Examining the Relationships between Racial-Ethnic Socialization, Racial Identity,

and African American Youth's Academic Outcomes: An Analysis with Implications for

Social Work Research, Practice and Policy

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Abstract

Compared to their counterparts, African American youth on the average, are significantly disadvantaged in the American Public K-12 education. Examination of the resources, and processes that are key to educational success suggests that African American youth underachievement may potentially be driven by disparities in access to opportunities, and processes at multiple levels of their educational experience. While the vast majority of the research has documented and hypothesized about the problem and the causes of underachievement in Black youth, few have focus on identifying culturally relevant resources within the African American families and communities to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for these youth especially in social work.

In response, the current study employed path analysis, and data from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) to examine culturally protective and compensatory factors (racial socialization and racial identity) in African Americans, and the mechanisms by which they operate to influence healthy psychosocial adjustment and academic performance. The findings, which revealed previously unexplored mechanisms by which various structures of racial identity reinforce each other, suggest that race-based messages and practices related to the racial/cultural heritage of African Americans in combinations with practices that

alert youth to potential discrimination and the strategies to deal with them hold some positive gains in developing positive sense of self that foster healthy psychosocial adjustment and academic performance in Black youth.

Additionally, this study highlights the content, the structure, and the processes by which racial identity as a source of strength may be cultivated, transformed, and maintained. Social workers and related disciplines in the applied field stand to foster strength in Black youth if they incorporate racial-ethnic socialization, and advocate for opportunities that support youth's exploration, development, and commitment to and affirmation of positive racial identity with the strategies to help them live out such identity.

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PREFACE

First of all, I give thanks to the Almighty God for His Grace that guides, strengthens, teaches and motivates me, for in him I move, live, and have my being.

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Nyame Nshira mo yinaa……. God bless you all!

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Racial disparities in education in the United States are well documented. Compared to their non-Black counterparts, African American youth's educational outcomes are often characterized by lower test scores, graduation rates, and enrollment in post-secondary education (Covay, 2010; Gaddis & Lauen, 2014; Hartney & Flavin, 2013; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Martin, 2012; Noguera, 2003). These differences in educational outcomes are popularly described as the achievement or test score gaps (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). A report issued by the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems (2015) reveals that in 2013, 58 and 52 percent of Whites fourth and eighth graders respectively scored proficient or higher in reading nationally, while 68 percent and 62 percent of Asian fourth and eighth graders evidenced proficient or higher reading scores respectfully. However, only 20 percent and 18 percent of Black fourth and eighth graders respectively were proficient in reading the same year. Similarly, the National Educational Assessment Progress (NAEP, 2013) report on the trend in the achievement gaps since 1971 to 2012 indicates that Blacks are significantly trailing Whites at each age group. According to NAEP data, for nine year olds, the gap stands at 23 and 25 in reading and math respectively. For thirteen year olds, it is at 23 and 28 points in reading and math respectively, while it stands at 26 in both reading and math for seventeen year olds.

When viewed through systems concepts such as input (resources and opportunities), throughput (the process by which resources are transferred), and output (outcomes that are linked to the input and the process) (Von Bertalanffy, 1972), the achievement gap indicates racial disparities in access to educational resources and opportunities (Allen-Mears, 2015). Consequently, some scholars have reframed the achievement gap according to racial disparities in access to learning resources, and opportunities in the K-12 education system in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 2008, 2006; Lipman, 2013; 2011; Lynn & Dixon, 2013; Milner, 2012). Research supports the argument that the achievement gap reflects racial disparities in access to educational resources and opportunities that have disproportionate negative impact on African American youth's educational outcomes.

African American children often attend high poverty and high minority schools with the least experienced teachers, highest teacher mobility, and highest percentage of teachers teaching in unrelated fields (Knaus, 2007; Orfield et al., 2012). Additionally, this racial group is underrepresented in gifted programs, AP classes, and suburban schools with adequate resources (Abulkadiroglu, Angrist, & Pathak, 2014; Erickson, 2016; Kelly, 2009). Furthermore, African American youth are overrepresented in special education (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Codrington, & Fairchild, 2012; Zion & Blanchett, 2011) and lower academic tracks (Burris, Wiley, Welner, & Murphy, 2008; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2009; Kelly, 2009). In addition, Black youth experience higher rate of exclusionary school discipline practices (Dupper, 2010; Finn & Servoss, 2015; Losen et al., 2014; Quintana, 2012; Skiba et al., 2014; Skiba et al, 2009; Skiba & Noam, 2001), and lower teacher expectations (McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Together, these studies indicate that the achievement gap may potentially be driven by the disparities in the resources and processes that characterize the education of African American youth.

1.1   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The consequences of these disparities are enormous and affect all ecosystems. At the micro-mezzo levels, these disparities are associated with African American's poorer health and higher mortality rates (Copeland-Linder et al., 2011; Flores, 2010; Koh, Graham, & Glied, 2011). In addition, racial disparities in education have also been linked with lower incomes, higher unemployment, and higher poverty (Ferguson, 2007; Friend et al., 2011; Gaddis & Lauen, 2014; Holzer, Offner, & Sorensen, 2005), increased crime, incarceration and subsequently, family disorganization within the African American communities (Ewert, Sykes, & Pettit, 2014; Finn, Nybell, & Shook, 2010). Nationally, the academic inequities faced by African American youth challenges the fundamental democratic ideals and principles of the United States, and raises serious concerns about the educational and labor prospects of the nation (Braun et al., 2010; Gaynor, 2012; Ferguson, 2014; McKown, 2013). At the international level, the racial disparities in U.S. schools represent a violation of human rights and social justice principles. They undermine a global agenda for human development (Brittain & Kozlak, 2007; Aidman & Malerba, 2015; Darling Hammond, 2007; Ferguson, 2014).

Given that social work is a social justice oriented profession with a particular focus on vulnerable and oppressed groups (Gasker & Fisher, 2014; IFS, 2012; NASW, 2008), the above indicators and consequences of the achievement gaps are relevant for social work practice (Fram et al., 2007). There is the need for the social work profession to develop evidenced-based responsive policy and practice interventions to create school environments that equitably foster and promote the emotional, psychological, social, and academic development of African American youth (NASW, 2012; Teasley, 2004).

While large a body of research in various disciplines including, but not limited to, education, sociology, psychology, economics, and political science has identified and hypothesized underlying causes for these disparities, significant gaps remain in terms of interventions to address them, particularly in social work. This study seeks to generate knowledge to contribute to the dearth in the area of social work intervention by exploring the web of relationships between racial-ethnic socialization, racial identity, and African American youth outcomes related to education. More specifically, the present study examines the extent to which racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity operate as cultural resources to influence youth's psychosocial and educational outcomes such as academic-self-concept, expectation for performance, and actual academic performance. This chapter proceeds as follows: first, the links between racial-ethnic socialization, racial identity, and African American youth psychosocial and academic outcomes are introduced. Second, racial identity and its association with psychosocial and academic performance are discussed. Next, the theoretical frameworks guiding the study are presented. The chapter concludes with a description of the overview of the study's methodology.

1.2   RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION, RACIAL IDENTITY, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH ACADEMICS

Over the past few decades, researchers have become increasingly interested in the process by which African American parents socialize their children to function in a race-conscious society. A construct that is gaining currency in the light of researchers' interest is racial-ethnic socialization—the specific messages about racial status that parents transmit to

children to influence personal and group identity, intergroup relationships, and adjustments in several domains of society including education (Hughes et al., 2006; Rodriguez et al, 2009). As discussed in depth in chapter three, racial-ethnic socialization (RES) is a multidimensional construct. The research has established associations among the various RES sub constructs and racial identity, and academic related outcomes in African American youth (Neblett et al., 2008; Hughes et al., 2006).

1.2.1   Racial-Ethnic Socialization and Racial Identity

As noted (Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995)**,** healthy racial identity is one of the key motivations for African American parents to engage in racial-ethnic socialization. According to Stevenson (1995), in the absence of racial-ethnic socialization, African American youth may be vulnerable to a self-identity that can lead to unhealthy adjustment in a race conscious society such as the United States. Research has found an association between some RES subconstructs and some subdomains of racial identity development in Black youth (fully described in chapter four) (French & Coleman, 2013; Sellers et al., 2007; Small et al., 2007). For example, RES messages that highlight racial/cultural heritage of African Americans as well as those that stress the need to treat everyone with respect are found to be positively associated with aspects of racial identity that emphasize unity among Blacks and the similarities among all races respectively (French & Coleman, 2013). Other research has also found racial messages and activities related to African Americans cultural/ racial heritage to be associated with the importance youth ascribe to their race, and positive evaluation of Blacks and by extension, themselves as Black youth (Neblett et al., 2009; Tang et al., 2016; Williams and Smalls-Glover 2014). For instance, Neblett,

Smalls, Ford, Nguyn and Sellers (2009) investigated the relationship between RES and racial identity among middle and high school African American students. They found that parents' messages related to racial pride, awareness of potential discrimination, self-worth, and engagement in race based activities were positively related to youth's racial importance, controlling for sociodemographic factors. Thus, the subconstructs of RES may be differentially related to various dimensions of racial identity in African American youth.

Although research has established that some subconstructs of racial socialization maybe distinctively related to the dimensions of the racial identity, it is possible that the racial/cultural heritage socialization may be related to the various dimensions of the racial identity independent of the other racial/ethnic socialization subconstructs when the subconstructs are considered simultanously. A critical examination of the racial/cultural heritage and history of African Americans reveals evidence of racism and subsequent discrimination and stereotypes about African Americans. Additionally, the racial/cultural heritage highlights how African Americans have overcome oppression and achieved success in education and other endeavors of life despite race related stress in ways that highlight determination, persistence, self-worth, and the value of education (Perry et al., 2003). Thus, the racial/cultural heritage and history socialization as noted in Perry et al. (2003) can inform the African American youth of the potential for discrimination, offer skills for coping effectively, provide positive evaluation of Blacks, which in turn can lead to the significance that could be attributed to being Black. However, little research has considered the controlled effects of the various racial socialization constructs on the racial identity dimensions simultaneously. In addition, the network of pathways by which racial socialization subconstructs influence racial identity dimensions, which in turn predict outcomes

related to Black youth academics, have rarely been simultaneously explored in the social work literature. Yet such research will help social work practitioners, parents, and policy makers in their effort to assist Black youth develop healthy racial identity that support academic success.

1.2.2 Racial-Ethnic Socialization and Academic Related Outcomes

In the area of education, research has suggested that RES is associated with direct academic performance and psychosocial outcomes that positively support success in education. RES has been linked to values related to the, importance, interest, and utility of education (Butler-Barnes, 2012; Byrd & Chavous, 2009; Howard, Rose, & Barbarin, 2013; Neblett, 2006; Caughy, et al., 2002; Scotham & Smalls, 2009; Smalls, 2009). Additionally, RES has been linked positively with academic oriented beliefs and behaviors like academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy, school bonding, attendance, and classroom engagement (Butler-Barnes, Chavous, Hurd, & Varner, 2013; Cooper & Smalls, 2010; Hughes et al., 2009; Neblett Jr et al., 2009). Next, other findings have established direct and significant link between some of the RES subconstructs and academic performance, as indicated by grades and standardized test scores (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Friend, Hunter, & Fletcher, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003; Wang & Huguley, 2012).

However, other studies have reported negative or insignificant relationships between several of the RES subconstructs and academic outcomes (Neblett et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2003). For example, Neblett et al. (2006) found that in the context of race related stress, racial messages about pride were negatively related to youth's academic curiosity, and GPA, and unrelated to academic persistence. Butler-Barnes, Williams and Chavous, (2012) found no direct

relationship between cultural pride and performance. Such findings highlight inconsistences in the link between some of the subconstructs of racial-ethnic socialization and outcomes related to academics. Thus, additional research is needed to shed light on the inconsistent findings. Moreover, the extant research seems to suggest that each of the RES subconstructs that has been linked with academic outcomes has distinct effects on youth's academic outcomes independent of each other, and of racial identity and psychosocial mediations. Similarly, the literature suggests that the various subdomains of racial identity uniquely predict psychosocial and academic outcomes in African American youth. However, studies have not tested these hypotheses in a single model to ascertain the extent to which such hypotheses hold when tested simultaneously.

In response, this study seeks to examine the independent effects of the RES subconstructs on African American youth racial identity dimensions, and ultimately academic outcomes. The study also aimed to investigate the independent and unique influences of the racial identity subdomains on Black youth educational outcomes when controlling for the RES subconstructs, and sociodemographic factors. In so doing, the study seeks to identify the pathways by which racial-ethnic-socialization practices are linked to African American youth's developmental outcomes with implication for their academic performance. This project thus, ultimately, aims to use path analysis to clarify the web of relationships that exist between specific racial-ethnic socialization practices, racial identity domains, and academic achievement in ways that shed light on distinct culturally resources that can enhance social workers, educators, parents, and policy makers' capacities to support African American youth.

1.3   RACIAL IDENTITY, PSYCHOSOCIAL AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

The research has generally examined Black racial identity for its effects on various developmental outcomes, including education (Chavous et al., 2003; Cross, 1991; Rowley et al., 1998; Sellers et al., 1997). Regarding education, researchers have employed racial identity as promotive/protective and risk factor to help shed light on the academic outcomes of African American youth, and to inform intervention (Butler-Barnes et al., 2013; Chavous et al., 2015; McGee, 2015; Martin, 2012; Smalls et al., 2007; Varelas, Martin, & Kane, 2013). Specifically, researchers have explored whether the various meanings youth ascribe to being African American promote youth's academic success or place them at risk for academic failure (Byrd & Chavous, 2012; 2011; Chavous, 2003).

1.3.1   Racial Identity as Promotive of Academics.

A review by Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon (2013) suggests that racial identity constitutes key aspect of the normative development of minority youth with implication for their psychological health, well-being and academic engagement and achievement. Some dimensions of racial identity (e.g. positive evaluation of the racial group, the importance ascribed to the race, and the sense of racial belonging) have been found to be protective factors that enhance African American youth's educational engagement and performance amidst adverse learning contexts including discrimination and neighborhood disadvantages (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; Wright, 2011). Sellers, Chavous and Cook (1998) found that racial centrality positively predict African American student's performance. Chavous et al. (2003) found that subdomains of racial

identity—positive evaluation of one's group (private regard), the importance attached to race (racial centrality) were positively and significantly associated with psychosocial factors that are known to support higher academic performance such as attachment to school, and academic self-efficacy.

In addition, findings by Smalls et al. (2007) support the racial identity as promotive of academic perspective. The authors suggest racial identity beliefs that endorse minority group experience which highlights similar history of oppression that Blacks may share with other minority groups in the United States may foster student academic engagement. Smalls et al. (2007) further reported that while perceived discrimination had a detrimental influence on school engagement, subscales of racial ideology moderated this relationship, whereby youth with assimilationist ideologies reported lower academic engagement in the presence of discrimination relative to those who did not endorse assimilationist ideology. Sellers et al. (1997) found a positive significant association between racial centrality and academic self-concept among college freshmen, whereby those who reported higher racial centrality were more likely to display higher academic self-concepts of ability than those who reported lower racial centrality. Other research has also found that higher racial centrality and high private regard are linked with positive academic achievement attitudes and higher performance in African American adolescents after adjusting for family and SES factors (Byrd & Chavous 2011).

1.3.2 Racial Identity as Risk to Academic Success

Conversely, other research highlights ways in which racial identity poses a risk to African American youth's educational success (Osborne, 1999; Sackett, Hardison, & Cullen,

2004; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). These scholars argue that in an educational context where stigma and stereotypes about African American youth's intellectual abilities are prevalent, racial salience may lead to youth's disengagement to protect self-esteem (Patterson, 2015; Steel, 1997). In a study that examined the relationship between racial-ethnic identity and academic performance in a sample of multiracial youth in a gifted program, Worrell (2007) found that strong connections with African Americans was negatively associated with GPA for Blacks. Worrell's (2007) findings have been supported by Cokley et al. (2012), and Harper and Tucker (2006), who found a negative link between racial identity and academic performance.

On a whole, the findings regarding the link between racial identity and African American youth educational outcomes are mixed. Some research has established a potentially strong link between racial identity and successful educational outcomes. Such research suggests that racial identity directly influences positive academic outcomes, and indirectly through its effect on youth psychosocial factors that predict better achievement. Additionally, racial identity may also buffer the detrimental effects of stereotypes and discrimination on students' performance. Conversely, there is also some evidence that racial identity may pose a risk for lower academic performance and attainment in African American youth. Therefore, in order to prevent lower performance and attainment, scholars who view racial identity to be risk for lower achievement have argued that African American youth disengage from academic endeavors when they encounter racism (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Further research is thus needed to help explain the mixed findings. Moreover, given that the various subdomains of the racial identity seem to have independent effects, a model that simultaneously examines the pathways by which particular racial identity subdomains distinctively influence psychosocial functioning in education will be helpful to guide practice in

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terms of whether particular subdomain or each subdomain equally matter. A path analysis design that will demonstrate the independent or complementary role of each racial identity subdomain, and that of RES constructs to understand the mechanisms through which RES, racial identity, and educational outcomes of African American youth interrelate will significantly contribute to moving theory and empirical evidence into practice. According to the NASW (2012) standard for social work practice with youth in school, social workers are to strive toward emotional, physical, and psychological availability of all students in the classroom, and promote respect and dignity to ensure access to learning opportunities equitably. Therefore, given the role of racial socialization and racial identity in fostering African American youth's psychosocial adjustments, emotionally and academically, social workers understanding of the mechanism by which the psychosocial factors fostered by racial socialization and racial identity operate will be if great value to social work practice with youth, their families, and schools around the educational success of African American youth.

1.4   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by three major theoretical frameworks: (1) integrative model for the development of minority children (García Coll et al., 1996); (2) the identity cultural ecological (ICE) perspective derived from the phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST) (Spencer, 1999); and (3) the person-in-environment construct that informs social work (Green, 2008; Greene & Ephross; 1991; Pardeck, 2015). The integrative model is premised on the grounds that while every child's development is dynamically linked to the

proximal and distal processes in their social ecologies, minority children experience unique ecological circumstances—racism, stereotypes, discrimination and stigmatization— that are not shared by children in the mainstream. According to this model, to fully understand the normal development of minority children, these unique ecologies must be explicitly incorporated in research. This means that the unique task and strategies that African American parents have for raising healthy and competent children in a race-conscious society (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Miller, 1999; Nicolas et al., 2008) must be recognized.

Similarly, the ICE integrates normal developmental processes and contextual influences to shed light on youth's educational processes and outcomes. The basic tenet underlying the ICE perspective is that an individual's perception of a social phenomenon depends on social-cognitive mechanisms that influence variation in coping /adaptive responses throughout the life course. That means the degree to which Black youth may develop adaptive or maladaptive skills that support or hinder success in education may be influenced by how they construct themselves in the light of the social group to which they belong in the United States. It offers an opportunity to investigate "multiple and interactive contributions or roles to individual-context fit" and school adjustment issue (Spencer, 1999, p.44), and assumes the relevance of identity, culture, and context as the individual develops across the life course. In line with the integrative model for the development of minority children (García Coll et al., 1996), the ICE contends that individuals' self-concept is shaped by the experiences and processes that occur in the diverse contexts (home, peer group, community, and school) that they are embedded in (Spencer 1999; French & Coleman, 2013). The ICE thus, underscores the importance of contexts, and the degree to which congruence or incongruence exist in the contexts within which children are developing, and how they influence education of the African American youth. Most importantly, while

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supporting the integrative model of child development, the ICE contends that being a minority in a race conscious society, particularly, being an African American, necessitates the need to pursue responses to perceived and experienced risks and stressors.

Accordingly, racial socialization and racial identity have been identified as protective responses that African Americans rely on to enhance positive adjustment and achieve positive developmental competences despite the hostile racial environment they live in (Hughes et al., 2006; Miller, 1999; Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012; Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2013; Stevenson, 1995; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). However, the research linking racial socialization and racial identity to African American youth's education is underexplored, particularly in social work (French & Coleman, 2013; Miller, 1999; Teasley, 2004). As a helping profession, social workers are called to explore and leverage on strengths and resources within client systems for culturally appropriate intervention for sustained empowerment (NASW, 2016). Therefore, given the potential role of racial socialization and racial identity as culturally relevant factors that promote healthy psychosocial functioning, and academic performance of African American youth (Hughes et al., 2006; Jones & Neblett, 2016), social workers are likely to increase their effectiveness in working with, and on behalf of African American youth and their families by taking advantage of these culturally relevant resources.

The integrated model of minority development and the ICE frameworks are consistent with the social work person-in-environment perspective, which speaks to an adaptive balance between an organism and its environment, and views social functioning as the relationship between the person and the environment (Greene, 2008; Pardeck, 2015). Underlying the social work person in-environment perspective, which draws heavily on the Bronfenbrenner's

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ecological framework, is the realization that human problems are often due to complex interplay of social, political, psychological, economic, and physical factors and processes (Pardeck, 2015). Therefore, attention to problems in social functioning entails transactional relationships of the interconnectedness between environmental conditions, processes, and human conditions (Pardeck, 2015). Two of the concepts that inform this perspective are of particular interest to this study of Black youth's academic achievement: transaction and behavioral setting.

The concept of transaction (Greene, 2008; Pardeck, 2015), which the person-in-environment assumes, is particularly drawn upon for this work. Rather than viewing problems in social functioning as individual pathology, the application of the concept of transaction guides to situate problems in a malfunctioning ecosystem of which the individual is a part (Pardeck, 2015). From this argument, problems in Black youth education may be regarded as a function of a transaction that entails or is interwoven in a complex process within and across the learning ecology (Allen-Mears, 2015; McKown, 2013).

The concept behavioral setting suggests the need for the social work practitioner to assess and intervene in students' behaviors in ways that move away from the behaviorist's definition of behavior as a stimulus-response association to one that regards behavior as a series of events or processes that are inextricably linked to settings, people, and time—processes and variables that constitute the learning ecology (Allen-Mears, 2015; Graham, 2007; Pardeck, 2015). This is particularly salient because academic achievement for Black youth entails negotiating complex processes, relationships, and behaviors across multiple contexts (Harper, 2007; Martin, 2012; Nasir, 2011; Varelas, Martin, & Kane, 2013). Together, these theoretical frameworks underscore the complex transactional processes, and relationships that must be understood to explain the

achievement of these youth in education. Additionally, the theories help to understand the unique position of African American youth, and the unique skills and competences they must develop to negotiate their learning environment for effectively meeting their educational needs.

1.5   OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine and explain the pathways by which racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity interrelate to influence the psychosocial development of African American youth with particular focus on the educational outcome of these youth. Specifically, the study will explore: 1) whether parent racial-ethnic socialization practices influence youth's racial identity development and their psychosocial and academic outcomes; and 2) how racial identity relates to racial socialization to influence the academic outcomes among African American youth.

On a whole, the research indicates that African American youth experience disproportionate disparities in resources and opportunities, and the processes that lead to success in education (Ford & Moore, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2008, 2006; Milner, 2012) . Consequently, African American youth, on the average, find themselves with lower academic achievement in comparison to their counterparts in other racial groups. The burgeoning research suggests that two culturally relevant and protective factors (racial socialization, and racial identity) are associated with healthy psychosocial functioning and well-being including education in African American youth (Hughes et al., 2006; Jones & Neblett, 2016). However, both racial socialization and racial identity are multidimensional constructs. While some specific subconstructs of racial

socialization have been linked to particular dimensions of racial identity, and youth's psychosocial and academic outcomes, less is known in terms of whether those subconstructs function independently or in combinations with one another to influence racial identity, psychosocial and academic outcomes, and the pathways by which their effects are realized.

Similarly, the various domains of racial identity when developed, also seem to interrelate with racial-ethnic socialization constructs to influence psychosocial and academic outcomes. However, there is a dearth of social work research elaborating on the nature of how racial identity subdomains function to effect Black youth's psychosocial and academic outcomes independent of the unique effects of racial-ethnic socialization subconstructs and sociodemographic factors. Additionally, some of the findings established between racial-ethnic socialization constructs, racial identity and academic related outcomes are mixed. Further study is needed to shed light on the inconsistent findings, and identify the pathways by which a given racial-ethnic socialization construct relates to particular identity subdomain, and youth's outcomes to inform social work practice with African American youth, their families, and the schools that youth attend. This study seeks to fill in the identified needs above by using path analysis to investigate the web of relationships that exist between racial-ethnic socialization subconstructs (racial/cultural heritage and preparation for bias) in African American families, and subdomains of racial identity (racial centrality, private regard, and sense of racial belonging), and academic related outcomes (academic self-concept of ability, expectation for performance, and performance in GPA). The study's associated research questions are presented below.

1.5.1   Research Questions

1. To what degree do dimensions of racial-ethnic socialization influence dimensions of racial identity in Black youth?

2. How does racial centrality relate to private racial regard in Black youth?

3. To what degree do Black youth's sense of racial belonging support academic outcomes

4. What is the nature of the interrelationships between RES, racial identity, and psychosocial and academic outcomes?

1.5.2   Hypotheses for Questions 1, 2, and 3

The following hypotheses are associated with research questions 1, 2, and 3. Independent of background characteristics;

1. More engagement in racial-ethnic socialization subdimensions by parents will be associated with higher racial centrality among Black youth.

2. Racial centrality will be positively associated with private racial regard.

3. Youth with strong sense of racial belonging in the Black racial group will demonstrate positive link with academic performance.

1.5.3   Hypotheses for Question 4

The interrelationships hypotheses are as follows, (see Figure 1)

a) RES predicts youth's racial identity development, which in turn predicts youth academic self-concept of ability. Academic self-concept of ability in turn will predict students' expectation for performance, and GPA.

b) RES predicts youth's outcomes related to their academics (academic self-concept of ability, expectations for performance, and GPA) independent of racial identity mediations.

c) Racial identity subdimensions (the importance of race, positive evaluation of being Black, and racial belonging) directly and uniquely predict Black youth's psychosocial and academic outcomes (academic self-concept, expectations for performance, and GPA), independent of RES constructs, and background factors.

d) Black youth's racial identity subdomains jointly affect their academic self-concept, which in turn predict expectation for performance to influence GPA independent of RES predictors and background characteristics

Figure 1 Hypothesized Conceptual Model
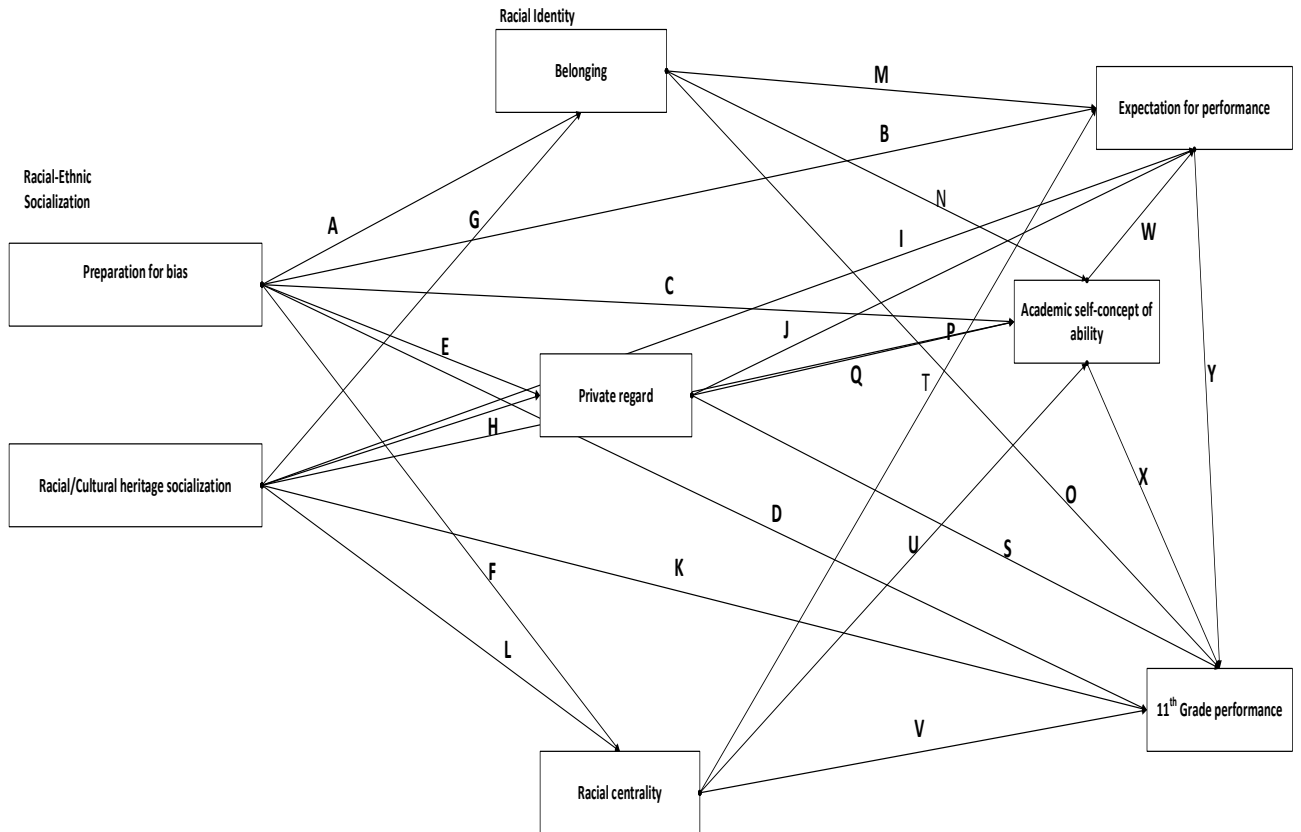
The study proceeds as follows: First, an overview of the disparities in education with implications for social work intervention is provided. Next, research on the racial-ethnic socialization and hypothesized relationships with education in African American youth is discussed. Following, racial identity and its hypothesized relationship with education is presented. Next the methods for the study is introduced, followed by the results. Finally, the discussions and implications for social work practice and research are presented.

2.0   OVERVIEW OF THE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION

Research shows that African American youth are substantially and disproportionally disadvantaged in nearly all the indicators of success in the U.S. education system. On the average, African American youth in K-12 educational outcomes are often characterized by academic failure, high dropouts, lower test scores and grades, high school graduation rate, and college enrollment (Abulkadiroglu, Angrist, & Pathak, 2014; CRSP, 2015; Ford & Moore, 2013; Hanushek, 2016; Kelly, 2009; Knaus, 2007; NAEP, 2013; Orfield et al., 2012). Nationally, it is reported that African American 12th grade students trail their White counterparts by four years in math and reading performance, more so for those in urban context, and Black males (Farkas, 2004; Ford & Moore, 2013; NEAP, 2013; Noguera, 2003). A more recent study indicates that the average Black 12th grader is located on the 19th percentile of White's distribution in mathematics achievement, and 22nd percentile of the distribution in reading achievement (Hanushek, 2016). Stunned by his findings, Hanushek (2016) states that "After nearly a half century of supposed progress in race relations within the United States, the modest improvement in achievement gaps since 1965 can only be called a national embarrassment" (p. 21).

Using the feedback loop concept as applied in systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1972; Richardson, 1991), the racial achievement gap in the U.S. education maybe a product of racial disparities in the resources and opportunities as well as the processes that determine success in

education (Ford & Moore, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2008, 2006; Milner, 2012). In the section that follows, these disparities are discussed. First, a review about the emergence of the gaps in abilities at birth is provided to argue that to a large degree, the racial achievement gap may potentially be rooted in social processes and interactions rather than Black children's intellectual abilities. Following, a discussion of hypothesized factors including, race, family experiences, and school related issues is presented. The chapter concludes with analysis of the consequences associated the racial disparities in education, and draws implications for social work.

2.1   THE EMERGENCE OF THE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION

Research has found that no racial difference exists children's cognitive abilities during the first year of birth (Levitt & Fryer, 2004). However, following the first year of birth, before children enter school, there is evidence of Black-White gap in school readiness indicators (Covay, 2010; Ferguson, 2014; Levitt & Fryer, 2004). By the time they enter school, the gap has widened, and persists and expands by the time students reach adolescence (Ferguson, 2014; Hanushek, 2009). Using data from samples across three developmental stages—early childhood, elementary, and adolescence—Covay (2010) concluded based on her findings that racial differences in students' performances show up early before school, but are compounded by multiple factors in and across multiple contexts that become evident as children develop. Her findings suggest that complex variables and processes initiate and sustain the disparities in education by race. Similarly, Hanushek and Rivikin (2009) examined changes that occur in the Black-White achievement in test scores and grades as student progress. They conclude that the

achievement gap widens among Black students who were higher achievers at school entry. This may reflect a possible failure to develop Black students' skills and abilities or an intentional effort to restrict further development of their abilities. Thus, to understand and effectively, respond to the racial disparities that disproportionately affect Black youth in education, adequate attention to the processes in the learning environment of youth (e.g. how education is made available, accessed, and how responsive it is to the needs of students) that significantly influence students' outcomes is critical.

2.2   HYPOTHESIZED FACTORS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION

Multiple factors have been hypothesized to explain the racial differences in the education experiences and outcomes of Black youth relative to their non-Black counterparts. In the section that follows, these factors are identified and classified as; (1) Racism; (2) Socio-economic factors related to income and class; (3) Family/parenting related factors; and (4) School culture and practices. These issues are discussed noting sub-factors where necessary.

2.2.1   Racism

Research indicates that the persistent disparities in education that confront Black youth are rooted in structural and institutional racism (Bell, 1795; 1976; Bale & Knopp, 2012; Bertocchi & Dimico, 2014; 2012; Card & Rothstein, 2007; Carter et al., 2015; Condron et

al., 2013; Diamond, 2006; Dixon and Lynn, 2013; Mickelson, Bottia, & Lambert, 2013). These scholars have argued that racism in the United States affect African American youth education by structurally restricting their access through segregation. Racial segregation both within school and outside of school that concentrates Black families into disadvantage neighborhood has been identified as one key mechanism by which racism creates and pertuates racial disparities in education (Erickson, 2016; Hanushek & Rivikin, 2009). Some scholars have argued that racial segregation that concentrates Black families and their children in disadvantaged neighborhoods indirectly contributes to disparities in access to educational resources and opportunities (Erickson, 2016). Hanushek and Rivikin (2009) concluded that attending school with higher Black enrollment, which they implied is a function of segregation, has a deleterious impact on students' achievement. Related to Hanushek and Ravikin, some scholars have observed that a racial undercurrent drives educational policies so much so that educational policies do not respond to the educational needs of African American youth (Berends et al., 2008; Hartney & Flavin, 2013; Lipman, 1998; 2013). For example, policies are designed to in ways that view African American cultural frame of refernce as pathological (Erickson, 2016; Lipman, 1999). Consequently, policies regarding curriculum and pedagogical skills isolate African American children from their culture, and demand unquestionable obedience to learning rather than eliciting students' own motivation for engagement (Boykin 1984; Carter, 2003; Grant, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Similarly, others contend that racism impact Black students' education through the effect on Black familie's capacity to make available the material and home resources that are essential to education (Bertocchi & Dimico, 2014; 2012; Condron et al., 2013; Diamond & Huguley 2011). Cottrell et al. (2015) developed a 3-staged model called adverse impact through which

they show that racism drives the Black-White ability gap through income, maternal education, and maternal verbal ability. These maternal advantages then influence parenting practices such as acceptance, sensitivity, learning orientation, birth weight and birth order, and the environment context in which children develop. In support of Cottrell et al.'s (2015), other research reveal the effects of intergenerational disadvantages in Black families that are rooted in racism on the underachievement of Black youth (Bertocchi & Dimico's, 2014; Sharkey & Elwert, 2011; Willson, 1978), and may indicate that the racial disparities in education whereby Blacks youth appear to be underachieving reflect opportunity gaps (Ladson-Billings, 2008; 2006; Lipman, 2013; Lynn & Dixon, 2013; Milner, 2012). Overall, there is evidence that the racial inequities in education that disfavor African American youth may be driven by racism.

2.2.2 Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomics have also been hypothesized to explain the disparities in Black youth education (Coleman, 1968;Feagans et al., 2012; Gaddis & Lauren, 2014 Mandara et al., 2009; Rebell & Wolff, 2009). Research on differences in school readiness between among children of different racial groups and socioeconomic status (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Levitt & Fryer, 2004; Rodriguez et al., 2009; Yeung & Pfeiffer, 2009) contend that family SES or class may explain Black youth underachievement (Gaddis & Lauen, 2014). In a panel study where three different cohorts of children were followed, Yeung and Pfeiffer (2009) observed that the racial gaps in Black-White children's letter and word development at both base-line, and transitional stages, were nearly eliminated when SES- related factors were built into the model. A review conducted by Duncan and Magnuson (2005) found that larger proportion of the test score gaps

were attributable to family SES. Similarly, in a study of 4,046 adolescents, Mandara and colleagues (2009) observed that after accounting for a host of intergenerational factors such as grandparents' SES, and mother's SES, differences in education outcomes disappeared, suggesting that SES, viewed intergenerationally accounts for the racial differences in educational success among Black children and youth relative to non-Black children and youth.

Given that most Black youth live in and attend schools that are located within poor neighborhood with limited resources (Darling-Hammond, 2007a; Knuas, 2007; Orfield et al., 2012), the SES hypothesis may sound persuasive. However, findings elsewhere contradict the SES related factors for explaining Black youth's lower representation on the indicators of successful education (DeCuir-Gunby, 2007; Diamond, 2006; Ogbu, 2004; Orr 2003; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). For example, Orr (2003) examined the impact of wealth which she conceptualized as economic capital that can be converted to either direct financial resources—for buying books, private education, computers, and various status symbols— or indirect resource such as social or cultural capital. She found that although class may explain a significant portion of the achievement differences, race remains significant. Previous findings by Jencks and Phillips (1998) provide evidence that although a host of family background factors account for a significant portion of the Black youth test achievement, these factors are not sufficient to explain the whole of the gaps. On the whole, while SES has been hypothesized to contribute to understanding the racial disparities that disadvantage African American youth in the K-12 education, it appears that SES alone may not provide a complete picture of the achievement gap dilemma. Additionally, given the interwoven relationships between race and SES (Rodriguez et al., 2009; Yeung & Pfeiffer, 2009), and the relative location of African American families, one can argue that the achievement gap therefore reflect disparities in access to resources that may

have racial underpinnings and socioeconomic related factors, and not student's intellectual abilities as the achievement gap might lead us to believe.

2.2.3   Family Related Factors

It has been hypothesized that parenting also contributes to the racial disparities in Black youth education. Parents are argued to socialize children academically in relation to goals, and beliefs, and the development of the importance of education and the motivation toward achievement (Spera, 2005). Research suggests that various aspect of parenting styles and beliefs strongly influence adolescents academic achievement independent of SES (Areepattamannil, 2010; Baumrind, 2013, 1966, Bowen et al., 2012; Darling & Stieberg, 1993; Fan & Chen, 2001 Froiland & Davison, 2013; Fan & Chen, 2001; Mandara, 2006; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010)**.** Cho and Campbell (2010) for example, provide a review that suggests that parent involvement practices such as, creation of an intellectually stimulating environment, and home-based academic support for children who may be socioeconomically and culturally disadvantaged have strong impact on the children's achievement with implication for racial achievement gaps. Similarly, Brooks-Gunn & Markman (2005) have contended that if parenting is taking into consideration, about 25 to 50% of the gaps in the academic achievement gaps between Whites and minority children could be eliminated. Thus, it maybe stated then that if Black children underachieve, perhaps parenting in the home has a contributory role. Indeed, African American families have been observed and described as not setting rules in the home to regulate children's school work and the amount of time children watch TV; not making the home

atmosphere conducive to learning for children; and not helpful to children in their homework (Hill, Mann, & Fitzgerald, 2011; Sampson, 2013).

Although parenting practices and the home structure strongly influence students' achievement, research has also found that even when Black parents demonstrate the school engagement approaches —involvement, monitoring, and holding of high expectations that are known to support students' performance—Black youth still lag behind after accounting for parenting education, income and family structure (Bowen, Hopson, Rose, & Glennie, 2012; Seyfried & Chung, 2002; Zhan & Sherraden, 2011). Some scholars also contends that racism and stereotypes in the larger society that influence the school culture has a diminishing effect on parents' educational expectations (Rutchick, Smyth, Lopoo, & Dusek, 2009; Varner & Mandara, 2013).

Overall, although parenting plays a role in understanding and addressing the racial disparities that plague the average Black youth, families' roles are not linear. From the social work person-in-environment perspective, families roles intersect with and are influenced by their environments to impact youth education and general well-being (Anderson, Carter, & Lowe, 1999; Ashford & Lecroy, 2013; Fram et al., 2007; Greene, 2009; Grogan-Kaylor & Woolley, 2010; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2006). Therefore, when viewed at the superficial level that only assesses families' choices and decisions, to the exclusion of the structural factors, that interact with the internal dynamics of families, research may exaggerate or overestimate the role of families and overlook the significant impact of the structural conditions within which Black families live that can potentially restrict families' ability to perform their role in relation to their children's education (Cottrell et al., 2015).

2.2.4   School Related Factors

2.2.4.1 Course taking

In the school context, research has found that racial disparities exist in opportunities for course taking, which in turn contribute to racial achievement gaps that disproportionately affect African American youth (Burris and Welner , 2005; Chambers, 2009; Kao & Thompson, 2003). Using national educational longitudinal study data to examine disparities in math classes placement in schools, Kelly (2009) reported that gaps in opportunities for advanced level mathematics taking between Blacks and Whites are significantly higher in integrated schools even after controlling for students' characteristics and family socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, Chambers (2009) observed disparate learning opportunities that are racial. Realizing how such disparities hinder students achievement potential (Chambers, 2009, p.422), Chambers asserts that framing the racial disparities as achievement gap is "unfair and shortsighted. The lower track students in this study encountered teachers, work environment, and classroom management styles that differed significantly from their high-track counterparts' classroom. Given their experiences, the achievement gap label became another obstacle that prevented them from receiving services they needed."

Related to the disparities in course taking opportunities, research has found that African American youth are overrepresented in special education classrooms (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Codrington & Fairchild, 2012; Quintana, 2012; Zion & Blanchett, 2011). In special education, these students are less likely to receive rigorous curriculum because behavior management, rather than academics, may become the focus (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Codrington & Fairchild, 2012). Given these disparities in learning opportunities, it can be argued

that the racial differences in achievement indicators reflect broader systemic issues. Therefore, it is important that the disparities are conceptualized in ways that reflect these gaps in opportunities and resources that students experience in learning process.

2.2.4.2 Student-teacher relationships

It has been argued that the quality of teacher-student relationships is an important mechanism for engagement—a key predictor of achievement—in students, and especially so for African American youth (Davis et al., 2014; Wallace & Chhuon, 2014). Yet there is evidence that African American students experience conflicted student-teacher relationships (Spilt and Hughes, 2015: Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). For example, Spilt and Hughes (2015) investigated the degree to which SES, children's IQ and being African American uniquely predict conflicted teacher-student relationship (coercive teacher-student interactions characterized by mistrust and discordance) adjusting for aggression and prosocial behaviors. They found that being an African American, not SES, or IQ, irrespective of gender, independently predicted conflictual teacher-student relationship trajectory from 1st grade to 5th grade. This relationship undermined students' performance six years later during middle school transition (Spilt and Hughes, 2015).

Still on the student-teacher relationship, teacher expectations are among the strongest predictors of student achievement. Even here, gaps exist between Blacks and Whites with implications for the Black-White achievement gap (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Findings documented by McKown and Weinstien (2008) suggest that disparities in teacher expectations by race contribute to racial achievement gaps through three causal pathways; 1) teachers may provide higher quality instruction to students from groups they have higher expectations for. Higher expectation in turn lead to children's accessibility to high-quality instruction that prepares

them adequately; 2) students for whom expectations are high, may perceived themselves to have higher academic self-efficacy and perform to meet the expectations; and 3) in the presence of lower expectations, Black youth who may be stereotyped may experience increased susceptibility to negative expectancy effect. It has been found that implicit bias about African American's intellectual inferiority exists even among teachers who presume to be neutral on race (McKown & Weinstien, 2008). In some racially integrated classrooms, McKown and Weinstien, (2008) found that, in reading and math, teachers' expectations were significantly higher for Whites and Asians than African American and Latino students with similar levels of achievement characteristics. They reported that these racial gaps in expectations resulted in .93 and 1.00 standard deviation differences in reading and math respectively. Having established racial disparities in teacher expectations, McKown and Weinstein (2008) investigated the contribution of such differences in teacher expectations to end of year grades. Findings indicated that in classrooms where students experienced racial disparities in teacher expectations, there was .21 to .38 standard deviation differences in grades between stereotyped and non-stereotyped students with similar history of achievement. Meta-analysis corroborates the findings that teacher expectations vary by race with African Americans and Latino's receiving lower expectations than their Whites and Asian counterparts (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). From the forgoing, the racial disparities educational outcomes in many ways reflect a chain of gaps: expectations gap, which in turn leads to opportunity and access to high quality educational resources gaps. They speak to the fact that African American students disproportionally experience fewer opportunities for educational success.

2.2.4.3 Racial disparities in school discipline

African American youth are overrepresented in school discipline practices such as suspension, expulsion, and office referrals (Dupper, 2010; Finn & Servoss, 2015; Losen et al., 2014; Morgan et al, 2014; Skiba et al., 2014). Compared to their counterparts in other racial groups, African American youth are more likely to be suspended, expelled, and receive office referrals for even non-violent behaviors (Dupper, 2010; Finn & Servoss, 2015; Losen et al., 2014; Morgan et al, 2014; Skiba et al., 2014). This removal of students from the learning context due to discipline disrupts engagement opportunities and introduces academic disengagement that leads to a chain of events including course failure, dropouts and ultimately a host of negative outcomes that shape students' life trajectory (Finn & Servoss, 2015; Skiba & Noam, 2001; Skiba et al., 2014). Thus, the achievement gap may in part reflect gaps in access to learning opportunities rather than students' academic abilities.

Overall, the preceding sections suggest that the potential underpinnings of the racial gaps in students' educational outcomes are product of the multiple gaps in all the systems, resources and opportunities, and process that lead to success in education. These gaps include, but are not limited to family and community resources gaps, access to rigorous curriculum and instruction gaps, teacher-student relationship gaps, and school discipline gaps that all disfavor African American youth in educational institutions in the United States. Interventions to address these disparities therefore need a multisystem focus.

2.3   THE IMPACTS OF THE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION

These disparities in K-12 education by race have serious consequences for the ecosystem. Research has linked them to poor health and higher mortality rate in African Americans (Copeland-Linder et al., 2011; Flores, 2010; Koh, Graham, & Glied, 2011), higher unemployment, low income and poverty (Friend et al., 2011; Gaddis & Lauen, 2014; Holzer, Offner, & Sorensen, 2005; Leach & Williams, 2007). Additionally, increased crime, incarceration and subsequently, family formation within African American communities are associated with the racial gaps in educational outcomes between Blacks and their counterparts in other racial groups (Ewert, Sykes, & Pettit, 2014; Finn, Nybell, & Shook, 2010; Wildeman, 2009). Ferguson (2007) reveals that the disparities in math and reading scores predict earning and income disparities in adult Blacks, which he connects to large and unexplained disparities in earnings within and between racial groups. He documents that living conditions, employment, earnings, attitudes and other important family characteristics of the young adults in the late 1980s were linked to their test scores in 1979 when they were in their teens. He concluded that reducing racial test score gap is indispensable to equality goal in America (Ferguson, 2007).

Similarly, other research has discovered that the racial disparities in K-12 educational outcomes in the U.S. are associated with opportunities for post-secondary education and ultimately occupational status (Covay, 2010; McKown, 2013; McKown & Weinstien, 2008). The disparities in access to rigorous curriculum and high-quality instruction means that Black youth are less prepared to succeed in post-secondary education. Disparities in post-secondary education in turn, can lead to gaps in earnings and income status, suggesting that Blacks will be at a more disadvantaged position in the labor market. Additionally, educational success has been linked to

quality decision making regarding health, marriage, parenting, goal-oriented lifestyle, and self-regulation, and improvement in trust for effective social interaction (Cottrell et al., 2015; Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2010). The Black-White educational disparities thus have implications for optimal social functioning in many domains and pose a threat to social and economic justice.

Furthermore, high dropouts rates among African American young males and their subsequent incarceration have been linked to racial disparities in education (Ewert, Sykes, & Pettit, 2014; Finn, Nybell, & Shook, 2010; Wildeman, 2009). This problem has major implications for marriage and single motherhood in the African American community. It makes men unavailable, and when available, less desirable for marriage (Hamilton et al., 2009). Generally, both men and women are motivated to marry when they have jobs that guarantee economic stability (Catanzarite and Ortiz , 2002). Therefore, when there is scarcity of working men, especially Black men "women (African-American) have fewer incentives for marriage, and unemployed Black men will be disinclined to marry even when their partners become pregnant" (p.280). Although African American women have made substantial advancement in the area of education, and many demonstrate resiliency, optimism, and buffering abilities in their parenting (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000; Murry et al., 2001; Taylor et al., 2010), the literature shows that lack of an available supportive spouse, particularly financially supportive spouse, has significant distressing effects on these mothers parenting, which adversely impact the developmental outcomes of their children including their education (Belsky, 1984; Downey, 1994; Simons et al., 1993). The disparities in educational opportunities that negatively affect African American youth thus have significant negative impact on their social functioning, family, and community in ways that transcend generations.

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Nationally, when the debate about the educational disparities are situated within the growing diversity of the American society, they raise a troubling concern about the educational and labor prospects of the nation (Berends et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2014; Williams, 2011). Worker productivity depends on skill level of the worker, and societies with more skills grow faster because they generate skills for creative ideas that bring innovations, particularly, in this technological world (Acemoglu & Angrist, 2001). Therefore, to have a significant group of a multiracial or multicultural country to be characterized by significant lack of growth in skills that are the backbone to innovation and creativity is a great national loss. Acemoglu and Angrist (2001) argue that differences in skills predict cross-country economic disparities. Similarly, some scholars have argued that the vitality of democracy depends on an educated citizenry (Galbralith, 2006; Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2010), suggesting an urgent call for the nation to respond to the achievement gap dilemma in ways that will augment the skills so needed in the 21st Century to position America to maintain its leading role in global affairs, and domestically improve the well-being of its citizens.

Levin et al. (2007) examined the public gains from investment in the skills development or human capital nurturance in African American males. They first identified promising interventions for increasing high school graduation rate of African American males and assessed the benefit associated with these interventions in relation to taxes, increased spending on crime, and health. Their findings suggest that while it may cost $90,700 to see a cohort of Black male students graduating high school, the public stands to benefits at $256,700 from savings in taxes, public health, and crime. They conclude that for each age group, when Black males graduate at the same rate with their White counterparts, the public saves about $3.98 billion. Thus, the

underachievement of African American youth in education comes with significant economic loss to the nation as a whole.

At the international level, the educational disparities in the United States' K-12 education that impact students of African descent at a higher rate violate the United Nations' principles of human rights and social justice (Brittain & Kozlak, 2007; Aidman & Malerba, 2015). According to the United Nations' conventions on the elimination of racial discrimination (CERD), which the United State is a party to, the U.S has failed to pursue racial integration and multicultural education as a matter of policy for the purpose of providing equal opportunities to children of all races (Brittain & Kozlak, 2007). Preliminary findings by the U.N working group of African descent on the status and conditions of African Americans in the United States reveal that the persistent gap in indicators of well-being, including education, that exist between African Americans and the rest of the American population, presents a barrier to the full realization of human rights by African American children and their communities (United Nations, 2016). They assert that African Americans have been structurally rendered invisible in school curriculum, and that the history of slavery and racial discriminations are not adequately attended to in school curriculum.

Research shows that when racial discrimination and the history of slavery are addressed in schools, it helps African American children to discover themselves, and most importantly, realize the powerful role of education to achieve liberation and racial uplift (Hale, 1994; Perry et al., 2003). Therefore, by not addressing issues of race in the curriculum, the American education system trains Black children to be the guardians of an oppressive system, and in the process, destroys the leadership capacity within African American children needed for their liberation and empowerment (Hale, 1994).

Quality and equitable education that is free of all forms of discrimination –direct and indirect, and stereotypical attitudes by teachers, educators, and peers—have been identified by the U.N as key to a developmental agenda that advances the quality of life, and provides safety net against poverty, for people of African descent (Melchiorre & Atkins, 2011; U.N, n.d). Therefore, the educational disparities that disproportionately affect African American youth pose a potential threat to, and undermine global developmental agenda. Besides, the gap in skills development of African American youth has an adverse effect on America's competitive advantage in global market (Aidman & Malerba, 2015; Darling Hammond, 2007; Ferguson, 2014). In the 21st Century, to keep up with the pace of development in the global world requires skills beyond post-secondary education (Ferguson, 2014). Therefore, to have a large portion of America's Black population with underdeveloped skills means that the nation is underutilizing its full potentials to maintain its leadership role in global marked, particularly in the area of technology.

2.4   IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Given that social work is a social justice oriented profession (Gasker & Fisher, 2014; IFS, 2012) that aims to enhance human coping or adaptive capacities as well as the well-being of society, with particular focus on vulnerable and oppressed groups (NASW, 2008), the above indicators and consequences of the racial disparities in education are relevant for social work intervention. Besides being social injustices, the disproportionate gap in skills experienced by African Americans contradict the social work values of the dignity and worth of a person

because the consequences of the disparities render many African Americans less capable in expressing their full humanity (United Nations, 2016). According to the NASW code of ethics social workers, in particular school social workers, strive toward emotional, physical, and psychological availability of all students in the classroom, and promote respect and dignity to ensure access to learning opportunities equitably (NASW, 2012). The racial disparities in education therefore challenge the social work profession to develop responsive policy and practice interventions through research to create the school environments that equitably foster the educational success of African American youth.

As a practice based profession and an academic discipline, social work employs an eclectic knowledge base including, theories of social work, indigenous knowledge, social sciences and humanities to engage people and structures to respond to challenges in social functioning (Kirst-Ashman, 2006; IFSW, 2014). Social work research, practice, and policy that promotes high achievement in Black youth and other minorities' in ways that reduce racial achievement gap are instrumental to justice attainment in public education in the U.S. The achievement gap reflects inequity in social processes, in and across developmental contexts (McKown, 2013). Justice in education means equitable treatment in the provision of, and accessibility to, high-quality or excellent education (McKown, 2013). Social workers may better articulate and work toward educational justice through the four A's stipulated by the Rights to Education Project: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability (Allen-Meares & Montgomery, 2014; Melchiorre & Atkins, 2011).

As the literature has shown, progress toward equity in access to resources and opportunities that necessitate Black children's educational success since the end of slavery has

been gradual (Ferguson, 2007; Hanushek, 2016). To a greater extent, the gradual progress has been the result of persistent struggle by Blacks (Ferguson, 2007; 2014). The implication is that to expand the progress, it is not only necessary that the approaches and strategies that have contributed to the gradual progress are understood, modified, and perhaps built upon (Spencer, 1999).

In summarizing this chapter, it is evident that the achievement gap in K-12 education in the United States, that characterize African American youth at higher rates compared to their counterparts, is potentially driven by multiple and complex factors, and processes in the ecosystem. These factors can be conceptualized more broadly to include, but not limited to resources and opportunities gap, systems gap, teacher-student relationship quality gap, discipline gap, course taking gaps, and gaps in family's experiences. Collectively, these gaps have serious consequences for the ecosystem. From the person-in-environment perspective, the substantial and persistent nature of the disparities suggest an interactive process (Pardeck, 2015; Allen-Mears, 2015). Implications for social work are that effective intervention to address racial disparities in education must accounts for both the role of African American students and their families, and their social environments (school, community, and policy) simultaneously.

3.0   RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION AND AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Scholars from multiple disciplines suggest that African Americans and their offsprings are probably the most endangered group in the United States due to racism (Anderson, 1988; Battalora, 2013; Bell, 1976; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Codrington & Fairchild, 2012; Dow, 2016; Erickson, 2016; McDermott, 1974; Hale, 1986, 1994; Neal & Rick, 2014; Pattillo, 2013; Wilson, 1978). In a post-slavery America, some scholars have argued that education and its unequal access has become one of the most powerful tools by which racism as an ideology works to advance and perpetuate the continued oppression, subordination, and racialization of African American children (Bale & Knopp, 2012; Erevelles , 2000; Martin, 2009, 2012; Lipman, 1998, 2011; Tomlin et al., 2013). Interestingly, education is also the tool for simultaneously achieving protection from oppression and exploitation, while affording the opportunity to acquire skills necessary for resisting oppression and fully expressing ones' humanity for groups historically marginalized (Allen-Meares & Montgomery, 2014; Hale, 1994; McCullough & Ryan, 2014; Perry et al., 2003). Thus, K-12 education in the U.S. is at the intersection of competing interests. On one hand, the education system may be employed to achieve, reinforce and remake inequalities by race in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Erickson, 2016; Hartney & Flavin, 2013). On the other hand, marginalized groups, such as African Americans view the education

system as the liberation and empowerment tool (Hale, 1994; Martin, 2012, 2009, 2006; Perry et al., 2003).

Conscious of this clash of interests, African American parents, and communities respond by engaging in and intentionally fostering strategies that prepare their children to achieve success in academics, as in other domains of the U.S. society. Racial-ethnic socialization (RES) has been identified as unique strategy that parents use with their Black children to achieve their educational goals and other developmental needs, including psychological well-being (Hughes et al., 2006; Murry et al., 2009). However, some scholars opine that the research about African American youth have two important shortcomings that overshadow the role of racial socialization to help African Americans and their children achieve success in even seemingly unjust places (Nicolas et al., 2008). First, they argue that African American youth are often defined from a deficit perspective (Nicolas et al., 2008). Issues such as poverty, drugs involvement, violence and abuse, and underperformance in schools, that may be structurally rooted, are used as proxies to define these youth (Harper, 2015; Nicolas et al., 2008; Reed & Swaminathan, 2014). According to such scholars, viewing Black youth only in terms of the myriad of factors that characterize their social environments overlooks the resources and assets within youth and their environment.

Second, African Americans may be viewed by both practitioners and researchers as a homogenous group that is normatively at risk or threatening, pathological, and a menace to society (Adams-Bass et al., 2014; Finn, Nybell, & Shook, 2010; Lipman, 1998; Nicolas et al., 2008; Noguera, 2003). However, large in-group variation exists among this subgroup (Patterson, 2015; Pattillo, 2013). Together, these assumptions may potentially direct school-based

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interventions to manage African American youth (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Boykin, 1984; Zion & Blanchett, 2011; Lipman, 1998), and provide socially therapeutic services, rather than rigorous academic experiences for strong academic competences (Allen-Mears, 2015). According to Nicolas et al (2008) and García Coll et al. (1996), these problems in research undermine researchers' ability to conceptualize appropriate frameworks to fully comprehend the development of African American youth and their inherent resources in ways that can guide policy and practice to support the African American child for positive developmental outcomes including educational success.

Racial-ethnic socialization (RES) has been posited to bridge this gap in research about Black children as well as other racial minorities' development (Grindal & Nieri, 2015; Hughes et al., 2006; Priest et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). With specific reference to African Americans, RES has been conceptualized as the task that parents have as an additional responsibility in raising emotionally, physically, and psychologically healthy children in a society where being Black is regarded as a menace to contain (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Stevenson, 1994). In their review, Hughes et al. (2006) identified four subconstructs of racial socialization that are linked to various outcomes in youth: 1) Cultural /racial pride promotion socialization—messages and activities that connect children to their racial heritage, culture and history; 2) preparation for bias—messages and practices that raise children's awareness to the existence and reality of discrimination, and provide strategies for responding to real or potential experiences of discrimination; 3) egalitarianism—messages that stress the equality of all and the need for equal treatment that respects and recognizes one's humanity; and 4) promotion of mistrust—messages that warn children to be wary of trusting

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individuals from other racial groups. These subconstructs indicate that racial socialization is a multidimensional construct.

Since its emergence in scholarly literature within the last three decades, racial socialization as a cultural resource within the African American communities has been linked to children's developmental outcomes in a range of domains including, education (Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Smalls, 2009; Smalls, 2010; Wang & Huguley, 2012), mental health (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Lesane-Brown, 2006), positive identity development (Sellers et al., 1997: Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014; Evans et al., 2012), and physical health (Huynh & Fuligni, 2010). Within the framework of positive youth development, Evans et al. (2012) contend that positive youth outcomes— caring, connection, character, confidence, and competence— are often linked to the racial socialization messages that African American youth receive at home. Thus, racial socialization seems to be a promising theoretical framework that can potentially unpack the complexities in understanding the developmental process, behaviors, and outcomes of Black children. Specific to social work (NASW, 2012), it is conceivable to suggest that RES potentially relates to several psychosocial outcomes (e.g academic self-concept, self-efficacy, expectations for persistence, and academic importance) that enhance successful functioning in education indicated by grades and test scores. These relationships are discussed in the sections that follow.

3.1   RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY

Research has established that several subconsturcts of RES are associated with different dimensions of racial identity in Black youth (Caughy et al., 2011; Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995; Tang et al., 2015). Theoretically, racial identity is the key motivation to parents' engagement in racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995). Tang et al., (2015) found an association between parent RES—cultural socialization, and preparation for bias specifically—and some dimensions of racial identity (the importance ascribed to the race, and one's perception of the public evaluations about Blacks) in African American youth three years later. Youth who received frequent messages that reinforced pride in their racial/cultural heritage in combination with strategies for dealing with potential incident of discriminations were more likely to view race as important to them. In addition, these youth were also less likely to be affected by the negative impact of discriminations. These associations were however, modulated by the frequency of parent-child communication. Specifically, in families with higher communication, youth reported: 1) significant and positive association between cultural socialization and higher racial centrality; and (2) significant and negative association between preparation for bias and public regard.

Other researchers have also linked several of the subconstructs of RES to various dimensions of racial identity. For instance, among the 358 African American youth studied, Neblett et al's (2009) cluster analysis revealed that independent of their socioeconomic backgrounds, youth who reported receiving frequent messages related to racial pride, barrier awareness, and engaged in cultural activities related to their racial group also reported that their race was an important aspect of their identity a year later. Similarly, Riva-Drake et al. (2009)

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reported that parent's cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages were associated with youth's racial-ethnic importance, and positive feelings regarding connection to their race in a positive direction independent of family socioeconomic circumstances. Findings by Hughes et al. (2009) from a sample of Black, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Chinese sixth graders supported the aforementioned relationships between RES and racial identity. These authors reported that cultural socialization was positively and significantly associated with a sense of connectedness to, and positive evaluation about their ethnic group. It is important to note here that Hughes et al. (2009) observed an interaction effect of gender in that, girls displayed stronger links in the relationship observed between cultural socialization and connection to ethnic group.

In a related study, RES messages about racial pride and behavioral socialization (participation in cultural activities related to Black race) were positively and significantly associated with higher private regard after controlling for family SES. Additionally, Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, and Chen (2009) observed that youth who received messages related to pride in African Americans family and racial heritage, were more likely to report positive racial identity that were oriented to higher performance in school. While these studies demonstrate a link between racial socialization and the subdomains of racial identity, less is known about the underlying process that establish the relationships. For example, do the distinct racial socialization subconstructs (e.g. preparation for bias, and racial/cultural heritage socialization) predict positive identity independently or jointly? For an applied field such as social work that is concerned about the holistic development of youth (Ashford & LeCroy, 2013; NASW, 2012) in a real world application, unpacking such process is important to help practitioners who seek to leverage the potential benefit of racial socialization for optimal functioning in Black youth.

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3.2 RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL OUTCOMES

A large body of research on RES has established a strong positive links between different subconstructs of RES and several psychosocial outcomes that are central to academic performance. RES has been linked to various beliefs and values related to the, importance, interest, and utility of education and academic self-concept of ability and expectation for performance and attainment (Angelique & Trask-tate, 2014; Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Howard, Rose, & Barbarin, 2013; Caughy, et al., 2002; McGill et al., 2012; Neblett, 2006; Rodriguez et al, 2009; Smalls, 2009). Additionally, RES has been linked positively with school bonding, classroom engagement and attendance (Butler-Barnes, Chavous, Hurd, & Varner, 2013; Cooper & Smalls, 2010; Dotterer et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2009; Neblett et al., 2009). Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, and Chen (2009) found that RES practices significantly and positively related to youth's positive sense of themselves one year later, which ultimately influenced teachers' higher expectations and mothers' grade expectations as well.

Some studies, however, delineate differential effects of cultural socialization and preparation for bias on psychosocial outcomes. Hughes et al (2009) for example cultural socialization was positively associated with participants' academic efficacy and engagement directly, and indirectly through self-esteem and ethnic affirmation (positive view of racial group or private regard). Cultural socialization also negatively related to antisocial behavior indirectly through self-esteem and ethnic affirmation. Yet they also found that while preparation for bias was inversely related to the students' efficacy both directly and indirectly, it was positively related to deviance behavior and academic outcomes, suggesting that the racial/cultural socialization may be distinctively related to students' racial identity and psychosocial outcomes.

Dotterer, McHale and Crouter (2009) found that racial socialization—cultural socialization and preparation for bias— were associated with school bonding and school self-concept, independent of students' backgrounds. However, link between cultural socialization and school bonding in their study was more prominent for boys than girls.

Still others have observed interplay between racial pride and bias socialization. Harries et al. (2007) found that RES (racial pride and racial bias) interacted to buffer the effect of perceived discrimination on youth's self-esteem. For youth with high frequency and moderate messages on racial pride and racial bias respectively, the negative impact of discrimination was mitigated. On the contrary, youth with low racial pride messages, and both high and low racial bias messages reported negative impact of discrimination on self-esteem. They conclude that African American youth with limited understanding of racism and their unique cultural heritage may be at disadvantage in the event of racialized experience. Also, Wang and Huguley (2012) observed that preparation for bias interacted with cultural/racial heritage socialization to offset the effects of discrimination on youth academics. Overall, while cultural socialization seems to demonstrate consistent positive association with youth psychosocial outcomes that support success in education, the distinct effects of preparation for bias may be mixed. However, it is possible that cultural socialization may interact with preparation for bias to produce other distinct effects on psychosocial and academic outcomes.

Studies that use qualitative designs provide findings that corroborate the positive link between RES measures and Black youth psychosocial outcomes. Carter's (2008) exploration of the characteristics of high-achieving Black students in a predominantly upper-class white public school in a suburban area revealed that preparation for bias psychologically enabled them to develop strong achievement orientation by which youth persist, adjust, and achieve academic

success in racially challenging context. Sefa Dei (1996) also adds to the literature about the importance of RES, cultural socialization in particular, in the academic engagement of Black youth. This author interviewed drop out and at-risk Afro-Canadian high school students to understand the underlying cause of their disengagement. Three themes emerged: 1) differential treatment based on race; 2) the absence of Black history in their school curriculum; and 3) the lack of Black teachers who could serve as role models. The participants expressed that these concerns made it difficult for them to experience personal and group sense of self in relation to culture, history, and heritage in the school environment (Sefa Dei, 1996). According to Sefa Dei (1996), his participants were intelligent students who became disinterested and disengaged from academics because of the omission and negation of their cultural history in school discourse and curriculum.

Although this study was conducted in Canada, it suggests the important role of cultural socialization in students' academic engagement, and support the contention by Asante (2003) that the psychological orientation of the Afro-American without a link to their cultural and historical heritage is troubling because it can lead to the destruction of both personal and collective development of the Afro-American community (Asante, 2003). Together, these studies suggest that when children are made to be aware of the historical and cultural experiences of the African American community, the role that education plays in this community's cultural experiences, youth are more likely to succeed academically.

Furthermore, in school settings, research from the perspective of critical education suggests that RES promotes critical consciousness development in youth, and by extension, contributes to successful outcomes related to education (Diemer, 2012; Diemer & Li, 2011; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Warrs & Flanagan, 2007; Watts,

Diemer, & Voight, 2011). These scholars argue that when members of group with history of structural marginalization are provided the opportunity to engage in conversation about the injustices in their experiences and the possibility of change—preparation for bias—youth are likely to be motivated to develop themselves educationally as change agents (Martin, 2006, 2009). Hipolito-Delgado and Zion (2015) examined the link between critical consciousness, ethnic identity and civic self-efficacy. Findings suggest that critical conversation about injustices in education and subsequent inequalities in society relate to the empowerment of youth who are marginalized in many ways including Blacks. Such empowerment in turn is positively linked to academic engagement, development of self-efficacy, and ultimately, achievement. For example, Godfrey and Grayman (2014) explored the effects of open classroom—one that created opportunity for, and supported critical conversations around differences and respect for diverse opinion—on critical consciousness development. Using a representative sample of 9th graders in the United States in a civic engagement studies, they reported that opportunity for the development of critical consciousness related to social injustice was positively and significantly associated with school self-efficacy among racial minority groups including Black youth independent of socioeconomics and background factors. Critical consciousness development was however, unrelated to school self-efficacy among Whites. Thus, raising racial minority youth's (e.g Blacks) awareness to the systemic inequalities, and providing them with strategies that guide and support their self-mastery (preparation for bias) may potentially help their psychosocial adjustment which in turn foster educational success in seemingly unjust educational context.

However, other studies have reported negative or insignificant relationships between several of the RES subconstructs and academic outcomes (Elmore & Gaylord-Harden, 2012

(Neblett, 2006; Smith et al., 2003). In a sample of 150 parents, Elmore and Gaylord-Harden (2012) investigated direct and interactive influences of racial socialization subscales (racial pride, racial bias) and generally accepted supportive parenting (parent practices and behaviors marked by empathy, warmth, sensitivity, acceptance and playfulness) on African American youth with limited resources' behavior. They observed that while there was no significant direct link between racial pride and racial bias messages with youth behaviors, the RES measures interacted with parent support to predict negative behaviors. Specifically, when racial pride was high, higher level of parental support was associated with increased externalizing behavior. However, no significant association was found between supportive parenting and externalizing behavior at low level of racial pride. This suggests that the race based messages probably lead to unhealthy behavior.

In a previous study, Neblett et al's. (2006) findings show that none of the RES subconstructs investigated demonstrate a buffering effect on the link between discrimination and youth psychosocial outcomes. In addition, these authors observed that RES messages about racial pride were inversely related to African American youth academic task persistence. Neblett et al. (2006) insignificant findings about the buffering effect of RES contradict findings by Wang and Huguley (2012) and Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2007) who reported similar findings that cultural socialization and preparation for bias interacted to buffer negative impact of discrimination on African American youth's psychosocial outcomes. It is possible that methodological differences may help explain these contradictions. For instance, while data for each of the studies came from different regions of the United States, Wang and Huguley (2012), and Harris-Britt and colleagues (2007) were similar in terms of the grade levels of their participants. Participants for both studies were same grade level. However, Neblett et al. (2006)

sample was more heterogeneous in terms of grade level (7 to 11th grade). Nonetheless, the mixed findings suggest that there are still unresolved concerns in research regarding RES and youth psychosocial outcomes that support success in education.

Findings reported by Cooper and Smalls (2010) support the contention that they are still some unanswered questions about the relationships between the various constructs of RES and youth's developmental outcomes. These authors investigated the relationships between culturally distinctive parenting practices—racial pride promotion, and minority experiences (racial barrier, awareness of racism and discrimination)—and parental academic socialization with youth psychosocial outcomes that promote academic adjustment (e.g academic engagement, and self-esteem) using a sample of 144 African American youth from 6th grades to 8th grades. On one hand, findings suggest a positive link between the promotion of racial pride and youth's academic engagement, and self-esteem. On the other hand, minority experiences were unrelated to academic engagement, and self-esteem. Thus, racial socialization may impact youth academic outcomes in multiple ways through the psychosocial outcomes. However, the directions of the relationships varied. Moreover, most of the studies use regression analysis and make inferences about the mechanisms. Research that simultaneously account for the unique effects of RES subconstructs, independently, and the possible pathways they each influence youth academic related outcomes may help shed light on some of the unresolved questions about how RES influence youth development. This study aims to uncover the multiple processes by which the transmission of racial socialization influences African American youth educational success. Such processes are of particular interest to social work given the profession's focus in understanding and identifying the complex social processes that may be underpinning social functioning of clients (Magil,2010).

3.3   RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

With respect to student's performance, research has generally established positive and significant link between RES subconstructs, and grades and standardized test scores, although the particulars vary across studies (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown et al., 2009; Friend, Hunter, & Fletcher, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003; Wang & Huguley, 2012). In a national study of 377 African American youth between ages 14 and 24, Bowman and Howard (1985) found that youth who received racial socialization messages that emphasized awareness of barriers, and egalitarianism were associated with high grades at school. In another study, Wang and Huguley (2012) found significant and positive associations between cultural socialization and youth's GPA after controlling for children's previous achievement and family socioeconomic factors.

Other studies have produced mixed findings across subdimensions, including negative effects. Brown et al. (2009) also investigated the link between some of the RES subconstructs (e.g pride in Black cultural values and the celebration of racial heritage, and racial bias) and grades. They found that African American heritage and pride in cultural values were associated with students' grades independent of background factors and other RES variables. However, the directions differed. On one hand, celebrating African American heritage was negatively associated with grades. On the other hand, pride in African American culture was positively and significantly associated with grades. Neblett et al. (2006) found that youth who reported engaging in more culturally and race-based behaviors were more likely to achieve higher GPAs independent of students' backgrounds. They also observed however that youth who reported receiving messages related to racial pride tended to have lower GPA after controlling for

sociodemographic covariates and other RES predictors. Meanwhile, Dotterer, McHale and Crouter (2009) observed no significant relationship between similar RES subconstructs and grades. These findings reveal that despite the generally positive associations between RES subconstructs, and Black youth's academic performance, there are some inconsistences that research still needs to clarify, in addition to understanding the mechanisms by which RES influences performance

3.4   FINDINGS FROM STUDIES THAT USED CLUSTER ANALYSES

Findings from research that combines several of the subscales of RES indicates that RES may be a complex process that require more research for understanding the various strategies and mechanisms by which messages around race are formed and transmitted to children. Using a latent cluster analysis, Neblett et al. (2009) looked at the relationships among six subscales of parent racial-ethnic socialization; racial discrimination, and academic persistence, and performance in a sample of 144 African American adolescent males from 7th through 11th grades. The RES subscales included; 1) cultural and racial heritage that promote racial pride; 2) racial barrier, i.e. messages about structural discrimination; 3) self-worth, i.e. race-based related positive messages about the self; 4) negative messages, i.e. disparaging messages about Blacks; 5) egalitarian messages; and 6) race socialization behaviors, i.e. engagement in cultural behaviors specific to the Black race. Results revealed that the largest cluster was labelled positive socialization, and consisted of high means of cultural and racial pride, self-worth, and racial barrier messages; moderate means on egalitarian and socialization

behavior; and low negative message. Youth in this cluster reported that their parents provided them with a combination of messages that stressed: their pride in their race and self-worth, the importance of positive intergroup relationship; and engaged them in positive affirming behaviors related to their race while providing few negative messages.

The second cluster, which was characterized by moderate means on all of the RES variables except self-worth and negative messages, was labelled moderate negative. Youth in this cluster reported receiving more negative messages (internalized racism) and less self-worth affirming messages and behaviors. The next cluster consisted of higher self-worth, and moderate means on the other RES subconstracts. This cluster reflected youth whose parents provided more self-worth messages relative to the other subcontructs of RES. The fourth cluster was labelled low frequency, and was characterized by scores approximately one to two standard deviation below the mean for the subscales excepts negative messages. This reflects youth whose parents provided low or raceless messages. The analysis indicated that variations in the cluster patterns were associated with variations in the outcome variables in wave two. Specifically, youth in the positive socialization, and self-worth clusters reported significantly higher levels of academic persistence than those in the moderate negative and low frequency clusters. Additionally, boys in the self-worth cluster displayed a strong link with higher performance in GPA independent of demographic factors. In the light of their findings, Neblett et al. (2009) made a number of recommendations that stress on the need for parents to balance racial barrier messages with messages of pride and self-worth. Moreover, they recommended the need for teachers and other adults as well as policy makers interested in the positive development of African American young males to incorporate the importance of their self-worth and pride in the broader context of race. The implication for this study is that research that contributes to our understanding of the

processes and pathways by which those RES subconstructs that are linked to positive developmental outcomes are conceptualized and transmitted will enhance practitioners, and policy makers interested in leveraging cultural resources to improve educational outcomes in African American youth.

Overall, the literature suggests that RES offers psychological resources that could potentially be a catalyst for academic persistence and achievement by providing skills to respond effectively to conflicts and obstacles that maybe experienced in one's academic pursuit (Hipolito-Delgado and Zion, 2015; Stevenson & Stevenson, 2014). Accordingly, Stevenson & Stevenson (2014) have conceptualized racial socialization as the "transmission and acquisition of intellectual, emotional, and behavioral skills to protect and affirm racial self-efficacy by recasting and reducing the stress that occur during racial conflicts with the goal of successfully resolving those conflicts" (p.18). Racial socialization thus, provides an integrated set of skills for effectively negotiating racial conflicts that may arise in "information and knowledge processing, relationship building, identity development, style of expression and stereotype deconstruction" (p.19).

However, some questions still remain unclear. Many of the hypothesized paths in the literature have not been tested in a single model to ascertain whether racial socialization subconstructs maintain their unique effects on specific educational outcomes such as GPA, and test scores independent of each other. Additionally, it is not clear in the extant literature whether the unique effects of the RES subconstructs still hold in the presence of potential multiple mediators (e.g. racial identity, academic self-concept, and expectations for performance). The current study employs path analysis to examine the web of relationships between racial

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socialization and multiple mediators on African American youth's specific academic outcome such as GPA. Thus, this study seeks to investigate complex processes that have not been adequately addressed in previous work. The use of path analysis will shed light on the process by which racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity in African American youth are related to influence the psychosocial and academic outcomes of Black youth. Such understanding will in turn help social workers in terms of goal setting when working with Black youth and their families. For example, by understanding the process, practitioners will be able to formulate interventions that specifically target positive racial identity, academic self-concept, and performance, in ways that although may be related, can help direct social work intervention to the specific goal (e.g. positive racial identity, self-esteem, school engagement, and GPA).

3.5   FACTORS INFLUENCING RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION

Parental race-related messages and the processes employed vary with respect to the sociodemographic characteristics of the parent (SES, gender, work status, age, neighborhood racial composition, and the region of the country) (Cooper & Mcloyd, 2011; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Stevenson & Arrington 2009; Varner & Mandara, 2013), parents' own racial identity beliefs and their discrimination experiences (Scottham & Smalls, 2009; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009), and the type of discrimination children may experience or are perceived to experience (Fisher et al., 2000; Saleem & Lambert, 2016). For example, in predominantly Black neighborhoods, parents are less likely to engage in intentional racial-ethnic socialization, while they are more likely to actively socialize children racially in predominantly White neighborhood

(Lesane-Brown, 2006). Thus, the role of context and socioeconomic factors in determining the racial salience that may require an active race socialization maybe an important consideration in understanding variation in racial-ethnic socialization and its impact on the racial identity and psychosocial adjustment of youth in domain such as education.

Parents, own racial identity beliefs and attitudes influence the extent to which they racially socialize their children. For example, Scotham and Smalls (2009) examined the role of racial identity in racial socialization messages among African American mothers/female caregivers. Specifically, they examined parents' perceived importance of being an African American (racial centrality) and the feelings that they have toward African Americans and themselves as part of the racial group (private regard). They found positive relationship between caregivers' racial identity (racial centrality and private regard) and their socialization behaviors, preparation for bias and racial or cultural pride socialization practices. Parents with higher racial centrality and private regard were more likely to engage in RES messages with their children compared to those who reported lower racial centrality and private regard. These authors then employed four cluster levels to understand how female caregivers' racial identity predict their racial socialization practices, which in turn connect to outcomes in children including their psychosocial adjustment and educational performance. The first cluster they called buffering/defensive cluster. This cluster consisted of individuals with higher racial centrality and higher private regard, but lower public regard—the perception that others look down on blacks. The second cluster was labelled idealized cluster. Individuals in this cluster displayed higher racial centrality, public regard and higher private regard. A Low affiliation cluster was the third cluster. Individuals here had lower centrality, lower private regard and higher public regard. In the fourth cluster individuals displayed moderate or near mean score on racial centrality, private

regard and public regard. These differences in the parents' racial identity profiles related to variations in the process by which parent socialized children racially.

Regarding RES practices, Scotham and Smalls (2009) found that on one hand, parents in both the buffering/defensive and idealized clusters provided preparation for bias messages when children experienced discrimination. On the other hand, in the absence of discrimination, only the parents in the buffering/defensive cluster socialized youth along the lines of preparation for bias. While many factors may account for the difference between the parents in these profiles, it could be speculated that while the idealized parents may be aware of potential discrimination, they may also have understanding that it is not every incident of discrimination that could be race-based, or they may not want to send discouraging messages to children. From this argument, it is possible that parent in the idealized cluster may wait until youth experience racial discrimination before they react. However, the parent in the buffering/defensive profile may reflect those who want their children to be proactive in dealing with racial discrimination given the unpredictability in when, and where one may potentially experience discrimination. Collectively, these findings suggest that racial-ethnic socialization process is complex, and parents have differing levels of sophistication in their enactment and application of racialized parenting tools. These tools are influenced by parents own identity beliefs and attitudes. Other findings have highlighted the quality of the parent-child relationship, and children's own internalization of the RES messages to moderate the association between RES and youth's academic outcomes (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2013; Hall, 2015; Smalls, 2010). Understinding these influences are important to help explain the variations in RES practices and the associated variations in children's outcomes.

3.6   OTHER SOURCES OF RACIAL-ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION

While the majority of the research has focused exclusively on African American parents (Priest et al., 2014), suggesting that parents are the only sources of racial-ethnic socialization, youth may also receive race related messages from other sources including, peers, and schools (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Harper, 2013; Hughes et al., 2011; Nasir, 2011; Priest et al., 2014; Walker, 2000).

3.6.1   Peer Racial Socialization

In predominantly White institutions (PWIs), peer racial socialization has been identified as a buffer that helps Black youth in college to negotiate their racialized climate by providing a sense of belonging, cultural similarity, validation, and critical consciousness (Harper, 2013). Peer RES may occur through the spaces that youth create in various campuses such as the Black Student Union, National Society of Black engineers, Black Student Alliances and many others (Harper, 2013). Through these peer organizations, youth co-create contexts that protect them from the negative impact of their racialized experiences; instruct them on how to respond to these experiences; and transmit these effective strategies to others for achieving success (Harper, 2013). The role of peer RES in academic settings was well articulated when the researcher in Harper (2013) asked about an extra ordinary teacher who has possibly contributed to the participants' education. One participant responded this way: "She is a leader in the Black community here. She's the person who taught me and a whole lot of other students of color on

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this campus how to succeed academically, given that the environment is so unfriendly to us. She is our best teacher" (p. 206).

Similarly, Marsh et al. (2012) examined the process by which high-achieving Black youth enact and sustain a resilient attitude, which they defined as the ability to accept challenge and keep an open mindedness in the face of adversity— in a racially diverse mathematics and science academy (SAMA). The authors situated their findings in two main themes that emerged; 1) Apprehension regarding racially diverse school settings, which they framed as "No longer a Black World, but I Ain't No Nerd"; and 2) peer racial socialization they experienced in their social club, which was termed "staying Black at SAMA". Specifically, while the former suggested that high achieving Black youth transitioning from predominantly minority school or neighborhood into racially diverse high school experience real or perceived apprehensions associated with alienation and the stereotypes of inferior intellectual ability, the latter provided them the skills and strategies to overcome their apprehensions to achieve academically. The findings from the authors suggest that racial-ethnic socialization that students receive in their peer groups contributes to strong motivation and initiative, higher sense of self-efficacy and goal-directed behaviors, which in turn influence higher academic performance (Marsh et al., 2012). While research indicates peers maybe providing-ethnic racial socialization to support the educational success of African American youth, the extant research on peer racial socialization and the mechanism is limited. More studies are needed.

3.6.2   School Racial Socialization

With respect to school, the literature suggests that schools socialize African American youth racially to influence their racial identity and academic oriented behaviors and outcomes (Aldana & Byrd, 2015; Hughes, 2011; Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2009; Nasir, 2011). Schools may inform students' racial identity through peer contexts interaction, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and interactions with teachers or other school personnel (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). Some researchers have suggested that positive benefits of culturally relevant education that incorporate racial knowledge and history not only for African Americans, but for other minority groups as well, may enhance students' cultural and racial identity, and critical consciousness while fostering academic achievement (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). Hope et al. (2015) has documented that student-teacher interaction is critical to the development of achievement oriented behaviors and actual performance. Black students receive messages about what it means to be student and Black from teachers (Hope et al., 2015; Nasir et al., 2009), which can be either positive or negative. Some scholars have also noted that schools through the curriculum can convey racial messages to students with implication for youth's academic and racial identity in three ways: 1) presence or absence of African American history in the curriculum; 2) the frequency with which teachers' pay attention to African American cultural heritage; and 3) whether teachers use the curriculum to teach students to effectively respond to racism and stereotypes (Hughes, 2011; Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2009; Nasir, 2011). As noted (Hale, 1986, 1994; Boykin, 1984; Sefa-Dei, 1996; Cudjoe, 2006; Spencer et al., 2001; Wright, 2009), in a school context where the opportunity is created to affirm positive view of African American youth, they demonstrate higher engagement and achievement. From the possible selves'

proposition (Oyersman et al, 2006) it is conceivable to suggest that without adequate positive representation of African Americans in the school curriculum and pedagogical approaches, the school can consciously or unconsciously socialize African American youth to develop an identity that may disengage from intellectual development.

3.7   SUMMARY

Overall, a rich body of literature exists linking racial socialization to African American youth' educational outcomes in multiple ways through direct performance and indirectly through several psychosocial outcomes that are central to performance. Specifically, racial/cultural history messages that instill pride in youth, and preparation for bias messages have been identified to be strongly related to youth academic outcomes and psychological well-being. While the former appears to highlight knowledge related to history and heritage for self-discovery and appreciation, the latter underscores the need to understand and be prepared to deal with the potential negative view and treatment from others due to one's membership in the racial group. The vast majority of the research suggests that while racial/cultural socialization seems to be consistently linked to positive racial identity and several psychosocial factors that enhance academic performance, the research on preparation for bias has been mixed, suggesting that the two subconstructs may be distinct and may differentially relate to youth outcomes. It is possible that preparation for bias may be situation specific and may be positive in the context of discrimination, or may be positive when considered alongside the racial/cultural heritage socialization. Further research using path analysis that examine the joint or combine and distinct

effects of preparation for bias, and racial/cultural heritage socialization will contribute to researchers and practitioners understanding of the processes by which these subconstructs work to influence African American youth's racial identity development, which shape the psychosocial adjustment of youth in education, and subsequently, performance.

In addition, although the literature hypothesizes the role of racial identity in understanding how RES influences youth outcomes, the potential pathways by which racial identity and RES work to influence youth's outcomes have not been adequately explored. This study seeks to contribute to filling in the identified gap using path analysis to help social workers gain increased understanding of the processes by which racial-ethnic socialization and African American youth educational outcomes are related. While emerging research suggests potentially alternative sources of RES (e.g. peers and school) in the various developmental contexts that youth are engaged in, these studies are few, and many are theoretical propositions that need to be tested.

In response, this study seeks to understand and identify the underlying mechanisms by which RES operates to influence African American youth identity development and educational success. This work will thus, contribute to research in terms of how social workers and educators can apply an emerging culturally sensitive framework to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of African American youth. For example, using path analysis to investigate the distinct effects of the racial-ethnic socialization subconstructs on African American youth educational outcomes independent of the multiple mediators, social workers and researchers will have an adequate understanding of the mechanisms by which racial socialization is linked to students' education. Although racial identity is hypothesized to mediate the effects of RES on youth outcomes, research is yet to fully estimate its mediating role on academic outcomes. This

is particularly important for social workers who are concerned about the holistic development of youth. By understanding the potential mediators can inform social workers to target certain systems (e.g. teacher-student relationship, parent-child relationship) in the environment that may need to be changed to ensure goodness of fit for the effective application of RES as a cultural resource.

4.0 RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND BLACK YOUTH'S PSYCHOSOCIAL AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

In an attempt to understand, explain, and respond to the phenomenon related to the educational achievement of African American students, scholars have become increasingly interested in the racial-ethnic identity of African Americans. Black racial identity has been defined as the importance and subjective meaning an individual ascribes to his or her membership in the Black racial group in one's conceptualization of self (Cross, 1991; Sellers et al., 1998; Sellers et al., 1997; Rowley et al., 1998; Worrell et al., 2012). More specifically, racial identity answers the questions: "How important is race in the individual's perception of self?" and "What does it mean to be a member of this racial group?" (Sellers et al., 1998, p.23). Sellers and colleagues (1998, 1997) have identified three dimensions to highlight both the relevance and the meaning of race in an African American conception of the self. These are: 1) Racial centrality—the importance an individual ascribes to the Black race; 2) Racial regard—feelings (positive or negative) with which one views Blacks. Racial regard consists of two subdimensions: a private regard that describes one's positive or negative evaluation of the self as a member of the Black racial group, and a public regard that reflects one's judgement of others view of the racial group; and 3) Racial ideology—an individual's philosophy in relation to the beliefs, attitudes, and opinions regarding how one should act in a given context given the racial

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background. Racial ideology is further delineated into four different orientations: 1) nationalist philosophy and collective efficacy, which centers on the sense of racial belonging; 2) an oppressed minority philosophy, which highlights the similarities in the oppression that African Americans and other minorities experience in the United States; 3) an assimilationist philosophy, which stresses the need for African Americans to fully adopt the mainstream American culture; and (4) a humanist philosophy, which dwells on the similarities among all human beings (Sellers, 1998, p.27-28).

A fourth dimension which is distinct from the three dimensions described above is racial salience—the extent to which an individual considers race to be relevant in a given situation. Thus, salience has to do more with context. The implication is that the degree to which an individual has to invoke the significance associated with being Black to influence behavior depends on a given context, and the prevailing events (Worrell et al., 2006). These dimensions and their associated features underscore the complexities in African Americans racial identity profiles, and suggest variations in Black youth's beliefs, attitudes and functioning. Although racial salience is a function of a specific contextual event, conceptually, it is argued to be consistent with racial centrality (Sellers et al, 1998; Rowley et al, 1998). Racial salience and centrality interact in a given context or situation to provide the opportunity for the display of racial regard, which in turn makes accessible one's racial ideology manifested in attitudes and behaviors (Sellers et al, 1998; Worrell et al., 2006). Therefore, in a race conscious society such as the United States (context), where being Black is associated with negative images and stereotypes, positive racial identity development is an exploration process that seeks to change and replace the negative narratives of being Black and of African origin with positive ones (Worrell et al., 2006).

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Racial-ethnic identity influences the psychological adjustment and functioning of African American youth in several domains of society including education (Sellers et al., 1998; Worrell et al., 2006; Worrell et al., 2011). With respect to education, research has established that racial identity has both a direct link with student academic outcomes, and indirectly through a link with several psychosocial factors that are known to support academic achievement. However, the findings have been mixed. On one hand, racial identity has been found to foster positive outcomes that are generally related to educational success in multiple ways in African American youth (Awad, 2007; Byrd &Chavous, 2012; Chavous et al., 2003; Cross, 1991; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Gordon et al., 2009; McGee, 2015; Martin, 2006, 2009, 2012; Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2008; Nasir, 2010, 2011; Rowley et al., 1998; Sellers et al., 1997; Spencer et al., 2001; Wright, 2009). On the other hand, research has found that racial identity could undermine the educational success of African American youth (Cross, 1991; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Gordon et al., 2009; Harper & Tucker, 2006; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Ogbu, 2004; Smalls and Cooper, 2012). Still, others have also found no link at all (Cokley et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2009).

The mixed findings could be attributed to the multidimensional nature of Blacks' racial identity development, the large diversity within Blacks, and the variations in the conceptualization and operationalization of racial identity development in Blacks (Chavous et al., 2003; Cross, 1991; King et al., 2015; Sellers et al., 1997; Sellers, 1998; Worrell et al., 2006; Worrell et al., 2011). Additionally, the role of contexts in supporting or counteracting academic achievement oriented identity for Black youth (Byrd & Chavous, 2009; Byrd & Chavous, 2011; Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2009; Nasir, 2011; Oyserman, Bybee, identity (Sellers et al., 1998) is employed to argue that the mixed findings in the literature related to African American youth's

racial identity and outcomes in education are, to a greater extent, related to the multidimensionality as well as the role of contexts, racism exposure and the degree of its internalization. The chapter concludes with a discussion for future research to identify and support positive racial identity profiles, and the mechanism by which they work to foster academic success.& Terry, 2006) has not been adequately considered. In the sections that follow, the multidimensional model of Black racial

4.1   MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF RACIAL IDENTITY AND AFRICAN YOUTH OUTCOMES RELATED TO EDUCATION

The various racial identity subdomains either in combination with one another or independently, have been found to be associated with academic performance and several psychosocial factors that are predictors of academic performance and attainment (Bennett Jr.,2006; Carter; 2008, 2012; Chavous et al., 2003; DeCuir-Gunby, 2007; Nogura, 2003; Perry et al., 2003; Smalls et al, 2007; Tang et al., 2015; Wright, 2009). Using cluster analysis and a sample of 606 African American 12th graders, Chavous et al. (2003) investigated the relationship between racial identity centrality and regard (private and public), and educational beliefs (about attachment to school, its importance, relevance and efficacy), performance, and later attainment (high school completion and college attendance). They found a positive and significant association between private regard, and attachment to school, and school relevance, efficacy, and later attainment independent of students' previous background and family SES. Similarly, centrality was associated with school relevance, school-efficacy, and later attainment

independent of private regard (Chavous et al., 2003). For youth with similar achievement characteristics, those who displayed higher private regard, and higher racial centrality demonstrated increased attachment to school, higher relevance to school, school efficacy, and were enrolled in post-secondary school two years after high school. While Chavous et al. (2003) did not find direct link between these racial identity constructs and participants' GPA, their findings suggested that racial identity possibly influenced GPA through their indirect effect on school attachment, relevance, and self-efficacy.

In another study, Sellers, Chavous and Cook (1998) examined the independent associations between racial centrality, the subscales of racial ideology (nationalist, assimilationist, oppressed minority, and humanist), and GPA among 248 undergraduate students sampled from predominantly White institution (PWI, $n = 163$) and historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs, $n = 85$). They report that while racial centrality was positively and significantly associated with GPA among participants independent of demographic factors, some of the subscales of the ideology dimension—assimilationist and nationalist— were inversely and significantly related to GPA. The authors further investigated the interaction effect of racial centrality and the racial ideology subscales on the GPA. They observed that on one hand, when racial centrality was high, both assimilationist and nationalist ideologies were associated with lower GPA. On the other hand, minority experience was associated with higher GPA at higher level of racial centrality. This relationship was consistent among students across both PWI and HBCUs after controlling for SES and school contexts.

Although caution is needed in interpreting Sellers and colleagues' (1998) finding given the cross-sectional nature of the study, their findings support other research that suggests that Black identity profile that de-emphasize race may be detrimental to Black youth's healthy

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psychological development and adjustment in the academic domain (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Asante, 2003; Wright, 2011). In addition, the findings suggest that Black youth's awareness of racism, and the importance placed on in-group identification are essential factors that can influence the identity profile that support academic excellence. Rowley et al. (1998) also observed that when racial centrality and private regard are considered simultaneously, and controlling for background factors, only private regard was positively and significantly associated with self-esteem, which is an important booster of academic achievement, in high school and college African American youth. However, Rowley et al. (1998) found that racial centrality and private regard interacted to positively and significantly predict high self-esteem. Specifically, in low centrality youth, private regard was not a significant predictor of self-esteem. However, for youth high in racial centrality, private regard was positively and significantly associated with self-esteem among both high school and college students independent of demographic covariates. The findings suggest that strong identification with Black racial group does not necessarily lead to improved self-esteem. Rather, youth who strongly identify with the Black racial group must also be proud of their membership in the group.

Related finding suggests that African American youth who have high private regard and are oriented to the other racial group members, which indicate interracial relations, tend to have positive academic self-concept which in turn, helps them to achieve higher GPA. However, youth who devalue academics, and have anti-white's attitudes tend to have lower GPA's (Cokley & Chapman, 2008). Smith and colleagues (2009) reported that racial identity was associated with African American children's psychosocial adjustment and academic performance overtime. Specifically, they reported that African American children demonstrated preference for own race as they age, and that this preference for own racial group was positively associated with youth's

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scores in reading, comprehension, and negatively associated with behavioral difficulties over time independent of sociodemographic variables. Their findings suggest African American youth who demonstrate high sense of racial belonging and internalize positive racial identity are more likely to have positive psychosocial adjustment and higher academic performance. However, youth's ability to understand and internalize positive racial identity maybe influenced by their developmental stages.

Previous research supports the findings that youth's ability to internalized positive racial identity predict success in education. Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee (2006) examined the content of racial identity and whether it is stable enough as a protective factor to sustain academic achievement across mid-adolescence among African American and Latino youth. Racial identity here was conceptualized as: 1) connectedness, which suggests racial belonging; 2) racial identity with high awareness of racism, which suggests low public regard; and 3) racial identity achievement embeddedness, which shows how youth perceive their achievement to be important to the racial group. Their findings suggest that by mid adolescence, youth racial identity appears more stable. Those with the identity that showed sense of belonging, awareness of racism, and viewed their achievement to be significant to them and their racial group maintained a steady GPA over time when compared to those who had identity profile with low connection to in-group members, less or no awareness of racism, and did not view their achievement to be important for their racial group. The observed relationship was independent of social and demographic factors.

In another study strong sense of racial belonging was positively linked with academic performance in African American boys after controlling for parent education and school related factors (Roberts & Taylor, 2012). Additionally, racial ethnic identity moderated the effects of

discrimination on performance for African American males, suggesting that the buffering effect of racial identity on students' experiences of discrimination was evident in males and not females (Roberts & Taylor, 2012). Wong, Eccles and Sameroff (2003) also reported a positive association between strong connection with racial group members and the utility value of education, academic self-efficacy, and GPA after controlling for background and socioeconomic variables. In addition, these authors suggested that racial identity enhanced students' performance by compensating for, and buffering against the negative effects of racism on youth's performance and psychological adjustment. Specifically, as connection to racial/ethnic group increased, greater perceived discrimination was associated with smaller decreases in students' self-efficacy, and performance in grades. These findings about the relationship between racial identity and academic performance as well as the psychosocial adjustment of African American youth are consistent with findings produced by other scholars (Bennett Jr., 2006; Chavous et al., 2008; Cooper & Smalls, 2012).

Findings from studies that use qualitative design also do underscore the interrelatedness of the various subdomains of the racial identity construct to influence behavior (Carter, 2012, 2008, 2007; Codjoe, 2006; Tatum, 2004; Wright, 2011). For instance, Dorinda Carter's (2008) study shows that academically successful Black youth display racial identity profiles with the following features; 1) "seeing oneself as a member of racial group; 2) being aware of stereotypes and limitations to one's present and future social and economic outcomes; and 3) developing a perspective of self as succeeding as a racial group member" (p.13). A careful analysis of the identity profile described by Carter (2008) suggests multiple dimensions of racial identity function together to inform youth psychosocial and academic self that support higher performance. Similarly, based on the identity profile of his participants, Wright (2011, p. 612)

defines positive racial identity that supports academic achievement in African American youth as "pride in in-group identification, confidence in one's academic abilities, competence in awareness of racism, and comfort with respect to self-presentation of racial-ethnic identity".

In a previous study, knowledge of being Black in the United States transmitted to children and the challenges that Blacks are likely to experience including discrimination in educational and labor market were regarded as the motivation factor that propelled Black adolescents to excel academically (Sanders, 1997). For example, by her knowledge of the Black history and the stereotypes that is associated with Black as a racial group, a 14 year old high achieving student in Sanders' (1997) study asserted "I know that being Black and a woman, I am going to work harder to prove what I can do and what I can be. I am willing to work hard because it is not what on the outside, but on the inside and what you know you can do and feel able to do" (p.90). When analyzing this quote, one could see a racial identity profile that is a combination of at least racial centrality, high private regard, and low public regard. Together, these findings highlight the fact that for African American youth, racial identity that support success in school, is complex, and requires youth to be able to synthesize the various dimensions, and develop competences to understand where, and when one may need to invoke racial identity for achieving success. As noted by Carter (2008), Sanders (1997), and Wright (2011) youth's positive evaluation of themselves as Blacks induce confidence in themselves and their potentials to be academically successful despite potential racialization. It therefore stands to reason that a negative evaluation of the youth as members of the Black racial group can erode confidence in themselves and in their academic potentials in the face of stereotypes. This may suggest variation in the way Black youth perceive and interpret their racialized experiences, which in turn influence their performance in a given context such as education.

4.2   STUDIES USING CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Recognizing the multidimensional nature of racial identity, and the interrelatedness of the various subdomains, other scholars have sought to use cluster analysis to help researchers understand how different dimensions of racial identity may function together to influence attitudes and behaviors that are specific to education. Chavous et al. (2003) employed cluster analysis to create different racial profiles using racial centrality, private regard, and public regard. They developed four profiles to examine the associations among racial centrality, private regard, public regard, and academic outcomes in African American youth. The four clusters were; 1) buffering/defensive cluster which— included high centrality, high private regard, and low public regard— indicates the protective effect of positive strong racial identification in the presence of racism: 2) low connectedness/high affinity, which describes participants low in centrality and public regard, but high in private regard; 3) idealized, which describes individuals high in all the three subdomains (centrality, private and public regards); and 4) alienated, which describes participants who are low in: race centrality, private regard and public regard.

They observed that independent of socioeconomic factors, and youth's previous performance, the four cluster groups differed in academic attachment, relevance, and self-efficacy. Those in the alienated group were significantly less interested in school than the buffering/defensive group and the idealized group. Furthermore, youth in the idealized group evidenced more personalized value in school than the buffering/defensive group, and that of the alienated cluster members. With respect to later attainment, most of the participants in 2 or 4 year colleges were found to be in the buffering/defensive cluster. Their findings suggest that Black youth who perceive their race to be of importance to them, have high pride in their in-

group identification, and are aware of societal bias toward, and devaluation of Blacks in the U.S. are more likely to be academically successful.

However, Harper and Tuckman (2006) reported somewhat contrasting findings. They used three of the identity profile clusters identified by Chavous et al. (2003) to investigate the extent to which racial identity profiles (centrality, private regard, and public regard) interrelate to influence students' performance across grade levels. Contrary to Chavous et al. (2003), students in the alienated cluster in both 9th and 12th grades were associated with higher academic performance suggesting that racial identity may either stall or lead to a decline in performance. A number of factors may explain the differences. First, Chavous et al. (2003) used longitudinal data while Harper and Tuckman (2006) data were cross-sectional. It is possible that the findings observed by Harper and Tuckman could change over time. Second, while both studies had predominantly African Americans, Harper and Tuckman's (2006) participants came from populations that were nearly all African Americans than the population that Chavous and colleagues' (2003) data were from. It is possible that Harper and Tuckman's sample were within a context where racial salience, which is essential for the deployment of racial identity to enhance psychosocial functioning was low. In that case, racial identity may not matter much.

Notwithstanding, the literature suggests that racial identity is a multidimensional construct. While the subdimensions that constitute the racial identity construct appear distinct conceptually, they seem to work together to influence the academic and psychosocial functioning of African Americans. Particular identity profiles in relation to education success may vary according to the way youth are aware of racial barriers, the relevance of race in their lives and whether they feel positive or negative about African Americans, and the beliefs and meanings youth attribute to education. The concern for researchers is to identify those racial identity

profiles that support healthy psychosocial functioning and educational success, and the mechanisms by which they are related. Examining the independent effects of the various subdomains on youth academic outcomes independent of potential mediators will increase social work researchers and practitioners understanding of how racial identity transmit it effects to influence African American youth's psychosocial functioning and academic outcomes.

Overall, the literature suggests that while the subdomains of the racial identity construct seem conceptually distinct, they interrelate to influence attitudes, behaviors and psychological adjustments in African American youth at any given point. Psychosocial and academic outcomes in African American youth may therefore be a function of the particular identity subdomains that may be working together to influence a particular profile. An integrated racial identity profile that centers on the positive view of Blacks appear to be positively linked with academic outcomes of African American youth. Therefore, understanding and identifying those subdomains of the racial identity that lead to positive view of the self and the mechanisms by which they operate have important implications for social work researchers, practitioners, educators and policy makers to inform interventions that can improve the educational experiences and outcomes of African American youth in the K-12 education system in America.

4.3   FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RACIAL IDENTITY PROFILES

As indicated in the previous chapter, parents' racial-ethnic socialization has been identified as the key predictor of African American youth's racial identity profile. In addition to parents' racial socialization, some scholars have suggested that racism and the degree to which it

may be experienced and internalized by youth is also an important consideration for understanding the variations in African American youth racial identity in relation to the educational outcomes of these youth (Brown & Lee, 2005; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015; Jones, 2000; Nasir, 2011; Nasir et al., 2009). Others have also suggested the school context as an important factor that influence the identity development of African American youth to shape educational outcomes (Martin, 2006, 2009, 2012; McGee, 2015; McGee & Martin, 2011; Nasir, 2010, 2011; Nasir et al., 2009; Parsons, 2008; Varelas, Martin, & Kane, 2013).

4.3.1   The Role of Internalized Racism in Black Youths' Racial Identity

Although racism and discrimination are highly prevalent in the United States and its institutions including education that adversely impact African American youth's education (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Neblett, 2006), the extent to which African American families and youth internalize racism is critical for the development of youth identity profile, and by extension, their social and psychological functioning in developmental domain such as education (Brown & Lee, 2005; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Hughes et al., 2015; Jones, 2000; Ogbu, 2004). Research has established a link between racial centrality and high private regard, and greater self-esteem, mastery and less depressive symptoms—factors that are known to be strongly linked to academic outcomes (Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002; Harper, 2007)—on one hand. On the other hand, it has also been found that low private regard is associated with internalized racism which in turn leads to low self-esteem, lower mastery or self-efficacy (Hughes et al., 2015).

Analysis of the findings by Hughes and colleagues (2015) suggests that for individuals with lower private regard (which might possibly reflect internalized racism), strong identification with the racial group (racial centrality) maybe associated with decreased self-efficacy. However, for individuals with higher racial private regard, identification with the group maybe associated with higher self-efficacy or mastery. Conceivably, it can be suggested that the degree of racism and stereotype exposure, and their internalization influence one's perception of the self, the social world, and ultimately functioning in a given domains including education. According to the social identity theory, in a race conscious society like the United States, a group ranked at the bottom of the social hierarchy may be severely limited in terms of opportunity for socio-economic mobility (Sullivan & Esmail, 2012). Group members may achieve a healthy sense of self by creating and internalizing a positive sense of self through what has been called social creativity (Hughes et al., 2015; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012). Social creativity is a process whereby group that may be restricted in social mobility may seek to derive psychological empowerment from past accomplishment or historical heritage (Hughes et al., 2015). For African Americans who are so devalued in the U.S., social creativity would suggest that developing an understanding of one's cultural heritage and accomplishments in the past that foster pride can be a source for positive racial identity to enhance or restore self-concept (Hughes et al, 2015).

Linking research on African American cultural/racial heritage socialization to African American youth's identity development and psychological functioning in education (Hughes et al 2006; Wang & Hugley, 2012), one can find support for the social creativity thesis. However, when the devalued group fails to utilize social creativity, (when members develop poor sense of self that leads to internalized racism) psychological adjustment and performance in education may be worse (Hughes et al., 2015). This view is also supported in the literature suggesting that

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in the absence of social creativity that enables Black youth to enact and maintain positive self-concept, and self-mastery, youth may display poor psychological adjustment and performance in education in the presence of racism and stereotypes (Brown & Lee, 2005 Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Hughes et al., 2015; Ogbu, 2004; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Overall, it is plausible to suggest that in a race conscious society where racism and stereotypes are prevalent with consequences that adversely impact academic performance, helping African American youth to develop a healthy racial identity is critical to psychological well-being and success in education. Educational success is in turn, a critical tool for overcoming oppression, and empowerment of group members (Hale, 1986; King, Akua & Russell, 2013; Martin, 2009; Perry, et al., 2003). Research has not fully explored the paths from racial-ethnic socialization constructs to academic outcomes in ways that simultaneously account for distinct effects of racial-ethnic socialization, racial identity, and the other important academic related outcomes such as academic self-concept of ability and expectation for performance that may help further explain the links between RES, racial identity and African American youth academic performance. Given that social work lies at the intersection of multiple systems, social work research that generates and disseminates knowledge about positive racial identity development, and the mechanism by which racial identity and racial-ethnic socialization—the hypothesized predictor of racial identity—is linked to psychosocial and educational outcomes can immensely contribute to advance the profession's efforts toward holistic development of African American youth with implications for academic outcomes. The current study aims at contributing to meeting this need by exploring the web of relationships between racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity, and psychosocial and academic outcomes using path analysis.

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4.3.2   The Role of Contextual Factors in Black Youth's Racial Identity Profile

Varelas et al (2012), Nasir (2011), McGee and Martin (2011), and Martin (2006) argue that learning and identity co-construct and reinforce each other leading to high performance. These authors suggest that the various spaces within the school (classroom settings, curriculum design, texts books, content of instruction and the pedagogical styles) work to foster engagement that integrates racial, academic, and discipline identities for high performance or disengagement that leads to poor performance. From this assertion, research that highlights contextual influences on positive identity development and the mechanisms by which contexts shape African American youth racial identity and academic outcomes is needed. With respect to school, context that maybe supportive of African American youth engagement and performance has been conceptualized as the interpersonal interactions (those between peers and adults) and school racial-ethnic socialization (Byrd, 2014). School climate that supports positive identity development may thus, ensure consistency in youth's socialization across contexts (e.g. home and school), particularly, for those who do experience positive racial identity socialization in the home (Martin, 2009; Spencer et al., 2001; Wright, 2011, 2009). Such youth are more likely to adjust well in school, which in turn fosters their educational success (Byrd, 2014; Byrd & Chavous, 2012; Spencer et al., 2001).

Scholars have described such consistency between contexts as context-congruence (Byrd & Chavous, 2012, 2011; Byrd, 2014). These authors have found that youth with high private regard in settings that support or promote their positive racial identity reported higher intrinsic motivation for high performance compared to those with high regard in settings that do not support positive racial identity. Thus, for Black youth with positive racial identity profile, school

racial climate may be potentially important target of intervention to reinforce positive racial identity for students' engagement and performance (Byrd, 2014). This is especially important for social work practice. Social workers identify resources and strengths in individuals, families and communities, and capitalize on such resources to help families and children set and accomplish goals in education (Allen-Mears, 2015). Social workers may sometimes demand a change in the system to support and manage resources and strength in families for optimal social functioning (Allen-Mears, 2015). Thus, when social workers understand how positive racial identity develops and support educational success in Black youth, they can better engage the school system to recognize and utilize it for educational success in African American youth.

Previous study has highlighted the importance of the school contexts in supporting or facilitating various racial identity profiles that are linked to various outcomes in education for African American youth. Using both survey and observational data, Nasir et al. (2009) identified two forms of African American youth's racial identity in relation to academic engagement. 1) The street savvy racial identity; and 2) school oriented and socially conscious racial identity. The street-savvy espouses African American youth as being connected to the street or the block and regarded as the "gangsta", speak Ebonics English, wear baggy jeans, oversized T-shirts and caps, and may be antithetical to education. Youth with this profile were found to be drug dealers and pimps, lacked respect for the law, displayed indifference to their role as citizens and appeared unconcerned about their future. In addition, the street savvy-youth viewed school as a context for social interaction, rather than knowledge acquisition, to engage in conversation related to drugs and illegal activities. On the contrary, youth with the school oriented and socially conscious racial identity profile displayed connection to community, school, and cultural and historical legacy. While they may speak Ebonics, and wear popular clothes, members in this group

regarded themselves as a positive force and agents of change in the community (Nasir et al., 2009). These racial identities were sustained because they were reinforced in both schools and out of school settings such as homes, communities and neighborhoods to predict varied educational outcomes in youth. Recognizing how settings complement or contrast each other to make racial identity salient to youth which in turn influences outcomes in school, Nasir (2011) asserts "racial identity can be challenging aspects of individual's life because it is lived out and enacted in a subtler way on multiple levels of experience" (p.4).

The role of contexts in positive identity development with implications for academic outcomes therefore suggest a critical need for social work research and practice. Social work intervention lies at the interface or intersection of multiple systems (Allen-Meares & Montgomery, 2014; Anderson et al, 1999 ; Ashford & LeCroy, 2013; Greene, 2009), and can thus be helpful in identifying and targeting multiple contexts to foster positive racial identity that support youth' academic achievement. However, social work research related to Black youth' racial identity and the mechanisms by which positive racial identity influences education, and the role of contexts in this link is very sparse (Teasley, 2004). This dissertation seeks to contribute to meeting this significant gap in social work research by exploring Black youth' racial identity, and to provide knowledge and skills to support practitioners and policy makers for the successful educational outcomes of African youth, who have historical and contemporary record of marginalization in the U.S. education system.

In sum, the lesson learned from this chapter suggests that racial identity is associated with African American youth educational performance directly, and indirectly through a link with several psychosocial outcomes. However, the directions of these associations are mixed. On one hand, racial identity has been linked to healthy psychosocial adjustments and educational

success. On the other hand, racial identity has also been found to be negatively associated with psychosocial and academic outcomes in African American youth. The multidimensional nature of the racial identity, the experiences of racism and the degree to which racism maybe internalized, and contextual factors may potentially underlie the mixed findings. Moreover, few sophisticated analyses are available that estimate the mechanisms by which racial identity operates to influence students' academic outcomes. Research that will highlight such pathways advance the field by providing practical tools that can be accessible to social workers, teachers, and families to engage youth to improve their educational experiences and outcomes.

4.4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND BLACK YOUTH

Overall, compared to their counterparts, African American youth on the average, are significantly disadvantaged in the K-12 education in the United States. Black youth are associated with lower performance on grades and test scores, higher dropout rates, and lower enrollment in post-secondary education. Examination of the resources, opportunities, and processes that are key to higher performance in education suggests that African American youth underachievement may potentially be driven by disparities in resources, access to opportunities, and processes at multiple levels of their educational experience. While the vast majority of the research has documented and hypothesized about the problems and causes of underachievement in Black youth, relatively fewer have focused on identifying culturally relevant resources within the African American families and communities to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for these youth. Moreover, although RES and racial identity have been identified to be

interrelated to influence the academic outcomes of African American youth directly and indirectly through several psychosocial factors, this web of relationship has not been adequately explored in the extant literature especially in social work. Additionally, while both RES and racial identity are regarded as multidimensional constructs with subdomains that may be distinct from one another, but also seem to interrelate to influence African American youth's educational outcomes, studies examining the distinct and the joint effects of these constructs independent of potential mediators in a single model are sparse. Yet doing so would advance research to comprehensively understand Black youth's construction of themselves, and how they may enact the selves to function optimally in their social ecologies. In response, the current study employs path analysis to examine culturally protective and compensatory factors (racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity) in African Americans, and the mechanisms by which they operate to influence healthy psychosocial adjustment and academic performance. Specifically, the study explores the web of relationships between racial socialization, racial identity, academic self-concept, expectations for performance, and actual performance among African American youth.

5.0   METHODS

The purpose of this study is to examine and explain the pathways by which racial socialization and racial identity relate to influence the psychosocial development and academic outcome of African American youth. Again, the research questions and their corresponding hypotheses are as follow:

1. To what degree do dimensions of racial-ethnic socialization influence dimensions of racial identity in Black youth?

2. How does racial centrality relate to private racial regard in Black youth?

3. To what degree do Black youth's sense of racial belonging support academic outcomes

4. What is the nature of the interrelationships between RES, racial identity, and psychosocial and academic outcomes?

The following hypotheses are associated with research questions 1, 2, and 3. Independent of background characteristics;

1. More engagement in racial-ethnic socialization subdimensions by parents will be associated with higher racial centrality among Black youth.

2. Racial centrality will be positively associated with private racial regard.

3. Youth with strong sense of racial belonging in the Black racial group will demonstrate positive link with academic performance.

The interrelationships hypotheses are as follows, (see Figure 1)

a) RES predicts youth's racial identity development, which in turn predicts youth academic self-concept of ability. Academic self-concept of ability in turn will predict students' expectation for performance, and GPA.

b) RES predicts youth's outcomes related to their academics (academic self-concept of ability, expectations for performance, and GPA) independent of racial identity mediations.

c) Racial identity subdimensions (the importance of race, positive evaluation of being Black, and racial belonging) directly and uniquely predict Black youth's psychosocial and academic outcomes (academic self-concept, expectations for performance, and GPA), independent of RES constructs, and background factors.

d) Black youth's racial identity subdomains jointly affect their academic self-concept, which in turn predict expectation for performance to influence GPA independent of RES predictors and background characteristics

5.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participants came from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) (Eccles, 2010). MADICS is a majority African American longitudinal study of teens and caregiver dyads, designed to investigate the influence of contexts on youth, and to examine successful pathways through adolescence into young adults. This study investigated only Black participants ($n = 904$) who make up make up 61% of the total sample size (N= 1,482). The sample broadly represents families from diverse SES backgrounds and the mean income of the families in 1990 was around $45000-$49000. Data were collected through face to face and self-administered interviews (Eccles, 2010). Data from Wave 3, which were collected in the summer following 8th grade when youth were transitioning into 9th grade (mean age was 14.5) were used to predict outcomes in Wave 4, which corresponds to the summer following 11th grade (mean age was 17.4).

5.2 MEASURES

5.2.1 Racial-Ethnic Socialization

Families' raced-based practices and management of racialized experiences were assessed with measures from MADICS, which were originally based on racial socialization measures in the Philadelphia family management study with some modification by the MADICS research team (Eccles, 2010). At wave 3, parents were asked through self-administered survey and face to

face interview about the frequency with which they communicate the importance of their racial background and engage children in activities related to racial background (Eccles, 2010). Consistent with the literature (Hughes et al, 2006), the following two subconstructs of RES—racial/cultural heritage socialization, and preparation for bias were assessed as predictor variables.

5.2.1.1 Racial/Cultural Heritage Socialization

This item was assessed using a composite score of four items that asked parents the frequency with which they communicate, and engage youth in conversations and activities that instill in them pride and importance of their race. Questions included; 1) how often do you talk in the family about your racial background?; 2) how often do you celebrate any special days connected to your racial background?; 3) how often does (CHILD) study the traditions of or about being (his/her) race?; and 4) how often do you participate in community activities with people of your racial background? Responses were coded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=almost never to 5 = almost always. The alpha for a total item of four is .72 (see Table 1)

5.2.1.2 Preparation for Bias

This measure was assessed using a composite score of 7 items that captured parents' prompts of potential discrimination and the strategies to respond. The predictor question was: "How often do you suggest to your 8th grader that good ways to deal with racial discrimination he or she may face are:" 1) do better than everyone else in school?; 2) have faith in God?; 3) do

their best and be a good person?; 4) work harder than others? (see Table 1 for review). Parents responded by indicating on a five-point scale (1 = almost never to 5 = daily) on how often they engage in each specific strategy. The alpha for this measure is .87.

5.2.2   Racial Identity

This study investigated how the subdomains of racial centrality, private racial regard, and belonging in the racial group work together to influence youth's educational outcomes. Below, how these subdomains were measured are described.

5.2.2.1 Racial Centrality

The extent to which youth view their race to be central or important to their overall development was assessed by a composite of three items in the MADICS that ask youth about how important is their race. The items were: 1) How important is your racial or ethnic background to the daily life of your family?; 2) How important is it for you to know about your racial or ethnic background?; and 3) How proud are you of your racial or ethnic background? Responses were coded in a four-point scale that ranges from 1= not at all to 4 = very important. The total scale of the three items had an alpha of 0.75.

5.2.2.2 Private Regard

Youth's pride in their race/ethnicity was captured by a composite score of seven items that assess youth's evaluation of the Black race, and themselves as part of the racial group.

Participants indicated the extent to which a specific statement was true of them or not on a five-point scale that ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (recorded). Sample questions include: 1) I am happy that I am Black; 2) I feel good about other Black people; 3) I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishment and advancements. (See Table 1 for a review of the full items). The total scale has alpha of 0.77.

5.2.2.3 Racial Belonging

Youth's sense of racial belonging was assessed using a composite of four items asking youth how true are those items about them as a member of the Black racial group. Items include: 1) I have a close community of friends because of my race/ethnicity; 2) People of my race/ethnicity have a culturally rich heritage; 3) I have meaningful tradition because of my race/ethnicity; and 4) people of my race/ethnicity are very supportive of each other. Responses were coded on a five-point scale that ranges from 1 = not all true of me 5 = extremely true of me. The total scale of four items has an alpha of 0.75.

5.2.3 Self-Concept of Academic Ability

Youth self-concept of academic ability (the belief in one's ability to do well academically) measured by a composite of two items that asked students about how well they do in school subjects. Questions include: 1) How good are you in mathematics?; and 2) How good are you in other discipline? Responses were coded on a seven- point scale that ranges from 1 = not good at all, to 7 = very good. The alpha for the composite score is .80.

5.2.4   Expectations for Performance

Students' academic expectation for performance was also measured by a composite score of two items that asked students their expectations for performance in mathematics and other discipline the following year. The questions were: 1) compared to kids of your age, how well do you expect to do next year in math?; and 2) Compared to other kids of your age, how well do you expect to do next year in other subjects? Responses were coded on seven-point scale ranging from 1=much worse than other kids to 7=much better than other kids. It has an alpha of .78.

5.2.5   Academic Performance

Academic performance was indicated by students' grade point average (GPA) at Wave 3 (rising 9th grade summer) and Wave 4 (11th grade). Wave 3 GPA which was taken from school record data was used as a control variable for prior performance. GPA at Wave 4 was obtained through students' self-report and was used as outcome variable. Both indicators are measured on a standard 4.0 GPA scale.

5.2.6   Family Income

Total family income was assessed by the primary caregiver's self-reported income taken in Wave 1 question that asked "*From all sources of income, tell me your total family income before taxes?*" Responses were then coded on a 21-anchor range scale of $5,000 increments, beginning with "*Under $5,000*" and ending with "*More than $100,000.*"

5.2.7 Parent/Caregiver Education Level

Parent's education level was also assessed via self-reported item from the primary caregiver, which was taken from a face-to-face survey question that asked "*What is the highest grade of school you have completed?*" The responses were then coded along a 22-point scale beginning with first grade school to post-secondary degree completion.

Table 1: Relevant Variables and their Measures

Parent racial/cultural socialization (α =72) 1. How often do you talk in the family about your racial background? 2. How often do you celebrate any special days connected to your racial background? 3. How often does (CHILD) study the traditions of or about being (his/her) race? 4. How often do you participate in community activities with people of your racial background? *Responses are 5 Likert point ranging from 1= almost never... 5= daily*	Preparation for bias (α = .87). Parents suggest to children to: 1. Do better than everyone else in school? 2. Have faith in God? 3. Do your best and be a good person? 4. Work harder than others? 5. Stand up and demand your rights? 6. Try hard to get along with other people? 7. Not blame yourself when you experience discrimination *Responses range: 1 = almost never....5 = daily*
Private regard (α = .77) 1. I feel good about other black people. 2. I am happy that I am black. 3. I feel that Blacks have made major advancements and accomplishments. 4. I believe that because I am Black, I have many strengths. 5. I often regret that I am black 6. Blacks contribute less to society than others. 7. Overall, I often feel Blacks are not worthwhile. *Responses were in 5 Likert scale point ranging from 1 = strongly disagree....5 = Strongly agree*	Youth's sense of racial belonging (α = .75) 1. I have a close community of friends because of my race/ethnicity. 2. People of my race/ethnicity have a culturally rich heritage. 3. I have meaningful traditions because of my race/ethnicity. 4. People of my race/ethnicity are very supportive of each other. Responses range: 1 = not all that true....5 = extremely true of me

Importance of race/ethnicity (Racial centrality) (α = .75)
    1. How important is your racial or ethnic background to the daily life of your family?
    2. How important is it for you to know about your racial or ethnic background?
    3. How proud are you of your racial or ethnic background?
Responses ranged from 1=not at all... 4=very
	Expectation for performance (α = .78)
	Question:
	    1. Compared to other kids your age, how well do you expect to do next year in math?
	    2. Compared to other kids your age, how well do you expect to do next year in other subjects?
	Responses range from *1= much worse than other kids to 7=much better than other kids*

Youth's academic self-concept beliefs (α =.80)
 How well do you do in Math and other school subjects?
Responses range 1=Much worse than other kid…7=Much better than other kids
Compared to other kids your age…
    1. How well do you do in Math?
    2. How well do you do in other school subjects?
Responses range: 1 =much worse than other kids....7 = much better than other kids
	Academic performance
	Wave 3 (rising 9th grade) GPA taken from school record
	Wave 4 (11th grade) GPA self-reported by youth
	GPA scale: 4.0

Total family income Question: From all sources of income, tell me your total family income before taxes?" Responses were then coded on a 21-anchor range scale of $5,000 increments, beginning with "*Under $5,000*" and ending with "*More than $100,000.*"	Parent/primary caregiver educational level Question: What is the highest grade of school you have completed? Response was coded along a 22-point scale beginning with *first grade school to post-secondary degree completion*

5.3   ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

In the initial modeling, RES practices by parents at wave 3 were used as the predictor variables on racial identity. Youth's racial identity at wave 4 as well as academic self-concept, and expectation for performance were investigated as mediators. Finally, youth GPA at wave 4 was investigated as an outcome. To examine the effect of racial identity on psychosocial

outcomes, youth's racial identity variables (racial centrality, private racial regard, and racial belonging) at wave 4 were used as predictors. Finally, the racial identity subdomains, academic self-concept, and expectations for performance were viewed as outcomes to explain the link between racial-ethnic socialization and academic performance to investigate the interrelationships among racial identity, racial-ethnic socialization, psychosocial and youth's academic outcome in GPA.

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were run to examine the first three research questions. Following, the web of relationships between racial-ethnic socialization practices, racial identity subdomains, and psychosocial and academic outcomes, were quantitatively estimated using path analysis, an analytical tool from the family of structural equation modeling (Acock, 2013; Kline, 2011). Path analysis provides the opportunity to explore and estimate multilevel analyses that involve mediation relationships (Acock, 2013; Kline, 2011). In this case, at Wave 3 (when youth were entering 9th grade) the effects of parents' reported RES indicators were estimated on youth racial identity, relevant mediators, and academic outcomes at Waves 4 (11th grade) using STATA's full maximum likelihood estimation. The conceptual model was specified and identified using the path model building features and steps (Acock, 2013) in STATA 14. The *estat teffects* functions in STATA were used to estimate the direct and indirect effects of the parameters in path model.

The fitness or adequacy of the model was assessed through four indices—model chi-square, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker Lewis index (TLI). The chi-square test is the first test of goodness to examine the consistency between the observed covariances and the model implied covariances (Kline, 2011). The model chi-square test of zero indicates a perfect fit, with an increasing test value further

away from zero suggesting a bad fit. However, the model chi-square is sensitive to sample size, and large sample size can lead to increase in the test value. *The root mean square error of approximation* (RMSEA). The RMSEA is regarded as badness-of-fit index with a value of zero as the best fit, and increasing values indicating poor fit (Kline, 2011). To achieve approximation of the fit threshold, a critical value of ≤.05 was used in this study for establishing model adequacy. *Comparative fit index* (CFI). The CFI is a goodness of fit index, which deals with how well the data fit better than a model in which variables are assumed to have no relationships. The value range is between 0-1, with increased value suggesting a better fit. In this study, a critical value of CFI ≥ .95 was considered an acceptable fit threshold. *The Tucker Lewis index* (TLI). The TLI is another goodness of fit index similar to the CFI on a 0 to 1 scale. This test of goodness may be particularly helpful for this study because it adjusts for model complexity that can account well for large sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1999). An adequate model fit was determined at a critical value of TLI ≥ .95. Stata 14 (Stata, 2013) was employed to investigate the research questions.

5.3.1   Missing Data

Missing data are common problems associated with survey and longitudinal data (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2016; Rubin, 1996). Reasons for missing data can range from several factors such as respondents' refusal to answer a question, lack of information, participants dropping out of the study in the case of a longitudinal, and many more (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2016). Missing data can bias the sample and threaten researchers' ability to make a valid inference to the population in which the sample is drawn from (Rubin, 1996). To treat

missing data, it is suggested that the researcher first investigates the pattern of missingness in order to determine the approach (Lee & Carlin, 2010). Traditionally, reasons for missing data have been classified into one or more of the following: (1) missing completely at random (MCAR) which deals with missing due to a nuisance than a problem to be overcome. (2) missing that maybe related to potential score of a respondent on the outcome variable or any of the independent variables. This pattern of missingness is called missing at random (MAR). (3) Missing not at random (MNAR) (Howell, 2008; Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2016).

Recent research has classified the patterns of missingness into monotone and non-monotone or arbitrary (Lee & Carlin, 2010; Stata, 2013; Yuan, n.d). Monotone missing is said to occur when a variable X with a missing value for an individual implies that all subsequent variables have missing values for the individual (Yuan, n.d). Arbitrary missing pattern occurs when information about the missigness cannot be ascertain (Lee & Carlin, 2010; Stata, 2013; Yuan, n.d). Using Stata's multiple imputation guideline (Stata, 2013), missing pattern of the data was investigated using misstable in Stata 14. An inspection of the missing-value pattern revealed that the data contain missing values on all the relevant variables and the covariates in the model (see Table 2). Further examination of the missing pattern suggests that missingness could be arbitrary. A joint multiple imputation approach for continuous data based on multivariate normal distribution (MVN), which uses Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) data augmentation procedure (Lee & Carlin, 2010; Stata, 13) was used to impute missing data.

MCMC is an advanced statistical tool that generates pseudorandom variables from multidimensional and otherwise intractable probability distribution through Markov chains (Yuan, n.d, p.3). When missing pattern is arbitrary, this approach can be applied to impute enough data to a monotone pattern to use a more flexible approach to handling missing data

(Yuan, n.d). Originally developed in physics for simulation, MCMC imputes pseudo random variables to augment data in ways that can generate large sample size depending on the pattern of missigness to enhance statistical power and valid inferences (Fichman & Cummings, 2003; Yuan, n.d). It creates multiple imputation using simulation from Bayesian prediction distribution for normal data (Yuan, n.d, p.2). In addition, multivariate multiple imputation using MCMC has been shown to be a better approach to dealing with data that violate the assumption of normality (Lee & Carlin, 2010; Stata, 2013). Given it potential utility, and the availability in Stata (Stata, 2013), the multivariate multiple imputation using MCMC data augmentation was found appealing to the pattern of missingness under the current study. Following Yuan (n.d) and Stata's joint multivariate normal imputation using MCMC data augmentation procedure, enough data were imputed to approximate a monotone pattern where Stata's full maximum likelihood estimation was utilized for data analysis.

Table 2 **Count of Missing Data**

Variables	Missing	observed	Unique values	Min	Max
pcultsoc	113	431	319	-2.342142	1.316152
prebias	144	400	39	1	5
privaterg	31	513	9	1	5
brconnect	125	419	21	1	5
racecentra	110	434	10	1.333333	4
ascpt	115	429	30	1.833333	7
expp	113	431	12	1.5	7
paeduc	104	440	15	8	22
faminc	123	421	16	1	16
aW3_GPA	69	475	47	.2222222	4
aW4_GPA	232	312	71	0	4

Note: pcultsoc= parent racial/cultural heritage socialization; prebias = preparation for bias; privaterg=private regard; brconnect= racial belonging; racecentra=racial centrality; ascpt= academic self-concept of ability; expp= expectation for performance; paeduc= parent/primary caregiver education; faminc=family income; aW3_GPA= 8th grade GPA; aW4_GPA=11th grade GPA.

Data were imputed following Stata's multiple imputation for continuous variables using multivariate normal regression (Stata, 2013). As can be seen in Table 2, the joint multivariate normal imputation using MCMC augmented the sample size for the Black only participants to a total of 1, 361. Guided by what Rubin (1996) describes as scientific estimand, which he defined as "the quantity of scientific interest that can be calculated in the population and does not change it value depending on the data collection design used to measure it (e.g., it does not vary with sample size, survey design, and nonrespondents)" (p.474), means and standard deviation of the imputed data with larger sample size were compared to the original data. An inspection of the descriptive statistics of the imputed data compared to that of the original data shows that both data are approximately the same (see Table 3).

Table 3 : Comparing Original Data with Imputed Data

	Original data			Imputed data		
Variables	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
pcultsoc	431	.01	.65	1,320	.01	.64
prebias	400	3.37	.98	1,233	3.33	.98
privaterg	513	4.37	.86	1,361	4.36	.89
brconnect	419	2.78	.86	1,300	2.81	.83
racecentra	434	3.55	.53	1,330	3.57	.54
ascpt	429	5.35	.99	1,361	5.36	.94
expp	431	5.54	1.19	1,361	5.48	1.19
paeduc	440	13.77	2.29	1,336	13.65	2.18
faminc	421	9.69	4.26	1,141	9.76	4.32
aW3_GPA	475	3.13	.73	1,361	2.97	.66
aW4_GPA	312	2.68	.78	1,361	2.48	.82

Note: pcultsoc= parent racial/cultural heritage socialization; prebias = preparation for bias; privaterg=private regard; brconnect= racial belonging; racecentra=racial centrality; ascpt= academic self-concept of ability; expp= expectation for performance; paeduc= parent/primary caregiver education; faminc=family income; aW3_GPA= 8th grade GPA; aW4_GPA=11th grade GPA.

6.0   FINDINGS

6.1.1   Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations were first examined for racial-ethnic socialization, racial identity, and academic outcome variables (see Table 4). The results indicate that on average, parents reported engaging in race-based socialization at least 1-3 times a month ($M =$ 3.3, SD =.98; $M= -.01$, $SD =.64$) for preparation for bias and racial/cultural heritage respectively. The African American youth sampled for this study had parents or caregivers who had about two years of college education or more ($M = 13.65$, $SD = 2.18$), and mean family income of approximately \$50, 000 ($M = 9.76$, $SD = 4.32$).

In addition, youth reported higher positive private regard ($M= 4.34$, $SD =.89$), higher racial centrality ($M =3.57$, $SD =.54$), and high sense of belonging in the racial group ($M = 2.81$, $SD =.83$). The findings revealed significant correlations among the study's variables of interest. Preparation for bias was marginally related to racial/cultural heritage socialization messages (r = .05, $p =.06$). Racial/cultural heritage socialization was positively and significantly related to youth private regard (r =. 10, $p<.0001$), racial centrality (r =.23, $p<.0001$), academic self-concept of ability (r =.08, $p<.01$), expectation for performance (r =.06, $p<.05$), and negatively related to 11th grade performance in GPA (r = -.07, $p<.01$). While preparation for bias was positively and significantly related to youth's racial belonging (r =.11, $p<.0001$) and expectation for

performance (r = .07, *p*<.01), it was negatively related to private regard (r = -.12, *p*<.0001), and 11th grade GPA (r = -.08, *p*<.01).

Furthermore, private regard was positively and significantly related to youth's racial belonging (r = .21, *p*<.0001), racial centrality (r = .18, *p*<.0001), academic self-concept of ability (r = .17, *p*<.0001), expectation for performance (r = .12, *p*<.0001), and 11th grade GPA (r = .08, *p*<.01). Additionally, youth's racial belonging was found to be significantly and positively related to racial centrality (r = .20, *p*<.0001), and academic self-concept of ability (r = .06, *p*<.05). Racial centrality was significantly and negatively related to 11th grade GPA (r = -.11, *p*<.0001), and marginally related to academic self-concept of ability (r = -05, *p* =.07). Moreover, academic self-concept of ability was positively and significantly related to expectation for performance (r = .81, *p*<.0001) and 11th grade GPA marginally (r = .05, *p*=.07). Expectation for performance was also significantly and positively related to 11th grade GPA (r = .09, *p*<.01) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	12
pcultsoc	1,320	-.01	.64											
prebias	1,233	3.33	.98	.05†										
privaterg	1,361	4.36	.89	.13***	-.12***									
brconnect	1,300	2.81	.83	.04	.11***	.21***								
racecentra	1,330	3.57	.54	.23***	-.04	.18***	.20***							
ascpt	1,361	5.36	.94	.08**	.02	.17***	.06*	-.05†						
expp	1,361	5.48	1.19	.06*	.07**	.12***	.01	-.00	.81***					
paeduc	1,336	13.65	2.18	.23***	-.10**	.16***	.13***	.18***	.02	-.00				
faminc	1,141	9.76	4.32	.10***	-.12***	.17***	.12***	.13***	.03	.02	.51***			
aW3_GPA	1,361	2.97	.66	.09**	-.12***	.02	-.10**	.07*	-.05†	-.02	.05†	-.06*		
aW4_GPA	1,361	2.48	.82	-.07**	-.08**	.08**	-.04	-.11***	.05†	.09**	.03	.04	.22***	

Notes: ***$p>.0001$, **$p<.01$, *$p<.05$, †$p>.10$

pcultsoc= parent racial/cultural heritage socialization; prebias = preparation for bias; privaterg=private regard; brconnect= racial belonging; racecentra=racial centrality; ascpt= academic self-concept of ability; expp= expectation for performance; paeduc= parent/primary caregiver education; faminc=family income; aW3_GPA= 8th grade GPA; aW4_GPA=11th grade GPA.

6.1.2 Results of the Path Modeling

Inspection of the result of the path analysis of the original proposed model indicated a poor fit, χ^2 (12, N = 1,361) =220.38, p <.0000, CFI = .90, TLI = .61, $RMSEA$ (90% CI) = .11 (1.00, .126), R^2 = .18. (see Figure 2). It suggested a significant difference between the observed and model covariances.
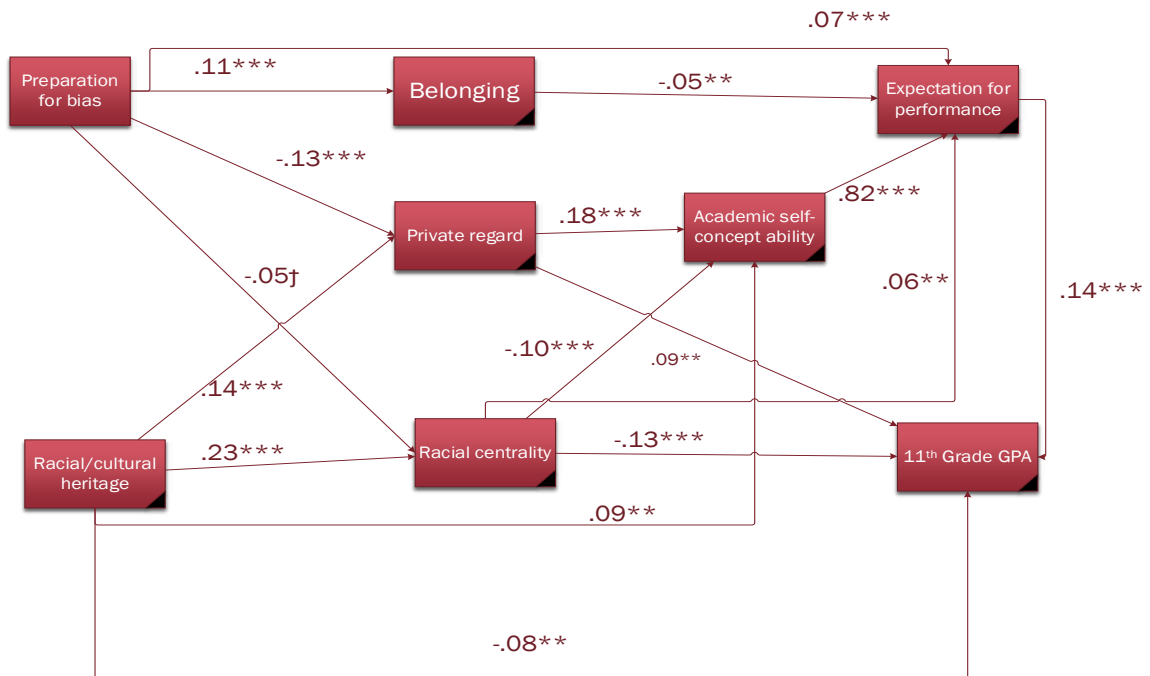
Figure 2: Initial Model Proposed

χ^2 (3) = 220.38, p=.0000

CFI =.90, TLI = .61

$RMSEA$ = .11 (90% CI= .100, .126)

R^2 = .18

Data from the modification indices revealed that the pathways in the original proposed model did not account for enough of the variance in the model. The information from the modification indices, and the theoretical frameworks as well as the multidimensional model of racial identity were relied upon to improve the model fit. More specifically, the identity-focused cultural ecological perspective (Spencer, 1999), and research suggesting that Black youth are agentic and co-construct their racial identity with their social ecology (Nasir, 2011; Varelas etal., 2012), and the multidimensionality of racial identity, which indicates that although the racial identity subdomains are distinct, they influence each other in a complex way (Schachter & Rich, 2011: Sellers et al., 1998; Worrell et al., 2006) guided the model improvement.

Direct paths from racial belonging were added to racial centrality, and direct paths from the racial belonging, and racial centrality were added to private regard. In addition, direct paths from the covariates (parent education, family income, and youth's past performance) were added to the racial identity subdomains. From the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) that informs the social work person-in-environment, these paths accounted for distal factors. Finally, the errors of the racial/cultural heritage socialization and preparation for bias were permitted to covary. These actions considerably improved the fitness of the model, suggesting no significant difference between observed and model covariance matrices, χ^2 (3, $N = 1,361$) =.67, p =.88, *CFI* = 1.00, *TLI* = 1.02, *RMSEA* (90% CI) = 0.00 (0.00, .022), (see Figure 3). The overall model accounted for 23% (R^2 = .23) of the variability in African American youth academic performance.

The results are reported from the revised model (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Revised Model

χ^2 (3) = .67, *p*=.88.

CFI =1.00, TLI = 1.02

RMSEA = 0.00 (90% CI= .000, 022)

R^2 = .23
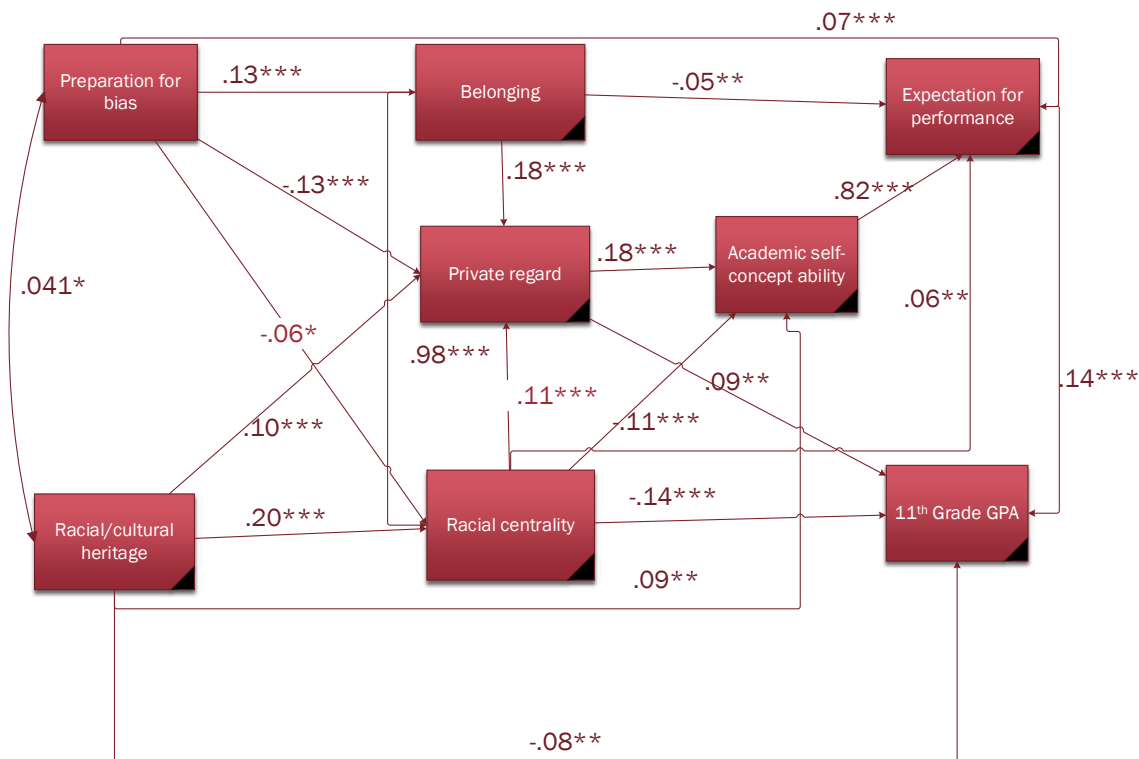
As can be seen in Figure 3, the result indicated support for many of the pathways proposed. As expected, racial/cultural heritage socialization was positively and significantly associated with private regard (β =.10, *p*<.0001) and racial centrality (β = .20, *p*<.0001) after controlling for preparation for bias and other predictors in the model (e.g family income, racial centrality and racial belonging). Preparation for bias positively predicted youth's sense of belonging in the Black racial group (β = .13, *p*<.0001), and negatively predicted private regard (β

= -.13, $p<.0001$), and racial centrality (β = -.06, $p<.05$) independent of racial/cultural heritage, other identity subdomain predictors, and family related factors as well as youth's previous performance. Additionally, racial belonging positively predicted racial centrality (β = .98, $p<.0001$) after controlling for the racial socialization variables, student's previous performance and family related factors. Also, private regard was positively predicted by racial centrality (β = .11, $p<.0001$) and racial belonging (β = .18, $p<.0001$). These findings suggest that youth who viewed their race to be significant to them are also likely to have positive evaluation of themselves.

Furthermore, academic self-concept of ability was significantly, and uniquely predicted by private regard (β = .18, $p<.0001$), racial centrality (β = -.11, $p<.0001$), and racial/cultural heritage socialization (β = .09, $p<.01$) independent of the covariates and other predictors in the model. Similarly, expectation for performance was predicted by academic self-concept of ability (β = .82, $p<.0001$), racial centrality (β = .06, $p<.0001$), sense of racial belonging (β = -.05, $p<.01$), and preparation for bias (β =.07, $p<.0001$). Each of these relationships was independent of the covariates and each other predictors. The results also indicated that after controlling for the covariates and independent of other predictors in the model, participants' GPA at 11th grade was significantly and positively predicted by expectation for performance (β =.14, $p<.01$) and private regard (β = .09, $p<.0001$). Additionally, youth's 11th grade GPA was significantly and negatively associated with racial centrality (β = -.14, $p<.0001$), and racial/cultural heritage socialization (β = -.08, $p<.0001$).

7.0   DISCUSSION

7.1   HYPOTHESIS ONE

Previous work has suggested that although racial-ethnic socialization is a multidimensional construct, two of the subconstructs (racial/cultural heritage socialization and preparation for bias) demonstrate mostly positive links with the various subdomains of African American youth racial identity (Hughes et al., 2006). More specifically, high frequency in parents' racial/cultural heritage socialization in combination with preparation for bias with youth have been found to be positively associated with racial centrality (Neblett et al, 2009; Riva-Drake et al., 2009). It was therefore hypothesized that more racial-ethnic socialization by parents will be associated with higher racial centrality among youth. This hypothesis was partially supported. On one hand, the result suggests that independent of preparation for bias, the reinforcing effects of the various racial identity domains, and child and family characteristics, racial/cultural heritage socialization directly influences the subdomain of racial centrality (see Table 5 and Figure 3). This means that parents' messages and practices transmitted, and exposed youth to the racial and cultural heritage of African Americans increased the degree to which youth perceived their race to be relevant to them. On the other hand, the finding revealed that after controlling for the child and family characteristics, the effects of the racial belonging, and racial/cultural heritage socialization, preparation for bias was negatively and significantly

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associated with racial centrality. Although not hypothesized, similar disordinal findings were observed between racial private regard and the independent influences of racial/cultural heritage socialization and preparation for bias. This pattern suggests that parents' efforts that communicate and expose children to racial history, heritage and cultural practices lead Black youth to have a positive evaluation of themselves, while those related to preparation for bias alone may lead youth to view themselves less worthy.

However, as can be seen in Table 5, preparation for bias appears to indirectly predict racial centrality and private regard through the effects on racial belonging positively. These results are consistent with previous findings and propositions by other researchers (Evans et al., 2012; Hughes et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 1997; Stevenson, 1995). They suggest that although racial/cultural heritage and preparation for bias appear distinct, both must be present for an optimally healthy racial identity. As observed in Figure 3, the errors of racial/cultural heritage socialization and preparation for bias are positively related. It is conceivable to suggest that for an integrated identity that is healthy and coherent, raced-based parenting practices that present racial/cultural heritage messages in tandem with preparation for bias messages may be optimal.

The findings thus add to the body of literature advocating for racial-ethnic socialization as culturally relevant and distinct parenting practices that African American caregivers engage in to raise children who are psychologically, socially, and emotionally healthy to function in several domains of society (Hughes et al., 2006; Fisher & Shaw, 1999; Nicolas et al., 2008; Tang et al., 2015; Wang & Huguley, 2012). The results also reveal previously unexplored mechanism by which preparation for bias works to influence positive racial identity, and underscore the necessity to balance racial/cultural heritage messages with preparation for bias and vice-versa.

The indirect effect of preparation for bias, while highlighting the complexity involved in racial identity, illuminates our understanding of how the various subdomains of racial identity influence each other. They suggest that when African American youth are exposed to successful or accomplished African Americans, understand their history, and the values and practices inherent in their history, and how other Blacks (either historical or contemporary) have lived a life of legacy despite challenges including discrimination, stereotypes, and opposition, youth are more likely to see themselves as worthy. They may also invest time exploring and engaging in similar practices (such as working hard, providing and receiving a sense of belonging to and from the racial group), which in turn can reinforce their perceived importance, and by extension, pride in being a member of the racial group.

7.2   HYPOTHESIS TWO

Prior research suggests that while the subdomains of the racial identity construct seem distinct conceptually, they are interrelated in practice (Sellers et al, 1998; Worrell et al., 2006). This study therefore hypothesized that racial centrality and private regard will be positively associated. As observed in Table 4, the correlational findings support the stated hypothesis. Racial centrality was significantly related to private regard in a positive direction. Thus, African American youth who highly identified their race to be relevant or significant to them were also likely to have positive evaluation about Blacks, and of themselves. In addition, racial belonging was found to be positively and significantly related to private regard.

Moreover, in the path analysis private regard was positively predicted by racial centrality and racial belonging (see Figure 3 and Table 5). These findings are consistent with research that suggest that racial identity is a complex phenomenon that may entail content, process and structures (Schachter & Rich, 2011; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The effects of the racial centrality and racial belonging on private regard reveals the nuances involved in racial identity development among African American youth. They suggest that the various structures or subdomains of the racial identity construct jointly work together to achieve an integrated sense of self racially to influence social functioning. Drawing on ego identity development, it can be argued that racial identity involves active exploration of what membership in the Black racial group looks like, and how it is enacted and acted upon (Worrell et al., 2006). Such exploration of membership in the racial group potentially leads to commitment to and affirmation of one's racial group (Hughes et al., 2016). Additionally, the findings suggest that the youth investigated are agentic who may be actively engaged in co-constructing and enacting the constructed self at any given time to respond to and negotiate their social cultural processes in the settings that they operate in (Nasir, 2011; Spencer, 1999).

7.3   HYPTHESIS THREE

Drawing on the interrelatedness of the racial identity subdomains, and previous findings that suggest that strong identification with the racial group, and awareness of racism contribute to academic success among African American youth (Altschul, Oyserman & Bybee 2006;

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Wright, 2011), the study further hypothesized that youth with strong sense of racial belonging in the Black racial group will demonstrate positive link with academic performance. The findings however did not support for a direct positive link between racial belonging and academic performance, independent of the other racial identity dimensions, youth and family characteristics, and the RES subconstructs (Table 5, Figure 3). Nevertheless, the results revealed an unexpected pathway racial belonging possibly influence academic performance: racial belonging was found to uniquely predict racial private regard positively after controlling for racial centrality, RES subconstructs, and other predictors including youth and family background. Private regard in turn positively and significantly predicted academic performance (see Figure 3 and Table 5).

Although this interrelatedness of the racial identity subdomains has been noted conceptually (Sellers et al., 1998; Schachter & Rich, 2011), the vast majority of research on Black racial identity and its link with African American youth developmental outcomes including academic performance has operationalized the subdomains as distinct with differential effects on youth's outcomes. These results about the links between racial belonging, private regard, and academic performance highlight the reinforcing effects of the racial identity domains, suggesting that integrated rather than the distinct effect of the racial identity structures holds promising influence on the academic performance of African American youth. In addition, the findings suggest that the effect of racial belonging on academic performance is enhanced by private regard. While these findings are consistent with previous research (Altschul, Oyserman & Bybee 2006; Carter, 2008; Sanders, 1997; Wright, 2011), they highlight an unexplored pathway by which racial belonging potentially contribute to an integrated and healthy sense of self that

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has implications for academic performance among African American youth studied. Thus, youth's sense of racial belonging that is built around the positive view of Blacks, and by extension themselves, has the potential to positively influence their academic performance. Conceivably, it can also be suggested that that youth racial belonging that is built around negative view of Blacks, and themselves can have a diminishing influence on their academic performance. This contention supports the argument by Galletta and Cross (2007) to interrogate the oppositional culture thesis that posits that Black youth disengage from academics when they experience racism (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988; Ogbu, 2004).

7.4   INTERRELATIONAL HYPOTHESES

7.4.1   Hypothesis 4 A

A key concern of the present study was to understand the nature of the relationships that exist among RES, racial identity, and academic related outcomes among African American youth. Theoretically, racial identity has been posited to be a central motivation factor for parents' engagement in race based practices with children in African American families, suggesting a link between racial socialization and racial identity (Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995). However, in many of the research and psychosocial intervention programs on African American youth development, RES and racial identity are conceptualized as distinct factors (Jones & Neblett, 2016). Investigating the extent to which such distinctions hold may help move the field forward in relation to the content of racial identity in the light of emerging proposition about the link

between the domains of RES and racial identity, and their subsequent effects on Black youth's development (Hughes et al., 2016). The current study hypothesized that RES predicts youth's racial identity development, which in turn predicts youth's academic self-concept of ability. Academic self-concept of ability in turn was expected to predict students' expectation for performance, and actual performance. As shown in both Figure 3 and Table 5, the results show that the RES subconstructs distinctively, but relatedly predict racial identity subdomains, which in turn shape one another in a complex way to influence African American youth academic performance outcome directly and indirectly through important academic outcomes such as academic self-concept of ability, and expectations for performance. The above hypothesis was thus supported.

These findings support the proposition by some scholars that racial socialization, racial identity and their various components are highly interconnected, inseparable and mutually reinforcing (Hughes et al., 2016). They underscore the need to view and understand racial identity development to entails raced-based content, structures, and processes (Schachter & Rich, 2011). Viewing racial identity development as involving content, structures and process, thus calls on researchers to investigate the ways by which racial identity contents are generated and transmitted across settings and space. Furthermore, this conceptualization of racial identity calls for the need to also seek to understand the processes by which racial identity structures are configured, reconfigured, and maintained to influence African American youth psychosocial adjustments and functioning across different domains of life including education. As the results suggest, African American youth are not passive recipients of the content of their racial identity. Rather, Black youth seem to be actively involved in co-constructing and enacting the constructed

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self at any given time to adapt to the contextual demands that surround them (Nasir, 2011; Spencer, 1999).

While prior work using interactions and cluster analysis have underscored the need to view RES and racial identity as multidimensional constructs (Chavous et al., 2003; Neblett et al., 2009; Wang & Huguley, 2012), to date research has not reported on mechanisms by which RES are transmitted to influence racial identity dimensions, which in turn reinforces each other for optimal functioning in African American youth. This may possible be related to methodological issues. Most research investigating the influence RES and racial identity on youth use regression analysis, which may be limited in understanding and highlighting the nuances in Black youth's racial identity, its content, the structure, and the process by which they are transmitted, and maintained. Multilevel and mixed method designs may be needed to further explore and understand these links.

7.4.2   Hypothesis 4 B

Research has found that racial/cultural heritage socialization and preparation for bias either independently or jointly, are associated with key developmental outcomes that support academic performance among African American youth. Two of such outcomes that have been linked to youth educational success are academic self-concept of ability and expectation for performance (Angelique & Trask-tate, 2014; Caughy, et al., 2002; Howard, Rose, & Barbarin, 2013; McGill et al., 2012; Murry et al., 2009; Rodriguez et al, 2009; Smalls, 2009). Additionally, racial/cultural heritage and preparation for bias socialization have been found to be predictive of youth's actual performance (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown et al., 2009; Friend, Hunter, &

Fletcher, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003; Wang & Huguley, 2012). Thus, another hypothesis of this study was that RES subconstructs would independently predict youth's self-concept of ability, expectation for performance, and actual performance independent of the racial identity mediations, and youth and family characteristics.

As can be observed in Figure 3 and Table 5, the findings suggest some support for the hypothesized predictions. However, the directions differed. More specifically, racial/cultural heritage socialization messages and activities that parent transmitted to, and engaged youth in at 8th grade significantly and positively predicted youth's 11th grade's academic self-concept of ability independent of youth sociodemographic background, preparation for bias, and the mediating effect of the racial identity ($\beta = .09$, $p<.01$) (see Table 5). This finding suggests that independent of background factors and identity mediation, one-unit increase in the frequency with which parents transmitted racial pride messages is associated with nearly one-tenth of a unit change in Black youth's academic self-concept of ability positively.

Preparation for bias however, was not a significant direct and independent predictor of academic self-concept of ability. Nevertheless, given the positive correlations between racial/cultural heritage socialization, it is possible that the two subconstructs work together. For example, in the discussion of the accomplished Blacks, and the history surrounding African Americans in the United States, one is likely to notice instances of both discrimination and the strategies by which many Blacks have achieved success in education despite stereotypes and discrimination. Such realization is likely to foster a sense of self-as academically perceptive and able (Murray et al., 2009).

Regarding expectations for performance, the findings reveal that preparation for bias was positively predictive of expectation for performance (β = .07, $p<.0001$) after controlling for racial/cultural heritage socialization and other variables. A unit increase in the rate at which parents raised youth's awareness to the potential discrimination that they may face, with the strategies to effectively respond (e.g. working harder than everyone else, having faith in God, treating everyone with respect, and avoiding self-blame) was associated with .07 increases in youth's expectation for performance. This finding is consistent with previous work that suggests that engaging youth in critical conversation and how they can make changes through education lead youth to see themselves as a change agent and subsequently developing expectation for performance in education (Carter, 2008; Diemer, 2012; Diemer & Li, 2011; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2012; Warrs & Flanagan, 2007; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). As indicated in Table 5, while racial/cultural heritage was not directly linked to expectations for performance, it was observed to influence expectation for performance indirectly possibly through private regard and academic self-concept of ability. This finding highlights the complex process by which youth expectation for performance is developed. It suggests that for social work research and practitioners interested in the positive developmental outcomes of the African American youth, practices that help youth to develop positive evaluation of Blacks and themselves as part of the Black racial group, and provide them with specific strategies by which to live out the positive view of self (e.g. academically gifted and able) in unjust context, have the potential to lead to key psychosocial factors that are essential for optimal functioning in education.

With respect to student's performance, while racial/cultural heritage socialization was significantly associated with student GPA, that association was negative independent of identity mediators and covariates. Further, no direct relationship was observed between preparation for bias and GPA under these mediation conditions. The findings thus suggest that independent of identity and psychosocial mediation effects, these racial socialization practices do not support high performance among Black youth.

The observed findings in some ways contradict the findings of previous research (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown et al., 2009; Friend, Hunter, & Fletcher, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003; Wang & Huguley, 2012). However, these studies did not investigate the mediation effects of racial identity and the psychosocial factors such as academic self-concept of ability and expectations for performance, in the link between racial-ethnic socialization and GPA. Findings here suggest that racial identity, academic self-concept of ability, and expectation for performance may by key mechanisms by which RES subconstructs enhance or support Black youth's performance. Meanwhile, it is possible that after controlling for these mediating effects, the remaining aspects of racial-ethnic socialization subconstructs that are unrelated to positive racial identity and psychosocial effects may be less conducive to achievement.

Overall, the findings show that independent of family and youth's characteristics, and the mediation effects of racial identity domains, the RES subconstructs investigated distinctively and uniquely influence African American youth's academic related outcomes. Given that the errors of racial/cultural heritage socialization and preparation for bias are positively related, the differential effects of these RES subconstructs on youth outcomes underscore the need for youth

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to be exposed to practices that teach them about their racial heritage to help them develop academic sense of self positively, and preparation for bias to provide them with the strategies to achieve their academic sense of selves, particularly, in a stereotyped school context. These findings strengthen our confidence in the race-based practices transmitted to youth. The results also underscore the need to incorporate these practices in understanding and conceptualizing normative development of the African American child. Furthermore, they suggest that interventions designed either within school or out of school that aim at building Black youth's resiliency and motivating them to achieve will serve these youth well when they incorporate racial socialization approaches (García Coll et al., 1996; Teasley & Lee, 2006).

7.4.3 Hypotheses 4 C and 4 D

Similar to the links between RES and African American youth's academic related outcomes, research indicates that the various subdomains of racial identity related to African American youth either jointly or independently are linked to important academic related outcomes that are known to enhance academic performance such as academic self-concept of ability and expectation for performance (Awad, 2007; Craft, 2006; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982; Patterson, 2015; Steel, 1997; Teasley & Lee, 2006), and actual performance (Sellers, Chavous & Cook ,1998; Smith et al., 2009). It was hypothesized that racial identity subdomains either jointly or independently will be associated with African American youth's academic self-concept of ability, expectation for performance, and actual performance.

The results found some supports for the above hypotheses. An inspection of the conceptual model (Figure 3) reveals that independent of the direct effects of other variables, private regard was positively and significantly linked to youth academic self-concept of ability. However, while racial centrality independently and uniquely predicted academic self-concept of ability, that prediction was negative. Also, racial belonging was not uniquely predictive of academic self-concept of ability independent of the other racial identity components, and sociodemographic factors. Nevertheless, the results also suggest that racial belonging and racial centrality positively predict private regard (see Table 5 and Figure 3). It is thus possible that the effects of racial belonging and racial centralities on academic self-concept of ability are facilitated by private regard. These results are consistent with prior work. They suggest that in absence of the mediation effects of private regard on academic self-concept of ability, racial centrality and racial belonging may not be positive and stable predictor of academic self-concept of ability.

Although previous work has established the link between private regard and important youth' outcomes that support performance (Davis et al., 2017; Carter; 2008, 2012; Chavous et al., 2003; DeCuir-Gunby, 2007: Rowley et al., 1998), research to date has not uncovered the indirect effect of racial centrality and racial belonging on youth development. This study thus highlights important pathways that support the contention about the interrelatedness of the various racial identity domains. While the findings underscore the importance of private regard as a key mechanism driving academic self-concept of ability, they also unpack the role of racial centrality and the sense of belonging in the racial group in strengthening positive private regard. Furthermore, they suggest that in the absence of positive view of the Black racial group, African American youth may develop and present a sense of selves that may initiate maladaptive

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responses to the unique ecological circumstances—racism, negative stereotypes and discriminations that may characterize their development (García Coll et al., 1996; Spencer, 1999; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2004).

From the expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), while academic self-concept of ability may be related to expectation for performance, this study considers expectation for performance to be distinct. A person may hold positive academic sense of self, but to translate that sense of self into reality, one must be able to understand and view himself or herself as capable of performing the specific strategies and behaviors (e.g. studying hard, normalizing failure, paying attention in class, regularly attending school) required of the perceived positive sense of self (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). This performance expectancy has been argued to be a key determinant of performance outcome such as GPA (Lent et al., 1984; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Although private regard did not have a direct link with expectation for performance, it indirectly predicted expectation for performance in a positive and significant manner through academic self-concept of ability. This finding indicates academic self-concept of ability fully mediates the effect of private regard on expectation for performance (See Table 5). Racial centrality was directly and positively linked to expectations for performance. However, its indirect effect was negative. The sense of racial belonging was negatively associated with expectation for performance independent of private regard and other variables.

These findings strengthen earlier argument that private regard seem to demonstrate consistent and stable effect on African American youth positive development. However, given that racial centrality and racial belonging positively predict private regard, it can be argued that an integrated racial identity is worth promoting to maximize optimal development of African American youth. Previous research found that racial centrality and private regard work together

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to influence youth's perception on relevance to school, school efficacy, and enrollment in post-secondary school two years after high school (Chavous et al., 2003). The current findings shed light on the potential mechanism by which racial centrality and private regard jointly work to influence African American youth's academic related outcomes.

Furthermore, the links between the racial identity subdomains and academic self-concept of ability and expectation for performance reveal that for youth who have a positive sense of themselves, and their future selves, and are also aware of potential fears (barriers to achieving the expected self), a detailed strategies for achieving the possible self is critical (Altschul et al., 2006; Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006). Thus, the content of racial identity that may be essential for academic performance and achievement in African American youth must include specific performance oriented strategies.

The subdomains of the racial identity reinforce each other to develop a stable pattern of an integrated identity to influence youth functioning (Schachter & Rich, 2011; Sellers et al., 1998; Spencer, 1999). While previous research has explored this relationship using moderation and cluster analysis (Chavous et al., 2003; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998), scholars have not employed paths modeling to investigate this relationship about how the racial identity subdomains influence one another. This study therefore highlights unexplored mechanisms that shed lights on the important ways by which racial identity subdomains function. As shown in Figure 3 (see also the Table 5) youth's racial belonging predict both private regard and racial centrality. Racial centrality also predicts private regard. Conceivably, it can be suggested that after the initial racial socialization messages, opportunity created to allow youth to experience the potential benefit of the racial socialization messages helps youth to solidify and internalize those raced-based practices in ways that become

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incorporated in their self-definition and presentation. As noted (Asante, 2003; Cross, 1991; Worrell et al., 2006), positive Black identity involves the exploration of the self in order to expunge the negative images attributed to Blacks and replacing it with positive ones.

Evidence suggests that strong identification with African Americans and positive feelings about this connection relate to higher motivation for academic success in middle and late adolescents African Americans (Byrd & Chavous, 2012; Spencer et al., 2001; Wright, 2009). Conversely, a strong identification with the group and higher awareness of the stigmatized status in the absence of a strong and positive private regard for one's group may present risks for one's academic self-concept, which in turn affect academic performance (Byrd & Chavous, 2012; Patterson, 2015; Steel, 1997). To protect the self-esteem, the racial identity-risk perspective contends that individuals must disengage from a domain such as school, where the stigmatized status of the group is salient (Patterson, 2015; Steel, 1997). With disengagement from the academic domain, youth are less likely to value the norms and behaviors that are required and consistent with participation in the domain (academics), which can diminish achievement for the group (Byrd & Chavous, 2012; Obgu, 2004). Thus, racial group identity is critically important in understanding and supporting African American youth's optimal social functioning. Practices that lead to, and sustain positive racial identity can create an enabling context for healthy social and psychological well-being of youth.

Regarding youth performance, both racial centrality and private regard were uniquely associated with African American youth in this study's 11th grade's GPA. However, the directions and the pathways differed. While private regard was significantly and positively associated with youth's 11th grade performance, racial centrality was significantly, but negatively associated with GPA after controlling for other identity subdomains, the effects of academic self-

concept, and expectations for performance, family SES, and racial-ethnic socialization subconstructs. Thus, consistent with previous work (Downey, Eccles & Chatman, 2006: Fuligni, 2007; Sellers, Chavous & Cook ,1998), these findings further suggest that a single dimension of the racial identity construct is not stable and does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the way by which racial identity influence youth's performance in academic domain. As observed, private regard seems to demonstrate consistent positive links with academic self-concept and expectation for performance, and performance (see Table 5).

However, private regard is predicted by racial centrality and racial belonging. It thus suggests that an integrated sense of self racially that is centered on the positive view of Blacks and youth themselves provide a resolved sense of racial identity that can provide a stable pattern of adjustment and functioning in education for African American youth. Thus, hypothesis 4d, which states that Black youth's racial identity subdomains jointly affect their academic self-concept, which in turn predict expectation for performance to influence GPA independent of RES predictors and background characteristics, appears supported. Earlier findings have also reported similar findings supporting the evidence that African American youth who do succeed academically have a racial identity that is a combination of the various subdomains (Altschul, Oyserman & Bybee, 2006; Carter, 2012, 2008, 2007; Codjoe, 2006; Tatum, 2004; Wright, 2011). For example, according to Wright (2011, p. 612), positive racial identity that supports academic achievement in African American youth entails "pride in in-group identification, confidence in one's academic abilities, competence in awareness of racism, and comfort with respect to self-presentation of racial-ethnic identity." Thus, besides having pride in the racial group and in one self as a member of the racial group, one needs strategies in understanding the potential

challenges that may have racial undercurrent, and skills for dealing with those challenges (distractors that can undermine one's ability to live out the perceived sense of self).

The findings thus add to a large body of literature that suggests that opportunity to engage youth's in a critical conversation about the injustices of racism and subsequent discrimination and stereotypes, and the strategies for educational success that are rooted in the history of African Americans struggle for education and liberation (Deplit, 2003; Martin, 2006, 2009; Perry et al., 2003) has potential to influence Black youth's psychosocial adjustment and academic outcomes.

7.5   SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

In summing up, as members of a racial group devalued as academically and culturally inferior (Diamond, 2006; Galletta & Cross Jr, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lipman, 1998; McGee, 2015), African American youth are more likely to experience challenges related to feelings of belonging and inclusion among peers, educators, and other adults in the school. For Black youth with comparable social backgrounds and racialized experiences, those racially socialized about the racial/cultural heritage, and potential discrimination with the strategies to cope may deal with discrimination through strong identification with the group in settings where race may be salient (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). With specific reference to education, this strong identification in turn can position group members to view membership in the racial group to be significant or relevant to their sense of self. Further, by viewing membership in the racial group to be a significant component of the self, an individual may be psychologically positioned and

willing to explore further their racial heritage. The further exploration can in turn expand the discovery of the rich cultural, intellectual, political, social and economic legacy of African Americans that celebrate and advocate for educational excellence and achievement (Adelabu, 2007; Deplit, 2003; Perry et al., 2003). Together, these processes can help an individual to insert himself/herself in the legacies of accomplishments where the "I" become integrated into the sense of "we." This sense of self where the "we" achieved through an exploration and a synthesis of the various identity contents (RES subconstructs), and structures have the potential to provide a stable, consistent, and persistent sense of self in negotiating and responding to racialized school contexts (Martin, 2006). When the above mechanisms are accomplished, youth may be in a position to conceptualize alternative views of the utility value of education that transcends getting a job to a broader view that include freedom, community transformation, realization of humanity, appreciation token to the generation before, and as a continuation of the legacy for the generations to come (Delpit, 2003; Ferguson, 2014; Perry et al., 2003).

It is important to note however that because exploration and subsequent integration is a process, racial identity development in Black youth may vary across contexts. From this contention, racial identity development as a stage theory from developmental perspective (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Tatum, 2004) sounds logical. However, given that large variation exists in racial identity development, including individual and environmental cues that may initiate exploration, conceptualizing racial identity from the multidimensional perspective seems more appealing to account for the nuances involved in African American youth racial identity that foster psychosocial adjustment and academic outcome (Sellers et al., 1998). For example, in the nigrescence theory of Black racial identity, youth who are at the internalization or

multiculturalist stage, which reflect an integrated sense of self, are more likely to demonstrate healthy psychosocial adjustment (Cross, 1991; De Walt, 2013; Helms, 1990; Worrell et al., 2006). The current findings that youth private regard is predicted by the racial centrality and racial belonging suggest that a Black youth with positive private regard can be similarly viewed as someone at the internalization or multiculturalist stage. However, viewing Black racial identity as a multidimensional qualifies racial identity development as a process rather than as a stage developmental theory because racial identity development may not occur in a linear fashion (Sellers et al., 1998).

Although the need to promote integrated identity to comprehensively understand the various dimensions of African American youth racial identity and how they work to support or undermine positive developmental outcomes has been highlighted in the conceptual literature (see Sellers et al., 1998, 1997), there is dearth of empirical work that highlight the processes by which the content of racial identity is transmitted to shape the various racial identity domains. Additionally, the extant literature has not explored the processes by which the various identity domains are configured, reconfigured and maintained, and youth own engagement in such processes to understand developmental outcomes among African Americans (see Wright 2011, Carter, 2008; Nasir et al., 2009; Altschul et al., 2006 for some exceptions). Given that regression analyses dominate the extant research, it can be speculated that the dearth of empirical work in identifying the processes by which the content of RES may be transmitted to shape racial identity, and how integrated racial identity may be achieved to influence developmental outcomes may be methodological issues. Research designs that incorporate multilevel analyses and mixed methods approaches may help to comprehensively understand the complexities

involved in the links between the domains of RES and racial identity , and their subsequent

influence on youth's developmental outcomes.

Table 5*: Decomposition of Effects

Path		Variable	Direct	z	Indirect	z	Total	z
					Effects			
Private regard	←	Racial/cultural heritage	.10***	3.66	.02**	2.94	.12***	4.54
	←	Preparation for bias	-.13***	-4.91	.02**	2.68	-.11	-4.11
	←	Belonging	.18***	6.91	.11**	2.81	.29***	6.68
	←	Racial centrality	.11***	3.89	.02*	2.35	.11***	3.89
	←	Family income	.12***	4.27			.14***	4.8
	←	Parent education			.03***	3.59	.03***	3.59
Belonging								
	←	Preparation for bias	.12***	4.13			.12***	4.13
	←	Family income	.06*	2.32			.06*	2.32
	←	8th grade GPA	-.09**	-.3.13			-.09**	-.3.13
	←	Parent education	.10***	3.61			.10***	3.61

Notes: ***p>.0001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p>.10

Path		Variable	Direct	z	Indirect	z	Total	z
Racial centrality	←	Racial socialization	.20***	4.77	.02	.68	.19***	7.10
	←	Preparation for bias	-.13***	-3.20	.12**	3.02	-02	-.77
	←	Belonging	.98***	4.04			.99***	4.04
	←	Family income	.13**	3.28	.06*	2.38	.06*	2.38
	←	8th grade GPA			-09*	-2.45	.05†	1.82
	←	Parent education			.10***	3.57	.10***	3.57
Academic self-concept								
	←	Private regard	.18***	6.31			.18***	6.31
	←	Racial centrality	-.11***	-3.72	.02**	3.31	-.09**	-3.04
	←	Racial/cultural heritage	.09**	3.15			.09**	3.23
	←	Family income			.02**	3.13	.02	.61
	←	8th grade GPA	-.05†	-1.68	-.01	-2.58	-.06	-2.08

Notes: ***$p>.0001$, **$p<.01$, *$p<.05$, †$p>.10$

Path		Variable	Direct	z	Indirect	z	Total	z
Expectation for performance	←	Academic self-concept	.82***	50.51			.82***	50.51
	←	Private regard			.14***	6.26	.13***	4.73
	←	Racial centrality	.06***	3.40	-.07**	-3.07	-.01	-.50
	←	Belonging	-.05**	-3.09			-.01	-.21
	←	Racial/Cultural heritage			.08***	3.59	.07*	2.35
	←	Preparation for bias	.07***	3.97			.07*	2.34
	←	8th grade GPA			-.04†	-1.74	-.02	-.69
11th grade GPA	←	Expectation for performance	.14**	2.24			.14**	2.24
	←	Academic self-concept					.05†	1.85
	←	Private regard	.09***	3.28			.10***	3.57
	←	Racial centrality	-.14***	-4.86			-.12***	-3.39
	←	Belonging			-.11**	-2.63	-.12**	-2.63
	←	Racial/Cultural heritage	-.08***	-2.97			-.10**	-3.44
	←	Family income			.01*	2.20	.05	1.5
	←	8th grad GPA	.23***	8.67	.12**	3.23	.22***	8.43
	←	Parent education			-.02**	-2.83	.01	.32

Notes: ***p>.0001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p>.10

7.6   LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that there are some important limitations to this study that when addressed in future efforts will significantly move the field forward in understanding and conceptualizing a comprehensive development of the African American youth. First, this study relied on parents' report of racial socialization messages. Although youth racial identities were found to be linked to racial socialization messages, it is not clear whether other racial-ethnic socialization forces beside parents also contributed. Emerging findings have highlighted the role of different racial-ethnic socialization agents such as peers, teachers, other family members, neighborhood, and school (Harper, 2013; Hughes et al., 2016; Hughes, McGill & Tubbs, 2011). Including youth's own report of the degree to which they received racial socialization from parents will reflect an accurate accounts of parents' report. It will also shed lights on other potentially unexplored sources of youth's positive racial identity that can be leveraged upon to support optimal functioning of African American youth.

Second, the study used older data from the Maryland and adolescents' development in context study (data were collected between 1990-1998). Therefore, this study may not have captured some of the emerging nuances in African American families raced-based socialization that may be more consistent with contemporary forms of racism and means to respond effectively. A more recent data that reflect how African American youth experience racial-ethnic socialization to influence youth's sense of selves in navigating the current racial climate, males in particular, are needed.

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Additionally, caution is needed in interpreting and generalizing the findings of this study. The data were collected in a singly county in the United States, and from more affluent than usual African American population. Furthermore, the study did not account for the diversity in Black families related to intra-racial and gender differences in socialization. Consequently, the results may not account for the diversity of experiences within the Black community in the United States.

8.0   IMPLICATIONS

Despite the above limitations, the current study has significant implications for social work research, practice and policy, and educators as well as parents. Below, these implications are discussed.

8.1   IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

Although social work's primary concern is about the well-being of individuals, families, communities and the general society, the field has a particular focus toward groups, that are highly at risk, oppressed, and experiencing social injustices (NASW, 2008; IFS, 2014). Given the racialized schooling and general experiences of African American youth (Adams-Bass et al., 2014; Carter et al., 2015; McAddo, 2002), and the subsequent negative outcomes (Copeland-Linder et al., 2011; Ewert, Sykes, & Pettit, 2014; Flores, 2010; Friend et al., 2011; Gaddis & Lauen, 2014; Koh, Graham, & Glied, 2011), social work research and intervention that advance social justice with, and for African American youth and their families are urgently needed. For social workers to increase their efforts in advancing social, educational, cultural and economic justice that significantly benefit African American youth and communities, their interventions must be grounded in what African American families and youth perceive to be of beneficial to

them so as to ensure inclusivity at all levels of society (NASW, 2015). As the current study highlights, racial-ethnic socialization practices and opportunities that inform positive racial identity development hold promise for achieving healthy psychosocial adjustments that are essential for optimal social functioning of African American youth and performance in education and other domains of life (Hughes, et al. 2006).

Social work can potentially contribute substantively to address disparities in education that are disproportionality associated with African American youth if the profession leverages on the protective and compensatory factors inherent in racial-ethnic socialization and positive racial identity in African American youth. School social workers in particular, strive toward emotional, physical, and psychological availability of all students in the classroom, and promote respect and dignity to ensure access to learning opportunities equitably (NASW, 2012). The findings of the current study, which are consistent with the limited extant social work research on racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity (Miller, 1999 :Miller & MacIntosh, 1999;Teasley & Lee, 2006) suggest that school social workers may potentially help to create contexts that foster academic performance through a healthy psychosocial adjustments of African American youth in education if they utilize and advocate for racial-ethnic socialization approaches in their engagement with educators, families and youth themselves.

Additionally, consistent with previous work, social workers working with African American youth can draw on racial-ethnic socialization and subsequent positive racial identity to engage youth and their families in a therapeutic relationship for improved well-being (Boyd-Franklin,2003; Mcloyd et al, 2005). Applying the social work core values of the importance of human relationship, the dignity and respect for the worth of individuals as well as the principle of

self-determination, and cultural competence requirements (NASW, 2008, 2015), social workers can be better positioned to support the development of positive racial identity among Black youth. According to the standards for cultural competence practice, standard three in particular, social workers are expected to have an understanding of how various racial groups are expressed including their values, traditions and history. Furthermore, standard five requires social workers to develop knowledge and skills in the resources, institutions and services that are available to serve multi-cultural group (NASW, 2015). The findings reported under the current study suggest that racial-ethnic socialization and positive identity development in African Americans are psychological resources that have some positive gains for African American youth's psychological well-being and academic performance. Per the standards for cultural competence for competent social work practice with minority populations (NASW, 2015), social workers will increase competency in their engagement with African American youth and families when they develop the knowledge and skills related to the positive racial identity development, its content, and process in African American families. By increasing their knowledge and skills in RES and positive racial identity, social workers can effectively advance social justice with, and for the African American racial group.

8.2   IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATORS

For educators, the present findings add to the burgeoning studies on racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity suggesting that African American youth will benefit greatly if the school curriculum and teachers acknowledge their culture, and the sociocultural processes that

influence youth development (Hughes et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2006; Jones & Neblett, 2016; Wright, 2009), and academic oriented identity (Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2009; Schachter & Rich, 2011; Varelas, Martin, & Kane, 2013) among African Americans. The contention by some scholars suggests that the United States and its institutions including education are racially structured in such a way that knowledge acquisition and talent nurturing process privilege certain racial groups, White in particular, and those who easily subscribe to Eurocentric world view (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Boykin, 1985; Landson-Billing, 1998; Lipman, 1998; Hale, 1982). Extrapolating from this perspective, other researchers argue that education has become the site for the reproduction, and the perpetuation of cultural resources that are deemed valuable and those that are considered dangerous (Carter, 2005; Erickson, 2016; Lipman, 1998). Because African American youth as a racial group can be found within the latter, the assets in the cultural resources that this racial group brings to the school are more likely to be ignored under the assumption that they are maladaptive (Landson-Billings, 1998; Lipman, 1998). As such the findings of the current study, which is consistent with previous work suggesting that to ignore the role of cultural heritage and race in education for African Americans can undermine youth's goals and aspirations for education (Carter, 2005; Sefa Dei, 1996).

The links between preparation for bias, racial belonging, private regard, expectations for performance, and GPA underscore the importance of the need to emphasize on efforts for achieving learning goals as an in-group value among African Americans. Consistent with previous work (Lawrence, Crocker & Dweck, 2005), the current study suggests that if educators stress on the importance of effort over fixed ability as an attribute by which African Americans have made strides in education given the history of stereotypes and discrimination, Black youth

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are more likely to have high standard and perform to achieve such standard educationally. Additionally, such view by educators can ignite critical hope in educators (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) which in turn can influence high expectations on the part of educators toward African American youth. Higher expectation for students in turn, position teachers to provide high quality instruction for youth for high performance (McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

As argued (Carter, 2005), beyond teaching, educators are powerful agents of socialization and symbols of authority, suggesting that by their teaching styles, classroom culture that they create, and cultural meanings they inculcate in students can powerfully offer and reinforce particular identity structures and process that can support or undermine African American youth psychosocial adjustment and performance. The link between youth's racial belonging, racial centrality and private regard is consistent with previous research (Altschul et al., 2006; Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995), indicating that embedding educational success as an in-group attributes, rather than an individualistic value holds potential for higher performance among African American youth. Educators may therefore be better positioned to help Black youth to psychologically adapt well in school for higher performance and achievement if they draw on the history of the quest for educational achievement, and how African Americans value and work to achieve educational success (Anderson, 1988; King, Akua & Russell, 2013; Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Perry et al., 2003; Walker, 2000).

8.3   IMPLICATION FOR PARENTS

The current findings add to the large body of literature about the importance of racial-ethnic socialization to the development of positive racial identity that supports psychosocial adjustment and performance in African American youth (Hughes et al., 2006). Parent's continued efforts in understanding the racial dynamics of the United States is critical to influence their socialization practices with youth. Additionally, as the findings show, it is possible that after the initial racialized parenting provided to youth, African American youth develop active engagement in further exploration that leads to commitment and affirmation of positive racial identity. This means that opportunities created and supported by parents to enable youth internalized the race-based socialization practices are needed. For example, parent can encourage or sign youth up on programs where youth will engage in racial/cultural practices with like-minded peers and adults that view education as an in-group value. Moreover, as the findings show, parent's messages that highlights the positive views of Blacks without connecting it to specific strategies that youth may apply for healthy psychosocial adjustment that support performance, racial-ethnic socialization may not translate into positive racial identity that support achievement. Therefore, parents are called upon to balance the racial/cultural history socialization with preparation for bias

Similarly, the findings suggest that parents who share potential experience of racial discrimination and provide youth with strategies for coping may be more effective in helping youth to adapt well to perform academically. Consistent with research (Lawrence, Crocker & Dweck, 2005), the current study implies that Black youth whose racial identity is influenced by preparation for bias and racial/cultural heritage messages may be less likely to attribute negative feedback on their performance to their ability compared to those who do not receive such

messages. Additionally, such youth may be well positioned to be high achievers in even a stereotype infused context. Thus, while it is important for parents to warn youth of potential discrimination, or share with youth their own experiences of discrimination, providing youth with effective strategies to overcome racialized experiences is critically important to the educational adjustment and performance of African American youth. Because in the event that the environment places a new contextual demand on youth racial identity, the identity content (racial socialization messages) are what youth are likely to draw on to achieve homeostasis between the self in continuity, and the self- redefinition (Chatman, Eccles & Malanchuk, 2005).

8.4   IMPLICATION FOR POLICY

The findings show that racial identity matter for how African American youth, and possibly, other racial minorities negotiate schooling experiences in a diverse and race-conscious society like the United States. For educational policies and practices to be responsive to the needs of diverse students, the role of racial identity on how youth experience stress, devise coping mechanism, experience a sense of belonging, and perform in schools transcends just membership in a racial group for meeting demographic requirements. For school policies to be responsive, they must consider the various ways youth define and enact their membership in particular racial group, and the characteristics of the settings that support or undermine positive self-presentation racially. Research suggests that educational policies and reforms have consistently been unresponsive to African American youth and their families (Erickson, 2016; Hanushek, 2016; Hartney & Flavin, 2013). The current study shed light on ways by which educational policy can

help schools to attend to building and nurturing coping skills that promote and sustain positive identity development for improving the psychosocial adjustment that enhance African American youth performance by legitimizing school-based racial-ethnic socialization.

The findings of the study suggest that multicultural education is critically important. Many school's conception and implementation of multicultural curriculum are restricted to Black history month, certain ethnic food and holidays (Irvin & Hudley, 2005). Research suggests that multicultural education was originally conceptualize as a response to educational injustices that minority students, African Americans in particular, experience in schools. However, multicultural education has become an umbrella concept for different educational practices that may highlight cultural diversity, but may show no concern for structural and or institutional racism (Aldana &Bryd, 2015). The current study further suggests that educational policy that supports culturally relevant education that incorporates racial knowledge and history in ways that permit critical conversations are important for reimagining the self, and identifying strategies for success among groups with history of oppression and marginalization (Mahalingam, 2007) such as African Americans. Given that policy directs practice (Lipman, 1998), until educational policies recognize and legitimize the inclusion of race and ethnicity that help youth learn about themselves and others, schools may do less to leverage the potential benefits in racial-ethnic socialization and positive racial identity for youth's performance.

8.5   IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH

For researchers, the findings of this study suggest that social workers can increase their effectiveness with African American youth and families if they incorporate racial-ethnic socialization and positive racial identity development in African American youth. However, social work research is very limited on African American racial-ethnic socialization, racial identity and academic outcomes. Social work research is therefore needed to inform practice in the field. While the findings reveal previously unexplored mechanisms by which preparation for bias influences racial identity subdomains, and the ways by which the racial identity subdomains work together to influence psychosocial adjustment and academic performance in African Americans, they suggest further studies. More specifically, the various processes by which racial socialization messages are transmitted and become internalized in youth to form an integrated racial identity need further exploration. Studies that utilize qualitative research approaches will help to unpack the processes more.

Furthermore, research is needed to explore the extent to which the identified mechanisms by which racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity are related to influence psychosocial and academic outcomes in African youth relate to student's persistence in education (e.g. high school graduation, college enrollment, retention and graduation). Such studies will help increase confidence in the web of relationship between racial-ethnic socialization, racial identity, and academic outcomes.

Moreover, from research suggesting that race intersect with multiple social identities such as class, religion, sex, and immigration (Carter, 2005; Chatman, Eccles & Malanchuk, 2005:

Good, Dweck & Aronson, 2007), social work research is needed to understand the effect of racial-ethnic socialization and positive identity on Black youth and the degree to which different social identities intersect with racial identity to support or undermine psychosocial adjustment and performance in education among African American youth. Additionally, from the social work person-in-environment perspective, which is rooted in Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework, research is needed to highlights the various forces in the learning ecology of youth and the degree to which one or more of the proximal contexts mediate or moderate the effects of racial-ethnic socialization and positive racial identity in Black youth. Thus, beyond the family context, research that investigate the characteristics of various settings (school, neighborhood, peers, classroom, and teacher interactions) will help social workers to identify and target systems in need of change to support the positive development of the African American youth with implication for academic performance (Allen-Mears, 2016; Hughes et al., 2016).

While the present study specifically focused on the educational outcomes of African American youth, previous research has linked race-based related messages and subsequent racial identity (that may manifest internalized racism or positive sense of self) to health (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Hughess et al., 2015;Williams & Mohammed, 2013), behavioral and other prosocial (Brody et al., 2006 ; Evans et al., 2012; Jones & Neblett, 2016) outcomes that social workers are concerned about. Future research therefore should extend the identified mechanisms by which racial-ethnic socialization and racial identity are linked to psychosocial adjustment and academic performance in African American youth to other outcomes related to health and prosocial behaviors in African American youth.

8.6   CONCLUSION

While disparities in education that disproportionality exclude African American youth from access to quality learning opportunities and resources are well documented, too few studies have investigated culturally relevant resources within the African American families and communities to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for these youth, particularly in social work.   In response, the current study employed path analysis to examine culturally protective and compensatory factors (racial socialization and racial identity) in African Americans, and the mechanisms by which they operate to influence healthy psychosocial adjustment and academic performance. The findings suggest that race-based messages and practices related to the racial/cultural heritage of African Americans in combinations with practices that alert youth to potential discrimination and the strategies to deal with them hold some positive gains in developing positive sense of self that foster healthy psychosocial adjustment and academic performance in Black youth.

In a society that is highly stratified by social categorization such as the U.S., racial identity can be a source of both stress and strength (Downey, Eccles & Chatman, 2006; McGee, 2013; Steele, 1997). Social work as a social justice oriented profession and discipline that prides itself on the well-being of individuals, groups, and society, our goal will be to minimize the former and maximize the latter. The findings of this study highlight the content, the structure, and the processes by which racial identity as a source of strength may be cultivated, transformed, and maintained. Social workers and related disciplines in the applied field stand to foster strength in Black youth if they incorporate racial-ethnic socialization, and advocate for opportunities that

support youth's exploration, development, and commitment to and affirmation of positive racial

identity with the strategies to help them live out such identity.

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