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Ethnic identity development among Black high school students

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ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AMONG BLACK HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

Adrienne Menette Lewis
University of Northern Iowa
July 1993

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were differences in ethnic identity as a function of gender and academic grade level and to determine if there was an interaction between gender and grade level among Black adolescents. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was administered to 179 Black male and female high school students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds recruited from two urban high schools in a Midwestern metropolitan area with a population of 105,000. The sample included 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders ranging in age from 14 to 19 with a mean age of 16.3 for the entire population. Results showed that, on the total scale score, ethnic identity, and on the three subscale scores on the MEIM (affirmation/belonging, ethnic behavior and ethnic identity achievement), there were no statistically significant differences in ethnic identity development as a function of gender and grade level. There was no statistically significant interaction between gender and grade level. These findings are discussed in terms of their implications for further research.

ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AMONG BLACK HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

Adrienne Menette Lewis
University of Northern Iowa

July 1993

This Study By: ADRIENNE MENETTE LEWIS

Entitled: ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AMONG BLACK
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for
the Degree of Specialist in Education.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in memory of my loving mother, Carrie Lewis, who believed that God would grant me every blessing that I could hold and that the gift of true contentment would come as the years ahead unfold, and whose life lesson I still live by and reap the benefits of, "Be a good girl and God will bless you."

Crème De La Crème

Adrienne Menette Lewis

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Identity development during adolescence has received much attention in psychological research (Phinney, 1990). It has been widely acknowledged that achievement of a personal identity is a central task of this period (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980; Phinney, 1990; Waterman, 1985). Ethnicity is an important dimension of identity. Ethnic identity refers to that portion of a person's self-concept which derives from his or her membership in an ethnic group, and the feelings one has toward that group (Phinney, 1992). Researchers (Ogbu, 1987; Phinney, 1988a, 1990; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971) have found that ethnic identity development follows a process similar to that of ego identity formation, which takes place over time as people explore and make decisions about the role of their ethnicity in their lives. Furthermore, studies on ethnic identity (e.g., Cross, 1978 and Kim, 1981) show that it impacts the overall adjustment of adolescents who come from minority groups.

Previous research suggests that minority adolescents who have not examined and resolved issues regarding their own ethnicity are at greater risk for school and personal adjustment problems (Phinney, 1989). In fact, understanding the ethnicity of Black students can help school

psychologists better understand and interpret the different behaviors Black adolescents may exhibit in school. Many Black youth choose an "oppositional identity," seeking to define themselves in contrast to the White culture with preferences for engaging in activities not adopted by that culture (Kunjufu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987). For example, many Black adolescents consider the cost of school success too high because they believe that cultural integrity must be sacrificed in order to succeed. Achieving school success is marked by conflict, ambivalence, and the need to camouflage efforts directed at behaviors that the group identifies as "acting White" (Fordham, 1988).

Results from previous studies (Parham & Helms, 1985; Phinney, 1989) have indicated that Black males were more likely than Black females to endorse attitudes from the earliest stage of ethnic identity development and less likely to show evidence of the highest stage. It is also more likely that Black males, when compared to Black females, are often viewed as at-risk for school failure (Smith & Shepard, 1987). Furthermore, Kunjufu (1988) argued that most people do not realize that what happens to Black males at certain ages/grade levels will determine whether they go to college or jail and how much income they will earn in future years. Understanding how ethnic identity development is related to gender and grade level can help

school psychologists develop more effective intervention strategies when working with minority adolescents.

Statement of the Problem

Conventional educational interventions have focused very little on the ethnicity of Black adolescents. Focusing on ethnic identity development by psychologists may prove to be a useful and effective diagnostic tool and resource that can be used to enhance students' academic performance. This study was designed to enhance the diagnostic work of the school psychologist and all school professionals by providing information on Black adolescents' ethnic identity development.

Implied in all of the latest school reform proposals, whether assertive discipline, computer-based instruction, school effectiveness, education for excellence, or multicultural education, is a demand for the accurate and comprehensive diagnosis of students' needs and for remediation strategies based on these diagnosed needs (Gay, 1985). In order to create viable intervention programs, it is necessary that school psychologists gain understanding of the target population. That understanding must transcend attendance records, test scores, promotion records, and should inquire into ethnic identity development and how it impacts Black and other ethnic minority adolescents' school performance (Farrell, Peguero, Lindsey, & White, 1988).

Research on at-risk populations suggests that for Black adolescents, who are at-risk of low academic achievement, school failure and dropping out is part of a long, systematic process of development that is multifaceted and varied by each individual student (Rumberger, 1987). The academic at-risk factor of Black and minority youth is further demonstrated in data regarding academic program placement. More minority children are served in special education programs for the mildly handicapped based solely on the number of minority students in the general school population. Blacks only made up 16% of the enrollment across the nation. Heller, Holtzman, and Messick (1982) reported that the Civil Rights 1978 survey of special education, showed that Black students comprised 38% of the educable mentally retarded classes of the elementary and secondary schools. This disproportion or over representation is neither a new nor an isolated phenomenon and is especially true for Black students (Maheady, Towne, Algozzine, Mercer, & Ysseldyke, 1983). Tucker (1980) noted a similar trend in programs for the learning disabled as a result of concern for over representation in educable mental retarded classes. In his words: "when it was no longer socially desirable to place Black students in educable mental retarded classes, it became convenient to place them in the newly provided learning disability category. It took

a year to make the changeover, but the resultant proportional differences were maintained" (p. 104). The problem of minority over representation in special education programs has been clearly recognized and documented. However it is still not clear what causes this problem and how it should be addressed. It appears that conventional diagnostic conceptions, models, and approaches that have focused on the self-concept as uni-dimensional, are not adequate for making competent decisions and prognoses about the needs, potentials, and performance of Black, as well as other ethnic minority adolescents.

In order to understand why Black and other ethnic minority adolescents are at-risk, it is important that school psychologists study and understand the self-concept as a bi-dimensional variable, which includes personal identity development and racial group orientation according to Cross (1991). Erikson (1968) discusses a similar concept, identity development, which consists of two components: inner essence of the individual and group culture.

School psychologists must enhance their professional knowledge with newer theories and approaches. For example, ethnic identity development provides a vehicle for updating diagnostic guidance for interventions designed to enhance minority student performance in school. Evidence has grown

over the last 20 years which suggests that there is great promise for improving the diagnostic strength among school psychologists with Black adolescents and other ethnic minority students and, ultimately, the overall quality of these students' educational experiences.

Significance of the Study

The ethnic aspects of an adolescent's identity development as they relate to gender and grade level have been hypothesized to be essential to educational interventions that aim at improving academic performance and maximizing educational quality for Black and other ethnic minority adolescents (Gay, 1985; Phinney, 1989).

Phinney (1992) developed a questionnaire that measures ethnic identity based on a wide range of characteristics that are common across groups. The characteristics include self-identification and ethnicity, ethnic behaviors and practices, affirmation and belonging, and ethnic identity achievement. These common elements can be measured across all ethnic groups. The primary purpose of this study was to examine how an individual's ethnic identity development, as measured by Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, related to grade level and gender among Black adolescents.

Research Questions

1. Are there differences in ethnic identity as a function of gender among Black adolescents?
2. Are there differences in ethnic identity as a function of grade level among Black adolescents?
3. Is there an interaction between gender and grade in the ethnic identity of Black adolescents?
4. Are there differences in the affirmation/belonging component as a function of gender among Black adolescents?
5. Are there differences in the affirmation/belonging component as a function of grade level among Black adolescents?
6. Is there an interaction between gender and grade in the affirmation/belonging component of ethnic identity among Black adolescents?
7. Are there gender differences in the ethnic identity achievement component among Black adolescents?
8. Are there grade level differences in the ethnic identity achievement component among Black adolescents?
9. Is there an interaction between gender and grade level in the ethnic identity achievement component among Black adolescents?

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were considered for this study:

1. This study was conducted with a sample of 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students which did not allow for much variability in grade or age.

2. The results of this study was based on a self selected sample; therefore, it is possible that this group of students were already involved in activities that would move them toward an achieved ethnic identity.

3. The results are only reflective of one group of Black adolescents in the Midwest and may not be applied throughout the United States.

4. This study examined only one ethnic minority group and results cannot be compared and contrasted to other ethnic groups.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were considered for the purpose of this study:

1. That all students would respond honestly.

2. That the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure would be a reliable instrument within one ethnic group.

Definition of Terms

1. Identity: A psychosocial construct involving the creation of a sense of sameness and continuity (Phinney, 1990).
2. Ethnic identity: That portion of a person's self-concept that derives from his or her membership in an ethnic group and the feelings he/she has toward that group (Phinney, 1992).
3. Self-concept: A person's perceptions with respect to his/her personal identity and racial group orientation (Cross, 1991).
4. Personal identity: The characteristics that define a person's general personality.
5. Reference Group Orientation (RGO): The ethnographic dimension of the self-concept and includes aspects such as culture, class, and gender (Cross, 1991).
6. Racial identity: A sense of group or collective identity based on an individual's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1990).
7. Oppositional identity: Individuals seeking to define themselves in contrast to the White culture, with preferences for engaging in activities not adopted by that culture (Kunjufu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987).

8. Affirmation/Belonging: Positive ethnic attitudes and a sense of belonging described as ethnic pride, feeling good about one's background, being happy with one's ethnic group membership, as well as feelings of belonging and attachment to the group (Phinney, 1992).

9. Ethnic identity achievement: Includes both exploration and resolution of identity issues and a period of exploration of one's ethnicity that leads to a secure sense of oneself as a member of the minority group (Phinney, 1992).

10. Ethnic behaviors: Involvement in social activities with members of one's ethnic group and participation in cultural traditions (Phinney, 1992).

Summary

This chapter included an introduction to the problem, a statement of the problem and significance of the study. Research questions and definitions were included to provide the research frame and directions.

Educators and psychologists have only recently begun to focus on the issue of ethnic identity development in general, and on the ethnic identity of the Black adolescents in particular. Research on ethnic identity is believed to enhance the knowledge and practice of school psychologists and can use to better meet the needs of minority students.

This study examined how an individual's ethnic identity development, as measured by Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, relates to grade level and gender among Black adolescents. A review of the literature is presented in Chapter 2. Detailed procedures used to collect data is described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 contains the analysis of data and the findings. A summary and discussion of the findings, implications, recommendations for further research, and conclusions are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter consists of five sections: (a) an introduction; (b) definitions of identity and ethnic/racial identity; (c) development of Phinney's ethnic identity model; (d) the importance of ethnic identity development to the adjustment of Black adolescents; and (e) Black adolescents' ethnic identity as it relates to gender and grade level.

Introduction

The history of research on identity development suggests a continuous effort to explore the variables that impact the foundation and process of the identity construct. The literature shows that early studies primarily sought to understand occupation, religious, and political ideology as the foundation of identity development (Marcia, 1966a). Later research has expanded the foundational areas considered central to identity formation and explored additional variables such as ethnicity, gender roles, comradeship, and dating patterns (Archer, 1982; Craig-Bray & Adams, 1985; Grotevent & Thorbuke, 1982).

Erikson's (1968) stage theory of identity, which suggests two dimensions, is the most widely used theoretical framework for examining identity development. The first aspect of identity occurs when the individual recognizes

his/her own unified "selfsameness and continuity in time" (Erikson, 1959, p. 23). In other words, the individual comes to know and accept him/herself as a unique human being. The second aspect is related to the individual's identification with the ideas and essential pattern of his/her communal culture. This includes sharing "some kind of essential characteristics with others" (Erikson, 1968, p. 104). Persons who have both accepted their inner essence and group/communal culture in which they live, are the ones who have attained identity and have a clear picture of who they are. Figure 1 depicts the bi-dimensionality of Erikson's (1968) identity and Cross's (1991) self-concept model. Both theorists are viewed as describing the same phenomena utilizing different terminology. Each component of the individuals self-concept has been measured by numerous variables as indicated by the vectors.

Reviewing data back to the 1930s, Cross has reported that personal identity has always been positive in Blacks, but that racial group orientation was historically negative until the Black Power movement of the 1960s. Black adolescents have lost a sense of their history and have internalized the negative stereotypes and views that are derived from a Euro-American frame of reference. Since there has been a tendency to look at the self-concept as uni-dimensional, addressing only the personal identity

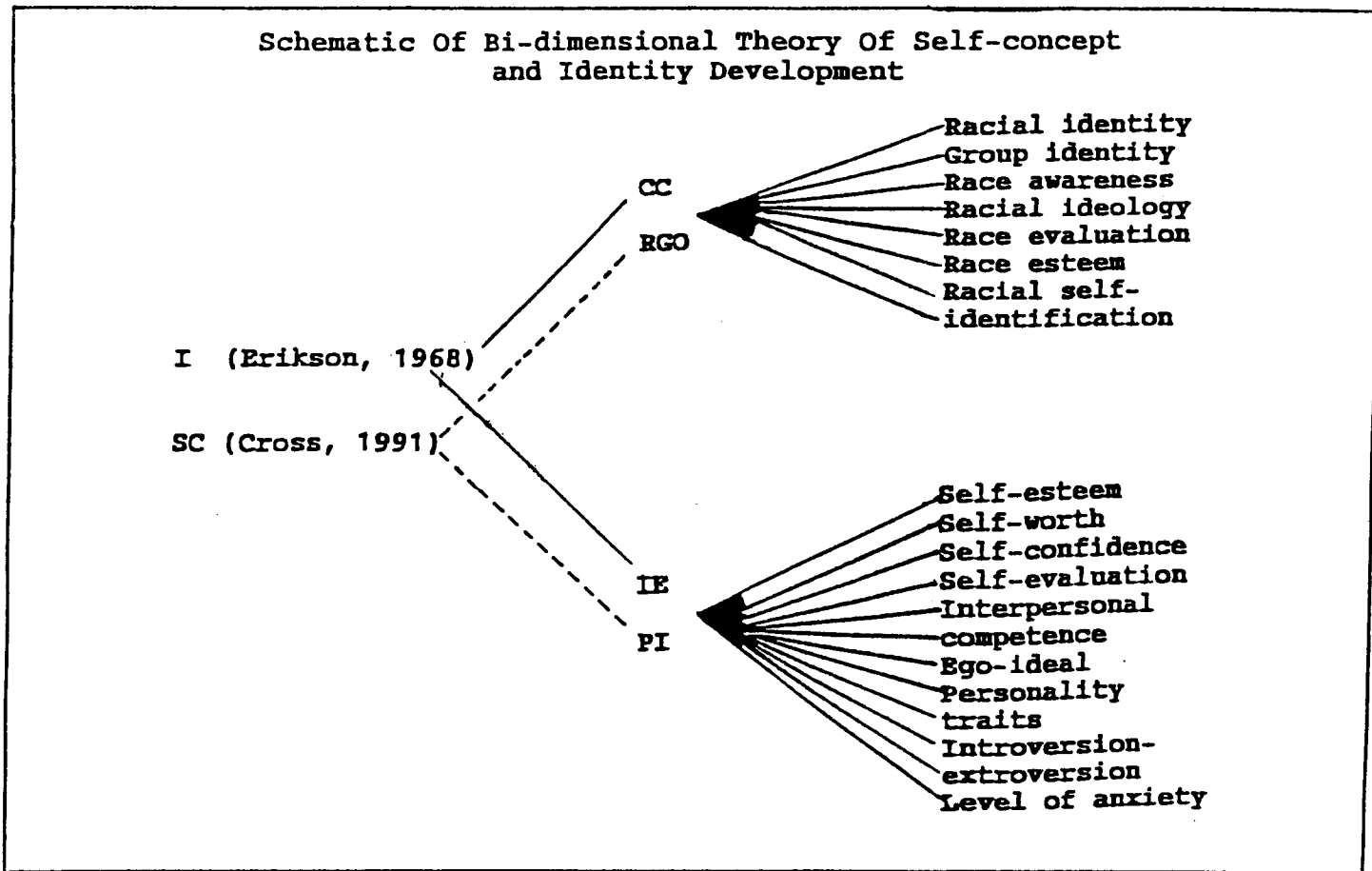


Figure 1. Self-concept model in Cross 1991 and display of Erikson 1968 theory. Self-Concept (SC), Identity Development (ID), Communal Culture (CC), Reference Group Orientation (RGO), Inner Essence (IE), and Personal Identity (PI).

component (Cross, 1991), ethnic identity development still needs to be addressed (Phinney, 1989; Streitmatter, 1988). Ethnicity appears to be an important factor in Erikson's theory; yet, research on adolescent identity development has not always included ethnicity (Phinney, 1990). Although, this gap may exist in the literature on ethnic identity development, this is not the case in the area of self-concept and self-esteem (Streitmatter, 1988).

While Cross and Erikson have clearly defined self-concept and identity development, the terms self-concept and self-esteem are occasionally used interchangeably in the literature. Self-esteem is viewed as only one variable that measures personal identity, one of the two major components of the self-concept, (e.g., Cross, 1991; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971; Figure 1). Many researchers within the social sciences have found that ethnic identity is crucial to the self-concept and psychological functioning of ethnic group members (e.g., Gurin & Epps, 1975; Maldonado, 1975; Phinney, 1990). Kinch (1963) defines the self-concept as a group of qualities that the individual believes that he/she possesses. Further, Kinch asserts that an individual's self-concept develops as he/she interacts socially, and it is this social interaction that guides and influences the individual's behavior not unlike Erikson's communal identity and Cross's Racial group orientation.

Rosenberg (1979) developed the concept of similarity or dissimilarity of the individual to those within that person's environment (contextual dissonance) when assessing self-esteem with a sample of early adolescents. Black adolescents in integrated schools had lower self-esteem than those in primarily Black schools. The data also showed that this difference was greater for older Black adolescents in high school. These results showed that the dissonant context clearly affects an individual's self-esteem. Within-group differences in self-esteem exist when comparing Blacks in integrated versus predominantly Black schools. Those in the former setting tend to score significantly lower than their cohorts in the latter setting. This phenomenon seemed to hold true by grade level with differences increasing from middle to high school. However, when comparing Blacks and Whites in the same setting, Rosenberg notes Blacks scored higher on the self-esteem variables (cited in Streitmatter, 1988).

Many studies found Blacks to have higher self-esteem than Whites (e.g., Bachman, 1970; McDonald & Gynther, 1965), which supports Cross's (1991) literature review asserting the historical positive nature of Black's personal identity. Coleman's (cited in Streitmatter, 1988) findings showed that there was no difference in "academic self-concept" while, McDill, Myers, and Rigsby (cited in Streitmatter, 1988)

reported that Black adolescents have higher academic self-concept than White adolescents.

While this study does not attempt to examine self-esteem, it seemed appropriate to examine the pertinent literature regarding self-esteem among Blacks, because self-esteem is a variable used to measure one of the major components (inner essence) of identity concept, and one of the major components (personal identity) of self-concept. The findings suggest that the self-esteem variables may have more diagnostic worth in the integrated school setting and should be coupled with equally viable assessment data.

Even though researchers have used self-esteem measurements as important in discussing self-concept and identity, there are other factors that are just as vital. Ethnic identity is another variable used to measure self-concept. It addresses reference group orientation and communal cultural which are also major components of self-concept and identity. Therefore, ethnic identity is the focus of this study.

Identity and Ethnic/Racial Identity

Identity

Since ethnic identity is only a small portion of one's identity, it is important to look at the evolution of the concept of identity. "Identity" and "identity crises" have in general and in scientific practices become terms that

electively set boundaries so large and so apparently obvious that to demand a definition would almost seem trivial, while at other times it is characterized as something made so confining for the purpose of measurement that the over-all meaning is lost, and it could just as well be called something else (Erikson, 1968). Erikson's concept of identity and the process of identity formation have become central to the study of adolescent development (Phinney, 1990). Identity has been defined by Erikson as a psychosocial construct referring to the creation of a sense of equality, sameness, and continuity; a unity of personality now felt by achieved individuals through a process of crisis and commitment (cited in Phinney, 1990). Erikson (1968) stated that the process of identity development is complicated and difficult to understand because the process is bi-dimensional and establishes two identities (see Figure 1). Therefore, an individual's ethnicity and cultural background are clearly important to the process of identity formation. Erikson (1968) described the process of identity formation as follows:

In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place in all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a topology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself

in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. (p. 22)

The process, for the most part, is said to be unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, "identity-consciousness." Erikson (cited in Phinney, 1992) reported that psychological research on identity formation has investigated a number of ideological and interpersonal areas in which adolescents must resolve issues about the self in order to arrive at the stable sense of self or an achieved identity. That is, identity formation is a result of a period of exploration and experimentation that leads to a firm commitment and usually takes place during adolescence. It is during these adolescent years that teenagers are learning about their relationship with individuals of all races. Therefore, ethnic identity is addressed in the next section.

Ethnic/Racial Identity

Several researchers believed self-identification to be the key aspect to ethnic identity; while others focused on feelings of belonging and commitment (Singh, 1977; Ting-Toomey, 1981; Tzurriel & Klein, 1977), common values and attitudes towards other ethnic group (White & Burke, 1987), and attitudes one has toward ones' own group (Parham & Helms, 1981; Phinney, 1990). Therefore, various definitions

of ethnicity/ethnic identity have been reported suggesting a lack of consensus among researchers (Phinney, 1990).

Ethnic/racial identity has been described as a construct that includes components such as social identity, cultural identity, attitudes, feelings, values, as well as, language, behavior, and knowledge of ethnic group history (Tajfel, 1981). It appears then that most researchers have a broad understanding of ethnic identity but differ on specific aspects of ethnicity.

Ethnicity formation deals with the extent to which ethnic group identity is maintained for a period of time when a minority group comes in contact with the dominant majority group and the impact of the process on the psychological adjustment of the individuals. Phinney (1992) believes that ethnic identity (ethnic/racial group identity) refers to specific aspects of a person's self-concept that is derived from his or her membership in an ethnic group. Also, Phinney (1990) discusses ethnic identity formation as an component of acculturation in which the concern is with individuals and the focus is on how they relate to their own group as a sub-group of the larger society:

An important empirical issue in this area has been the question of the extent to which ethnic group identity is maintained over time when a minority ethnic group comes in contact with a dominant majority group and the impact of this process on psychological adjustment. Underlying both these issues is the theme of culture conflict between two distinct groups and the

psychological consequences of such conflicts for individuals. How such conflicts are dealt with at the individual level is part of the process of ethnic identity formation. Both social and the acculturation frameworks acknowledge that ethnic identity is developmental. (p. 502)

The developmental model of ethnic identity assumes that with the passing of time and increasing age/grade level, individuals are more likely to have examined, explored, and made a commitment to their ethnicity; in other words they have achieved an ethnic identity. For example, Phinney and Tarver (1988) conducted a study with Black and White 8th graders and found that only a third showed evidence of ethnic identity search; in a similar study among tenth graders the comparable outcome was half (Phinney, 1989). Similarly, Krute (cited in Phinney, 1990), in a study using Cross's (1978) model, reported that Black college students perceived themselves over the past, present, and future as shifting from lower to higher levels of Black identity development. Therefore, it appears that older students had done more of an identity search than did the younger ones. In addition to definitions of the construct of ethnic identity, the literature contains models that describe the process of identity and ethnic identity development.

Development of Phinney's Ethnic Identity Model

There are a number of models in research that have theorized the process of identity. Among the most widely

referenced work are Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966b, 1980) which have established the foundational framework for the concept of identity. The work of these authors will be reviewed briefly because of the relevance they hold for Phinney's work. Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity model is reviewed more extensively since it serves as the basis for this study on Black adolescents ethnic identity development. In studies focusing on adolescent development, identity has been the core variable of interest. Studying identity is a difficult task, explains Erikson, because identity formation takes place within the innermost part of the individual, as well as in the communal culture (cited in Phinney 1990). The communal culture refers to an individual's ethnic reference group orientation. Ethnicity is inclusive of both the persons core and one's communal culture, and thus is vital to the process of identity formation (Phinney, 1990). Erikson's and Marcia's model is discussed in the next section.

Erikson and Marcia

Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966a, 1980) have developed conceptual models of ego identity that provided the basis for Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity. Erikson's (1968) developmental model of identity formation advanced the belief that an achieved identity status was a result of a period of exploration and experimentation that usually

takes place during adolescence. Marcia (1966a) operationalized Erikson's theory of ego identity into a model that consists of four identity statuses based on whether people have explored identity options (e.g., occupation, religion, philosophical, or political) and whether they have made a decision based on these options. A person in Status 1, identity diffusion, has neither engaged in exploration nor made a commitment. Status 2 is called foreclosure and refers to a person who has made a commitment but has not explored available alternatives. Moratorium, Status 3, describes a person in the process of exploration of available alternatives but has not made a commitment. A firm commitment following a period of exploration is indicative of Status 4, an achieved identity. In this stage, the individual has experienced a crisis which forces him/her to make a commitment to his/her ethnic identity.

Marcia's (1966a) ego identity model implies that there is a developmental trend or progression with the achieved identity being the most advanced level of the four statuses. Many models of ethnic identity (e.g., Cross, 1978; Kim, 1981; Phinney, 1989; Phinney, & Tarver, 1988) share a common theme with Marcia's (1980) model which is: an achieved identity results from a crisis which includes exploration and experimentation which leads to a clear commitment. Marcia's model deals with a crisis that causes one to

explore their role in society. Marcia discusses the "crises" as the social, political, and religious changes that cause individuals to explore, examine, and to make new commitments. An example of a crisis point could be graduating from high school. The individual examines his/her role as to what to do next. They may choose to go to college. The commitment is fulfilling that aspiration. They complete college; therefore, they have achieved an identity based on the choice of their major (e.g., the individual becomes a doctor). Other models such as the one developed by Phinney (1989) have considered the development of ethnic identity as a process comparable to Marcia's ego identity formation which takes place over time as individuals examine/explore and draw conclusions about the role of ethnicity in their lives (Phinney, 1990). Phinney's model was adopted from Marcia's considering the same "crisis." Her crisis focused on the ethnic issues an individual confronts. An example is entering a predominately White kindergarten as a Black student who has never interacted with White students and being faced with encounters that cause him/her to realize their position as a Black student. This child is going through a process of either accepting, rejecting, or clarifying their identity as "Black." Since this study is focused on ethnic identity of

development among black adolescents, Phinney's ethnic identity model is described below.

Phinney

Phinney (1989) proposed a three-stage model advancing from an unexamined ethnic identity through a period of exploration to an achieved or committed ethnic identity. In this model, adolescents and adults who have not been exposed to ethnic identity issues or concerns are in the first stage, unexamined ethnic identity. Young people may not be interested in or may not have given much thought to their ethnic identity which is similar to Marcia's (1980) diffusion status. Adolescents and adults may also have absorbed positive ethnic attitudes from parents or other adults, and therefore may not show a preference for the white ethnic group, although they have not thought through the process for themselves, which concurs with Marcia's (1980) foreclosure status. The second stage, ethnic identity search, is characterized by an exploration of one's own ethnicity, which is similar to the moratorium status described by Marcia (1980). The final stage of the model suggests that as a result of this process, people come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of their ethnicity and that is identified as ethnic identity achievement or internalization.

Erikson (1968), Marcia (1980), and Phinney (1989) proposed that the transformation to the last stage was a liberating process which symbolized a psychologically healthier state of being. These theorists advanced the thinking that developmental stages and associated tasks accounted for the movement of individuals from unexamined/diffuse states to achieved identity or ethnic identity. In contrast, Parham and Grotevant (cited in Phinney, 1990) suggest that the process of ethnic identity development does not end with achievement but may very well continue in cycles that involve further exploration or rethinking of the role or meaning of one's own ethnicity. Despite the contrast in beliefs about the process of ethnic identity development, Erikson's theory of identity is still utilized by many researchers today. Phinney adapted Marcia's model of identity (developed from one of Erikson's stages of psychosocial development) making ethnicity inclusive in identity.

The stages of identity diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity achievement were operationalized by Phinney (1992) into a valid and reliable instrument, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. The scale was designed to assist in understanding ethnic identity through identifying characteristics that can be applied and measured across all ethnic groups (which could lead to a better

understanding of ethnic identity). Before the final development of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, Phinney conducted several studies. With each study a newer understanding of ethnic identity was used to create the 1992 Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure used in this study. The more pertinent studies are summarized below.

Related History

Phinney (1988b) conducted an exploratory study on ethnic identity. Open ended questions were used to determine in what ways Black and White early adolescents (male and females) explore and resolve issues related to their ethnicity. Results indicated that over a third of the subjects had engaged in ethnic identity search. Additionally, Black females scored higher in ethnic identity search. Black subjects focused on their own race when discussing ethnic issues. Both groups recognized the existence of prejudice as a potential problem for Blacks.

In a second study conducted on ethnic identity development, Phinney (1989) did the following: (a) examined the stages of ethnic identity development, as described by the literature, to determine if the stages could be reliably applied to adolescents across ethnic groups as a component of their identity; (b) tried to determine if there was a relationship between ethnic identity and independent measures of ego identity adjustment; and (c) examined

differences among ethnic groups in the process. A questionnaire and interviews were conducted with 91 American-born 10th graders (age ranged from 15 to 17 years old) from two high schools in the metropolitan Los Angeles area. The subjects were Asian-American, Black, Hispanic, and White.

Results indicated that among minorities, about 1/2 of the subjects were in diffusion/foreclosure (they had not explored their ethnicity); about 1/4 were in moratorium (involved in exploration); and about 1/4 were in ethnic identity achievement (had explored and were committed to an ethnic identity). The author also found that subjects with high ethnic identity also had highest scores on independent measures of ego identity and psychological adjustment. While issues faced by each group were different, the process of identity development was similar across all groups.

Phinney (1990) conducted a third study that examined ethnic identity and the importance of ethnicity as an identity issue to be resolved in the development of an achieved identity. Ethnicity as an identity issue was studied among four ethnic groups: Asian-American, Black, Mexican-American and a comparison White group ($N = 169$). Questionnaires to assess ethnic identity, ethnic identity commitment, achieved sex role identity, importance of

identity domains, self-esteem, and demographics were given to male and female urban college students.

Results indicated that the exploration of ethnicity was significantly higher among minority groups compared to majority group college students. However, the groups did not show any difference on commitment to an ethnic identity. Also, achieved ethnic identity correlated significantly with achieved occupational and sex role identity. Based on the results, ethnicity was considered to be just as important as other traditionally studied areas of identity and was rated as significantly more important by minorities than by Whites. The importance of ethnic identity is discussed next.

Continuing with research designed to operationalize stages of ethnic identity development, Phinney (1992) presented a questionnaire, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, that was design to measure common elements of ethnic identity across all groups. The questionnaire was administered to 417 high school students and 136 college students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the total ethnic identity score, and reliability was reported as .81 for the high school sample and .90 for the college sample. The relationship of ethnic identity to various variables was also examined.

Results demonstrated that the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure is a reliable measure with ethnically diverse high school and college samples. Reliability of the measure was higher for the college sample than for the high school sample; also, ethnic identity components were higher in the college students. This suggests that ethnic identity may become more consolidated with age. Results also indicated there was no statistically significant differences between the high school and college sample on affirmation/belonging, ethnic behaviors, or ethnic identity total score. However, results did indicate that college students scored higher than the high school students on the ethnic identity achievement, which provides evidence of progression towards ethnic identity achievement between ages 16 and 19. Ethnic identity did not differ by gender or socioeconomic status; however, some differences were noted with minority group members. Minority groups consistently showed higher ethnic scores than Whites and mixed subjects. Also, in both samples, Blacks scored higher than other group members. It appears that Blacks are more likely to have examined ethnicity as an identity issue and to express a strong sense of belonging. Therefore it is important to study ethnic identity among Black adolescents.

Importance of Ethnic Identity Among Black Adolescents

The birthrate among Whites is declining, while the population of minority children is increasing. Edelman (1987) reported that one-fourth of all children under the age of 15 in the United States are Black and Hispanic. In spite of the fact that Blacks and Hispanics make up one-fourth of the school population, they are still more likely than their white peers to achieve poorly in school, become at-risk, and drop out of schools (Kunjufu, 1988; Paulu, 1987; Smith & Shepard, 1987). Projected demographics suggest that Blacks and Hispanics will make up one-third of all students enrolled in public schools in the United States by the year of 2000.

The high rate of academic under achievement among minority students led the researcher of the present study to advocate that school psychologists and all school professionals must become more aware of ethnic identity development as it relates to the lives of Black and all minority adolescents. Most of the research on ethnic identity has focused on the attitudes of the White group toward minority group members and the minority group members attitudes toward the White ethnic group. However, there have been few studies investigating the psychological relationship of ethnic and minority group members with their own group (ethnic identity).

It is important to study minority adolescents' ethnicity and more specifically Black adolescents who attend school in societies or communities where their group or culture is at best poorly represented (politically, educationally, economically, and in the media) and is at worst discriminated against or even attacked verbally and physically. According to Weinreich, the understanding of the concept of ethnic identity and how it relates to Black adolescents provides a way of understanding the need of Black adolescents to assert oneself in the face of threats to their ethnic identity (cited in Phinney, 1990).

Understanding Phinney's (1989) model of ethnic identity development and how ethnic identity development is related to or influenced by gender and grade level of Black adolescents will help school psychologists to devise more effective strategies for instruction, counseling, and intervention. It is important that the concept of ethnic identity is grasped and studied because it is implicated in the overall adjustment of adolescents who come from minority groups (Phinney, 1989). Many types of studies have been conducted on ethnic identity development among minority adolescents from different ethnic groups. Below, several studies are summarized on the basis of ethnic identity as it relates to gender and age/grade level.

Gender and Grade Level

In studies among Black adolescents (on ethnic identity formation), Phinney (1989) found that Black males were more likely than Black females to endorse attitudes from the earliest stage and less likely to show evidence of the highest stage. Parham and Helms (1985) also noted a similar trend among Black adolescents. Developmentally, it is assumed that with increasing age, subjects are more likely to have an achieved ethnic identity. While there is little support for this assumption, some results suggest that there is a developmental progression (Cross, 1978; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Tarver, 1988).

With a similar focus, Fregeau and Baker (1986) tested Erikson's theory which advanced and measured a developmental continuum to identity ranging from role diffusion to identity achievement using the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (OMEIS). The questionnaire was administered to 360 adolescents (12 to 18 years old). It was hypothesized that younger adolescents would score higher on diffusion and moratorium and older adolescents higher in foreclosure and identity achievement. The results indicated that the first hypothesis was supported; younger adolescents were mostly in the diffusion, moratorium, and foreclosure, and older adolescents were mostly in the identity achievement substage. In other words, diffusion or lower

stages did not predict age; however, by age 18 there was a decrease in diffusion, while identity achievement remained the same, but by age 18 a slight increase in ethnic identity was noted. The authors explained that the tendencies might be interpreted in a developmental perspective. As personality consolidates, diffusion decreases; personality must remain constant in order to avoid a borderline sense of nothingness.

Phinney (1988a) presented a model as well as some empirical research on the process of ethnic identity development beyond childhood, which she described as an area of research that has been neglected. She reported that several models are in line with Erikson's idea that as a result of an identity crisis (period of searching that leads to a commitment) an achieved identity is accomplished. Ethnic identity is achieved by minorities through exploring what it means to be a minority in a predominantly White society. Phinney (1988b) developed a questionnaire that is applicable across all ethnic groups. It was based on two components of the identity process, search and commitment, to assess ethnic identity development. The questionnaire was administered to 300 undergraduates on an urban college campus with a diverse population. Subjects were American-born Asian, Blacks, Mexicans, Whites, and foreign-born Asian students. Results indicated that ethnic identity is

important to all races, and that subjects who experienced the highest identity conflict were of mixed races.

It was also found that an achieved identity was reached by most minority students, or most minority students were in the moratorium stage. The ethnic identity process was found to start at an earlier age in minority students. In addition, there was a strong relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem and, minorities and Whites experienced similar levels of commitment, but whites experienced lower levels of search than minorities. Based on these results, Phinney concluded that ethnic identity is achieved by minorities through exploring what it means to be a minority in a predominantly White society.

Streitmatter (1988) examined the relationship of ethnic identity status in early adolescents as it might be mediated by race/ethnicity, sex role, and gender. Subjects were from a Southwest Junior High School containing grades seven and eight ($N = 367$); 59% Anglo and 41% other (Hispanic, Black, Asian, and Native American). The extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status was administered to assess identity status of the early adolescent sample. Results indicated that females scored higher on the more sophisticated measure of identity development. It was found that females develop earlier than males physically, socially, and cognitively.

By grade, the older students scored higher on achievement and moratorium than did the seventh graders.

A study was conducted by Phinney (1988b) to examine ethnic identity development beyond childhood. A questionnaire was administered to assess ethnic identity development based on two components of the identity process, search, and commitment that could be used across all ethnic groups. The subjects were 48 Black and White middle-class eighth graders from an integrated high school. Results showed that over a third of subjects had engaged in ethnic identity search. Black females were higher in ethnic identity search than Black males and White females and White males. It was also reported that Black subjects focused on their own race when discussing ethnic issues.

In summary, results from several studies suggest that with increasing age/grade level, subjects are more likely to have an achieved ethnic identity (Cross, 1978; Parham & Helms, 1985; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Tarver, 1988). Gender was also used in the literature as an important variable. Studies conducted with Black males and females found that Black men were more likely than Black women to endorse attitudes from the earliest stages and less likely to show evidence of the higher stage (Parham & Helms 1985). Black adolescents show a similar trend (Phinney, 1989).

Results from all these studies indicated a need to continue to learn more about ethnic identity as an important focus in evaluating the role of minorities in society. Phinney's scale looked across cultures and found pertinent information that could be useful to future psychologist. Chapter 3 will discuss the use of Phinney's (1992) questionnaire, Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, to address ethnic identity within one group.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into three sections: subjects, instrumentation, and procedures. Section one, subjects, includes a description of the subjects. The second section, instrumentation, includes a description of the instrument used in this study, scoring, and reliability. The third section, procedure, includes data collection and statistical analysis.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were 179 Black adolescents from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds from two urban high schools in a Midwestern metropolitan area with a population of 105,000. The sample included 9th (14 males and 23 females), 10th (34 males and 20 females), 11th (31 males and 23 females) and 12th (16 males and 18 females) graders ranging in age from 14 to 19 with a mean age of 16.3 (SD = 1.18) for the entire population. All subjects were enrolled in a study hall period for one hour, two days a week and/or a human relations group for one hour once a month, and/or Black History class for one hour a day, five days a week. Informed consent forms for participation in this study were obtained from the parents and the students. The informed consent forms were obtained from a drop off box in the assistant principal's office (see Appendix A).

Instrumentation

Instrument

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) developed by Phinney (1992) was used to measure the participants' level of ethnic identity development. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) consists of 14 items assessing three aspects of ethnic identity. The first aspect, affirmation/belonging, assessed ethnic attitudes and sense of belonging, which is described as ethnic pride, feeling good about one's background, and being happy with one's ethnic group membership, as well as feelings of belonging and attachment to the group. This subscale, consists of five items. The following are two examples of items in this subscale: "I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to" and "I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group."

The second aspect is ethnic identity achievement, which includes both exploration and resolution of identity issues; this involves a period of exploration of the meaning of one's ethnicity that leads to a secure sense of oneself as member of a minority group. The ethnic identity achievement subscale includes seven items (e.g., "I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs" and "I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me").

The third aspect is ethnic behaviors or practices and includes involvement in social activities with members of one's group and participation in cultural traditions. This subscale consists of two items: "I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group" and, "I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs."

Scoring

Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The scores range from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Scores are derived by reversing negatively worded items (indicated by the letter R), summing across the items and obtaining the means, and dividing by the number of items. Mean scores range from 4 (indicating high ethnic identity) to 1 (indicating low ethnic identity). Three additional items, not a part of the score, assess self-identification and ethnicity of parents.

Also, other group orientation is included in the questionnaire and is assessed by six items. Attitudes and racial group orientation are ideally distinct from ethnic identity; however, they may interact with it as an aspect of one's social identity in the larger society (Phinney, 1992).

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for both a high school and college sample (Phinney, 1992) to establish reliability coefficients for the measure of ethnic identity and two of its subscales as well as for the measure of other group attitudes. The overall reliability was calculated on the fourteen item Multigroup Ethnic Identity measure and was reported as .81 for the school sample and .90 for college sample. Affirmation/Belonging subscale which consists of 5-items reported reliability as .75 and .86 for the high school and college sample. In the ethnic identity achievement subscale, which is inclusive of seven items, reliability were .69 and .80, for both groups. No coefficients are given for the subscale ethnic behaviors because Cronbach's alpha can not be calculated with only two items. However, it was indicated that the overall reliability on the measure was increased by the ethnic identity items.

The reliability of .71 and .74 was obtained for high school and college students on the six items for other group orientation. These results showed lower reliability for ethnic identity scale. As indicated by the above scores, reliability was always higher for the college sample than for the high school sample.

Procedures

Data Collection

Originally, the subjects were selected on a voluntary basis from one urban high school with a total population of 1,220; 24% (290) were minorities and 94% (273) of the minority population was made up of Blacks. Since the participation was lower than expected (105), a second urban high school was chosen. The second high school had a total population of 1,609 with 19% (312) minority population; and 81% (253) of the minority population was Black. This increased the number of subjects who volunteered to participate in this study to 179.

The subjects were instructed by the assistant principal to report to the media center at the beginning of their designated study hall hour. The subjects were given three minutes to collect their thoughts and settle down in their seats. The researcher gave a brief description of the study and the importance for conducting the study. The informed consent form was given to each subject to take home and to be signed by their parents/guardians and themselves. The subjects were given a pass to return to their designated study-hall period. The subjects were given one week to return the informed consent form to a drop-off box in the assistant principal's office. The signed informed consent forms were then collected by the researcher from the

designated area. The following week, subjects who returned the informed consent forms were asked to report to the media center. As the subjects entered the room, they were given the self-administered scale (MEIM). The subjects were given twenty to thirty minutes to complete the instrument. Upon completion of the MEIM, each subject was given a pass to return to his/her designated study-hall period. The order in which the subjects completed the scale was determined by the time of day each subject attended study-hall. All subjects who attended the Human Relations group and/or the Black History class received the MEIM as a part of their group or class. All scales were administered by the researcher (see Appendix B).

Statistical Analysis

Separate 2 x 4 (Gender x Grade) fixed effects model Analyses of Variance were performed on the subjects' ethnic identity scores and their affirmation/belonging and ethnic identity achievement subscale scores. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the subjects' ethnic identity scale scores as well as for three subscales scores affirmation/belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and ethnic behavior. In addition, Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency was calculated for ethnic identity and two of its subscales: affirmation/belonging and ethnic identity achievement.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Three types of analyses were performed on the scores of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. First, reliability coefficients for the total scale and two subscales were computed. Second, means and standard deviations for subjects' total scale and subscale scores were computed for the full sample, males and females, and 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. Finally, three 2 x 4 (Gender x Grade) fixed effect ANOVAs were performed. An ANOVA was performed on each of the following sets of scores: ethnic identity scores, affirmation/belonging subscale scores, and ethnic identity achievement subscale scores.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated as a measure of internal consistency for the ethnic identity scale (MEIM) and two of its subscales (see Table 1). The reliability coefficient for the full fourteen item ethnic identity scale was .74 for this high school sample. For the five item affirmation/belonging subscale, the obtained reliability coefficient was .64. For the seven item ethnic identity achievement subscale, the obtained reliability was .61. A Cronbach alpha was not calculated for the third subscale, ethnic behaviors, because it only contained two items. However, when these two ethnic behavior items were included

in the reliability analysis for the full 14-item scale, the obtained coefficient was higher (.74) than when these two items were excluded from the analysis (.71). The reliability coefficients obtained in this study indicated that the MEIM is a reliable instrument.

Table 1

Reliability Indexes of the MEIM Subscales and Total Score

Scale/Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
14 Item Ethnic Identity Scale	.74
12 Item Ethnic Identity Scale	.71
Affirmation/ Belonging	.64
Ethnic Identity Achievement	.61

Note. The 14-item scale included the 2-items for ethnic behavior subscale and the 12-item did not include the 2-items for ethnic behavior subscale.

Total Ethnic Identity Score

Research Hypothesis 1:

There will be differences in ethnic identity score as a function of gender among Black adolescents.

Research Hypothesis 2:

There will be differences in ethnic identity scores as a function of grade levels among Black adolescents.

Research Hypothesis 3:

There will be an interaction between gender and grade level as they impact ethnic identity scores among Black adolescents.

Means and standard deviations for the total ethnic identity scores among males and females have been presented in Table 2. The ethnic identity mean and standard deviation scores for males and females by gender and grade level are shown on Table 3. A 2 x 4 (Gender x Grade) fixed effect model ANOVA was performed on subjects' ethnic identity scores. No significant main effect for gender ($F_{1, 171} = .08, p > .05$) was found (see Table 2 and Table 4). No significant main effect was found for grade level ($F_{3, 171} = .80, p > .05$) (see Table 3 and Table 4). Finally, no significant interaction effect was found ($F_{3, 171} = 2.48, p > .05$) (see Table 3 and Table 4).

Affirmation/Belonging Score

Research Hypothesis 4:

There will be differences in affirmation/belonging scores as a function of gender among Black adolescents.

Research Hypothesis 5:

There will be differences in affirmation/belonging scores as a function of grade level among Black adolescents.

Research Hypothesis 6:

There will be an interaction between gender and grade level as they impact affirmation/belonging scores among Black adolescents.

Means and standard deviations for affirmation/belonging scores of males and females are shown in Table 2. Means and standard deviations for males and females by grade level are shown in Table 5. A 2 x 4 (Gender x Grade) fixed effects model ANOVA was performed on subjects' affirmation/belonging scores. No significant main effects were found for gender or grade level ($F_{1, 171} = .17, p > .05$) and ($F_{3, 171} = 1.34, p > .05$). In addition, no significant interaction effect was found ($F_{3, 171} = 1.09, p > .05$). (See Table 5 and Table 6).

Ethnic Identity Achievement Score

Research Hypothesis 7:

There will be differences in ethnic identity achievement scores as a function of gender among Black adolescents.

Research Hypothesis 8:

There will be differences in ethnic identity achievement scores as a function of grade level among Black adolescents.

Research Hypothesis 9:

There will be interaction between gender and grade level as they impact ethnic identity achievement scores among Black adolescents.

Means and standard deviations for ethnic identity achievement scores for males and females have been presented in Table 2. A 2 x 4 (Gender x Grade) fixed effects model ANOVA was performed on subjects' ethnic identity achievement scores. Means and standard deviations for males and females by grade level are shown on Table 8. No significant main effect was found for gender ($F_{1, 171} = .379, p > .05$), or grade level ($F_{3, 171} = .68, p > .05$). Finally, no significant interaction effect was found ($F_{3, 171} = 2.28, p > .05$) (see Table 7 and Table 8).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Total Ethnic Identity
scale: Affirmation/Belonging and Ethnic Identity Achievement
Subscales by Gender

Scale	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Ethnic Identity			
Males	95	3.28	.35
Females	84	3.29	.33
Combined	179	3.29	.35
Affirmation/belonging			
Males	95	3.69	.41
Females	84	3.72	.30
Combined	179	3.70	.37
Ethnic Identity Achievement			
Males	95	3.09	.45
Females	84	3.04	.43
Combined	179	3.06	.44

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation for Ethnic Identity Scores
by Gender and Grade

<u>Grade/Gender</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
9th			
Males	14	3.41	.50
Females	23	3.14	.29
Combined	37	3.24	.40
10th			
Males	34	3.30	.35
Females	20	3.40	.27
Combined	54	3.33	.32
11th			
Males	31	3.21	.35
Females	23	3.32	.37
Combined	54	3.26	.36
12th			
Males	16	3.30	.32
Females	18	3.35	.38
Combined	34	3.33	.35

Table 4

Analysis of Variance Total by Grade and Gender

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	*df	Mean Squares	F Value	**p
Gender	.010	1	.010	.079	.78
Grade	.298	3	.099	.805	.49
Gender x Grade	.920	3	.307	2.480	.06
Error Term	21.138	171	.124		
(Subjects within Gender x Grade)					

Note. *degrees of freedom **exact probability

Ethnic Behavior Score

Table 9 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the ethnic behaviors subscale for males and females and grade level. The average scores ranged from 2.7 for 11th grade males to 3.41 for 9th grade males. The majority of the scores (5 out of 8) were greater than three. Two of the scores were less than three; however, they were in the 2.9 range. These findings indicate that on this component, most students scored at the achieved identity stage of Phinney's model. Given the small number of items in this subscale, it was decided not to perform statistical tests to determine if significant differences were present among the mean scores of the various subgroups.

Table 5
Means and Standard Deviations for Affirmation/Belonging
by Gender and Grade

<u>Grade/Gender</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
9th			
Males	14	3.80	.42
Females	23	3.65	.38
Combined	37	3.71	.39
10th			
Males	34	3.76	.32
Females	20	3.76	.26
Combined	54	3.76	.29
11th			
Males	31	3.57	.50
Females	23	3.70	.26
Combined	54	3.36	.41
12th			
Males	16	3.71	.41
Females	18	3.77	.31
Combined	34	3.74	.36

Table 6

Analysis of Variance Affirmation/Belonging by Grade and Gender

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	*df	Mean Squares	F Value	**p Value
Gender	.023	1	.023	.170	.68
Grade	.543	3	.181	1.349	.26
Gender x Grade	.439	3	.146	1.090	.36
Error Term	22.943	171	.134		
(Subjects within Gender x Grade)					

Note. *degrees of freedom **exact probability

Table 7

Analysis of Variance Ethnic Identity Achievement by Grade and Gender

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	*df	Mean Squares	F Value	**p Value
Gender	.072	1	.072	.379	.54
Grade	.385	3	.128	.681	.57
Gender x Grade	1.294	3	.431	2.285	.08
Error Term	32.275	171	.189		
(Subjects within Gender x Grade)					

Note. *degrees of freedom **exact probability

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for The Subscale Ethnic Identity Achievement by Gender and Grade

<u>Grade/Gender</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
9th			
Males	14	3.20	.61
Females	23	2.83	.35
Combined	37	2.97	.49
10th			
Males	34	3.08	.47
Females	20	3.16	.40
Combined	54	3.10	.44
11th			
Males	31	3.09	.36
Females	23	3.09	.47
Combined	54	3.09	.41
12th			
Males	16	3.06	.42
Females	18	3.11	.43
Combined	34	3.09	.42

Table 9
Means and Standard Deviations for Ethnic Behaviors
by Gender and Grade

<u>Grade/Gender</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
9th			
Males	14	3.41	.80
Females	23	2.93	.68
Combined	37	3.01	.72
10th			
Males	34	2.94	.76
Females	20	3.33	.55
Combined	54	3.08	.71
11th			
Males	31	2.77	.84
Females	23	3.17	.90
Combined	54	2.94	.88
12th			
Males	16	3.13	.67
Females	18	3.11	.61
Combined	34	3.12	.63

Chapter V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to examine Black adolescents' levels of ethnic identity in relation to gender and grade level. There were nine hypotheses tested in this study. The subjects (N = 179) were administered the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure to assess their ethnic identity. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed. In this chapter, findings as well as implications for further research are discussed.

Findings of the Study

The findings of this study indicated that all of the high school students had a high score (3 or higher on a 4 point scale) on ethnic identity, which is indicative of achieved ethnic identity. Subjects' responses to the questionnaire showed evidence of both the exploration of the meaning of their ethnicity (e.g., history and traditions) and commitment, reflected by their clear, confident understanding of the role of ethnicity for themselves. Also, all of the subjects scored high (3 or above on a 4 point scale) on the affirmation/belonging subscale suggesting that they have ethnic pride and good feelings about their background. They are happy with their group membership, and they feel a sense of belonging and attachment to their ethnic group. However, scores on the

ethnic identity achievement and ethnic behavior subscales suggest that 9th and 10th grade females on both subscales (2.9 or higher on a 4 point scale) appear to approach achieved ethnic identity. Perhaps they have explored their ethnicity but have not made a commitment to the role of ethnicity in their lives. Scores for 9th grade females (2.9 on a 4 point scale) and 10th and 11th grade males (2.7 or higher on a 4 point scale) on ethnic behavior also showed evidence of approaching an achieved ethnic identity.

The findings of this study also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females among 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade high school students' scores on ethnic identity or on three of its subscales: affirmation/belonging, ethnic identity achievement, or ethnic behaviors. Also, no significant interaction or main effects for gender or grade were found.

Discussion

When these findings are compared to Phinney's (1992) study, which was conducted with high school and college students, the question concerning age-related changes in ethnic identity findings showed that there were no statistically significant differences between high school and college students on affirmation/belonging, ethnic behaviors, or the total score (ethnic identity). However, in contrast to the findings of the present study Phinney did

find that the college students did score higher than the high school students on ethnic identity achievement. These results showed developmental progression, suggesting that there is expected change or growth with age (Phinney, 1992).

The results of the present study did indicate that as early as the 9th grade all subjects had reached an achieved ethnic identity, which was illustrated by the high ethnic identity score. These findings are similar to the findings of Phinney's (1988a) study in which she presented a model of empirical research on the process of ethnic identity development beyond childhood. Minority students appear to have begun the ethnic identity process at an earlier age.

Perhaps, factors associated with being Black (e.g., a history of social disadvantage and discrimination) makes this group of Black adolescents more likely to have examined their ethnicity as an identity issue and to express a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group. Another explanation for the early ethnic identity process among Black youths is that for over thirty years, Blacks have been involved in some type of positive social movement (e.g., Civil Rights, 1954-1968; Black Power, 1968-mid 1970s), which may account for the ethnic identity process at an early age in this group of Black adolescents. Black children at an early age are forced to identify with their ethnicity; they are viewed as Black children rather than as children. Hale-

Benson (1986) stated that Black parents have always been challenged to encourage the development of a positive self-concept in their children when they engage in social comparison or competition with white children.

Findings of the present study showed that there were no significant differences between males and females. Other studies differed from these findings. Parham and Helms (1985) found that Black men were more likely than Black women to have lower scores (reflective of unexamined ethnic identity), and less likely to have higher scores (reflective of an achieved ethnic identity). Phinney (1989) had similar findings to Parham and Helms among Black adolescents. Her results indicated that Black males were more likely to have scores reflective of earlier stages (unexamined ethnic identity), and females were more likely to have scores that were reflective of an achieved ethnic identity. The present study did not find differences in gender; these findings may have resulted because this group of students are in a school environment where they are not forced to focus on gender roles. On the other hand, they may have to confront gender issues when they are in another environment (e.g., job market where males are more likely to get jobs in the mainstream culture while females stay home). Once again this sample, unlike Phinney's, was all Black and not representative of diverse minority groups.

The findings of this study indicates that this sample of Black high school students have explored the meaning of their ethnicity and have reached a secured sense of self as a member of the ethnic minority group; this is indicative of achieved ethnic identity.

Implication for Practice

Review of the literature indicates that minority adolescents who have not resolved issues regarding their own ethnicity are at greater risk for school and adjustment problems (Phinney, 1989). In fact, understanding Black students' attitudes toward their ethnic identity may help school psychologists and school professionals understand and interpret different behaviors Black adolescents may exhibit in school. For example, research has shown that many Black youths experience what is known as "oppositional identity," seeking to define themselves in contrast to the White culture. They acquire preferences for engaging in activities not adopted by the White culture. School psychologists may better identify needs of black adolescents (academically, socially, and personally). They can also explore their own ethnic identity and what it means to them in relation to other ethnic groups because research has shown that Whites sometimes consider the term ethnic as relating to groups other than their own.

On the other hand, if most Black adolescents in this study have reached an achieved ethnic identity, emphasis may not be placed on developing strategies that will improve upon their ethnic identity development, but rather attention should focus on strategies that will assist Black adolescents in transformation of their positive sense of self into their academic, social, personal, as well as professional lives. Additionally, as interventions are ruled out and school performance is at issue for minority students, the need for environmental assessment alone with individual assessment becomes treatment.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is recommended that further research be conducted in which one's ethnic identity among Blacks would be explored across elementary, Jr. high, high school, and college students. This would allow for variability by grade and age, as well as examine if ethnic identity becomes more consolidated with age. It is also recommended that further studies in which one's ethnic identity be examined across ethnic groups at the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. This would allow for comparisons of similarities and differences in the development of ethnic identity across ethnic groups, provide implications for interventions, and integrate ethnic groups into society. Conducting a longitudinal study on ethnic identity may be worthwhile as it would allow for

observation of ethnic identity development over time. Finally, it is recommended that another instrument, one specifically designed to measure ethnic identity with Blacks, in addition to Phinney's (1992) MEIM be used to measure Black adolescents' ethnic identity. This would account for a measure of unique characteristics that Blacks may possess that are not common across other ethnic groups.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study has shown that by ninth grade Black adolescents appeared to have reached an achieved stage of ethnic identity. This undoubtedly presents a positive picture of these adolescents' ethnic identity development. The task that must be undertaken next by educators is to provide them with a school environment that validates their culture and their positive perceptions of themselves. Under these conditions, students will not feel the need to develop an oppositional identity to the school culture, and should be able to transfer their positive feelings about their ethnicity into their lives. Also, students' positive feelings of self and their group might engender higher levels of academic achievement.

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Appendix A
Informed Consent

Dear Parent,

I am a student at the University of Northern Iowa seeking a degree as a school psychologist. As an African-American, I am very interested in increasing my knowledge of the development of Black adolescents.

I am asking for your permission to give a questionnaire to your son or daughter during study-hall period.

It will ask questions about their knowledge of their ethnic group and how they describe their feelings about themselves as a Ethnic minority group member. Answering the questionnaire will take about 20 to 30 minutes. Since students will not be asked to write their names, their responses will be anonymous. The questionnaire will be administered during study-hall period, Black History class, or Human Relationship class.

Your child participation is voluntary, and he or she may withdraw at any time and will not be penalized for not participating.

If you have any questions regarding your child's participation in this study, you may contact me or the

project advisor, Dr. Radhi Al-Mabuk at:

Adrienne M. Lewis 277-6520

Dr. Radhi al-Mabuk 273-2609

For additional questions about this study and the rights of your child you may contact:

Human Subjects Coordinator

University of Northern Iowa

Phone: 273-2748

If you agree to your child participation, please sign and return the permission slip to your child.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my child's participation in this study as stated above. I hereby agree for my son or daughter to participate. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the description of this study.

Name of Student

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Investigator

Appendix B

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Mexican-American, Hispanic, Black, African-American, Asian-American, American Indian, Anglo-American, and White. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their ethnicity is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behavior is affected by it. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be

Next to each question below enter the number of one of the choices to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs. _____
2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. _____
3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. _____
4. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____
5. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. _____
6. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. _____
7. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together. _____

8. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life. _____
9. I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____
10. I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group. _____
11. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group. _____
12. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups. _____
13. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group. _____
14. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments. _____
15. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups. _____
16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs. _____
17. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups. _____
18. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. _____
19. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____
20. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background. Write in the number that gives the best answer to each question. _____

21. My ethnicity is
- (1) Asian, Asian American, or Oriental
 - (2) Black or African American
 - (3) Hispanic or Latino
 - (4) White, Caucasian, European, not Hispanic
 - (5) American Indian
 - (6) Mixed, parents are from two different groups
 - (7) Other (write in) _____
22. My father's ethnicity is (use number above) _____
23. My mother's ethnicity is (use number above) _____