahoo, & Betrand, 2001). Initiatives that provide academic support to African American males underperforming at expected college levels can offer practical ways to build self-confidence and abate pressures from social stigma. Specifically, HBCUs can provide academic assistance that offers components of challenge and support (Noguera, 2003). Matthew (2014) and Osbourne (1999) indicate that components of challenge may include practicing rigorous learning materials, setting deadlines for academic goals and high expectations for academic performance, and providing accountability for maintaining advanced study habits. Components of support may include the instructor's/tutor's investment in the student's academic performance, "open door" policy for questions, and a progressive assessment of student's performance instead of a deficient perspective. Lastly, HBCU counseling centers can

provide support groups specifically for African American males that would assist in developing adaptive coping strategies, finding balance in academic, home, and/or work environments, and fostering a strong sense of self.

Limitations

1. Participants provided responses via self-report measures; consequently, the likelihood of participants responding in a manner that is socially desirable should be considered.

2. Low reliability scores of the AS, SCQ and the Interpersonal stress subscale of the SSS have the potential to decrease statistical power (Henson, 2001; Shear & Zumbo, 2013) and consequently may have increased the risk of Type I error (Shear & Zumbo, 2013).

3. The Interpersonal stress subscale of SSS demonstrated a negatively skewed distribution of scores across the sample. Issues with normal distribution threaten parametric assumptions.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that scale construction methods are used to create a scale that may better address Africentric cultural values.

2. It is recommended that a cluster/profile-based study be conducted to examine patterns and differences in patterns (Chavous, 2003) for African American males.

3. It is recommended that in a future study, the impact of reared-community, parent's educational levels, relationship with caregiver, and spiritual/religious orientation on the profiles established in this study be investigated.

4. It is recommended that this study be replicated using the AS, Form A to assess differences with the present study.

5. It is recommended that this study be replicated utilizing interview methods to provide clearer accounts of the intersection between Africentric values and social stigma as it relates to stress.

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INFORMED CONSENT

An Exploration of Africentrism, Student Stress, and Social Stigma of Students at an HBCU

INTRODUCTION
The Department of Counseling and Human Development Services at the University of Georgia supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits which you would otherwise be entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with this unit, and the services it may provide to you.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to understand how African Americans students that attend an HBCU perceive stress, social stigma, and racial identity.

BENEFITS
The benefits that I may expect from this study include providing information of the experience of an under-researched college population. Information obtained for the purpose of this study will be used to inform literature and practice.

PROCEDURES
Students will complete a survey pertaining to demographics, and their experiences of stress, social stigma, and racial values. This survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

RISKS AND QUESTIONS
Although some participants may feel uncomfortable answering questions about their sources of stress and perceptions of social stigma, the benefits of adding to the literature and potentially contributing to our understanding of the experiences of African American students at an HBCU outweighs these potential minimal risks. Should you exhibit psychological discomfort in regards to this study, please refer the contact information below for psychological attention. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to a) The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu and b) Florida A&M University Institutional Review Board, 1700 Lee Avenue, 410 Foote-Hilyer Administration Center, Tallahassee, FL 32307; email address irb@famu.edu. The results of the research study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be used. In fact, the published results will be presented in summary form only.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT
The researchers will not collect your name or any information that could be used to identify you. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings from this study. By

completing and returning this survey packet, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project. Please keep this letter for your records.

Psychological Referrals:
Office of Counseling Services
Florida A&M University
101 Sunshine Manor
850.599.3145

Apalachee Center
2634 Capital Circle NE
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-523-3289

Cindy Joseph, M.S., Co-Investigator
Department of Counseling and Human and
Development Services
University of Georgia

John Chambers, PhD, Principal Investigator (FAMU
Affiliate)
Department of Psychology
Florida A&M University
850.599.3014

Rosemary E. Phelps, PhD, Principal Investigator
(UGA Affiliate)
Department of Counseling and Human and
Development Services
University of Georgia
706.524.1812

Racial Identity, Social Stigma and Stress

Questionnaires

Demographic Questionnaire

Please fill in the below questions, bubble in the appropriate demographic indicator as it best applies to you.

1. Age:
a.18-19   b. 20-21   c. 22-23   d. 24-25   e. 26-27   f.28-29
g. 30-40   h. 41-50   i. 51-60   j. 61 or older

2. Gender:
   a. Male   b. Female

3. Classification:
   a. Freshman   b. Sophomore   c. Junior   d. Senior

4. Race:
   a. African American
   b. White/Caucasian
   c. Hispanic
   d. Bi-racial (African American & Caucasian)
   e. Asian
   f. Other_____

5. What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?
   a. Below High School graduate
   b. High School Graduate
   c. Some College
   d. Two- to Four year college graduate
   e. Graduate education
   f. Don't Know

6. What is the highest level of education completed by your father?
   a. Below High School graduate
   b. High School Graduate
   c. Some College
   d. Two- to Four year college graduate
   e. Graduate education
   f. Don't Know

7. How would you describe your overall relationship with your caregiver?
    a. Extremely close
    b. Close
    c. Fair
    d. On/off
    e. Extremely distant

8. Which best describes the neighborhood that you lived the most when you were growing up?
    a. Predominately White neighborhood
    b. Predominately Black neighborhood
    c. Relatively even mix of races
    d. Other

9. What religion were you affiliated with while you were growing up?
    a. Baptist
    b. Catholic
    c. Seventh Day Adventist
    d. Jehovah's Witness
    e. Muslim
    f. Other _____

10. Currently, how strongly religious (spiritually-oriented) are you?
    a. Very strongly
    b. Somewhat
    c. Weakly
    d. Not at all

The Africentrism Scale

The following statements reflect some beliefs, opinions and attitudes of Black people. Read each statement carefully and give your honest feelings about the beliefs and attitudes expressed. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree using the following scale.

      A. Strongly Disagree
      B.   Disagree
      C. Agree
      D. Strongly Agree

11. My family's needs are more important to me than my own needs.

12. People should make the world better than it was when they found it.

13. The problems of other people are their problems, not mine. (R)

14. I am more concerned with my own goals than helping other people reach theirs. (R)

15. I have very little faith in African American people. (R)

16. I owe something to those who have tried to make things better for me.

17. People need to stop worry so much about the world around them and take care of their own needs. (R)

18. I am doing a lot to improve my neighborhood.

19. The success I have had is mainly because of me, not anyone else. (R)

20. I have more confidence in White professionals, like doctors and teachers, than in African American professionals. (R)

21. It hurts me when I see another person like me discriminated against.

22. Different racial groups should describe for themselves what to be called and what their needs are.

23. Society would be better off if people just work on their own goals. (R)

Student Stress Survey

The following reflect statements of your experience with stress. Read each statement carefully and give your honest response. Indicate the extent to which you find these experiences stressful or not stressful using the following scale.

<div align="center">

0   1   2   3   4

Not a Problem At All……………………Very Much a Problem

</div>

Interpersonal
        24. Change in social activities
        25. Roommate conflict
        26. Work with people you don't know
        27. Fight with boyfriend/girlfriend
        28. New boyfriend/girlfriend
        29. Trouble with parents

Intrapersonal
        30. Change in sleeping habits
        31. Change in eating habits
        32. New responsibilities
        33. Financial difficulties
        34. Held a job
        35. Spoke in public
        36. Change in use of alcohol or drugs
        37. Outstanding personal achievement
        38. Started college
        39. Decline in personal health
        40. Minor law violation
        41. Change in religious beliefs
        42. Death of a family member
        43. Death of a friend
        44. Severe injury
        45. Engagement/Marriage

Academic
        46. Increased class workload
        47. Lower grade than anticipated
        48. Change in major
        49. Search for graduate school/job
        50. Missed too many classes
        51. Anticipation of graduation
        52. Serious argument with instructor

Environmental
        53. Vacations/breaks
        54. Waited in long line

55. Computer problems
56. Placed in unfamiliar situation
57. Messy living conditions
58. Put on hold for extended period of time
59. Change in living environment
60. Car trouble
61. Quit job
62. Divorce between parents

Social Consciousness Questionnaire

The following statements reflect perceived experiences of social stigma. Read each statement carefully and give your honest feelings about the beliefs and attitudes expressed. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements using the following scale.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree or Disagree			Strongly Agree

63. Stereotypes about Blacks have not affected me personally. (R)
64. I never worry that my behaviors will be viewed as stereotypically Black. (R)
65. When interacting with Whites, I feel like they interpret all my behaviors in terms of the fact that I am Black.
66. Most Whites do not judge Blacks on the basis of their race/ethnicity. (R)
67. My being Black does not influence how Whites act with me. (R)
68. I almost never think about the fact that I am Black when I interact with Whites. (R)
69. My being Black does not influence how people act with me. (R)
70. Most Whites have a lot more racist thoughts than they actually express.
71. I often think that Whites are unfairly accused of being racist. (R)
72. Most Whites have a problem viewing Blacks as equals.