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The effects of African American family types and marital status on adolescent's self-concept and racial/ethnic identity

Tuwesha Monic Mitchell

THE EFFECTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY TYPES AND MARITAL

STATUS ON ADOLESCENT'S SELF-CONCEPT AND RACIAL/ETHNIC

IDENTITY

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

_____

by

Tuwesha Monic Mitchell and

Rameika Denise Phillips

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of family typology and parental marital status on African American adolescents' self-concept and racial/ethnic identity. Archived data from the African American Families Child Outcome Project at the University of California, Riverside were used for the present study. Participants included 116 fifteen-year-old African American students from various high schools in Southern California.

Descriptive statistics were examined and data were analyzed using t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Marginal significance was found in relation to parental marital status and adolescent self-concept and racial/ethnic identity development. However, family typology was found to have a moderate level of significance in relation to adolescent racial/ethnic identity. The implications and limitations of the study were discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

DIVISION OF LABOR

ABSTRACT ....Tuwesha Mitchell
                                        Rameika Phillips

INTRODUCTION ....Tuwesha Mitchell
                                        Rameika Phillips

LITERATURE REVIEW ....Tuwesha Mitchell
                                        Rameika Phillips

METHOD ....Rameika Phillips

RESULTS ....Rameika Phillips

DISCUSSION ....Tuwesha Mitchell

CONCLUSION ....Tuwesha Mitchell

INTRODUCTION

There has been a breadth of research on African

American children and their families over the past ten

years. Scholars have been able to identify significant

areas of inquiry and debate on issues governing family life

(Farley & Allen, 1987). In the past, research on African

American family life highlighted cultural deficits in

relation to the White mainstream class (Schoen & Kluegel,

1988). Nonetheless, the focus of research today on African

American life (a) employs resistant-adaptive perspectives,

(b) examines a broad range of topics and their

interrelationships, and (c) illuminates the diversity of

family life (Hill et al., 1990). Primarily, because of its

importance to individual development and community well-

being, the African American family has been viewed as both

a source and an outcome of the social problems that beset

the African American population (Billingsly, 1968;

Moynihan, 1965).

Today, there are many issues facing African American

people as a whole. Research has shown that factors such as

institutionalized racism, poverty/feminization of poverty,

and discrimination continuously plague African American communities, which lead to the breakdown of the African American family as a whole (Barker, Narviar, Hill, 1996).

Astounding statistics gives subsistence to the state of emergency that African American families are experiencing. To date, black children are more likely to be in an extended family and in foster care than their white counterparts.

In addition, in 1998, 24.5% of African American children are high school dropouts compared to 14.1 % of Whites (U. S. Census Bureau, 1999). In 1991, 31.5% of African American high school graduates entered college, compared with 41.1% of youths overall (Ginsberg, 1995). However, the college completion rate of African Americans is about half that of Caucasians. Consequently, African American children and their families are greatly affected. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine factors that may affect the African American adolescent's well being.

Family Role

Most of our knowledge about self is derived from early environmental influences. There are two influences that we

2

believe play an important role: family type and marital status. To the newborn infant, the family plays an important role in the development of self. This process is formed through intimate, intensive, and extensive interactions with parents and other family members (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Lewis (1996) stated that the concept of identity serves as a domain for questions such as, who am I, what is my relationship to others, as well as how do I feel about them and myself?

Consequently, the family plays a significant role in shaping the adolescent's personality, attitudes, and beliefs (Thorman, 1982; Wilson & Kohn 1995). The family is responsible for instilling motivation and direction that enables the adolescent to survive and to develop into an adult who is able to function as a productive person in society (Hill, 1995). For instance, Barker, Narviar, and Hill (1996) stated that a healthy family's ability to carry out its functions is crucial to the child within that family. These functions inadvertently shape the child's ability to parent, provide nurture, structure, and acculturation and socialization later in life. Therefore,

3

one of the most important predictors of identity

development is the family-environment (Barker, 1993:

Mandara & Murray, 2000).

Family life, however, is now changing in the African

American family. In 1990, 48% of African American families

were headed by two-parents, with more than half of the

households headed by a single parent. Black females are

more likely to be separated, divorced, or never married

than are White females (Christensen, 1993). By 1998, the

number of single-parent-headed households has increased to

62 percent. From 1960 to 1986 it was found that the

proportion of children born to unmarried mothers rose from

2% to 16% among Caucasians compared with an increase from

23% to 61% among African Americans (Jencks, 1989). Births

to African American teens constitutes 22.5% of the

population while Whites only make up half of the reported

11.3 percent. These statistics show the current trends of

family life and structure for African American families.

The interactions within the family as well as the

family environment are strongly influenced by the parent's

child-rearing practices (Buff, Louiselie, Misukanis, &

Mueller, 1988; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). A parent's style

of rearing children has been demonstrated to affect child

outcomes. Based on Baumrind's (1971) theories of parenting

styles, Mandara and Murray (2000) conducted an exploratory

study to identify African American family types. They

concluded that there are three family typologies that

constitute African American families. The cohesive-

authoritative family type was found to be the healthiest

family functioning. Conflictive-authoritarian family type

is characterized as a chaotic family relationship with

controlling and rigid parenting styles and high emphasis is

placed on achievement. The defensive-authoritarian type

exhibited dysfunctional family characteristics. By virtue

that this study is specific to African Americans, the

family typologies designed by Mandara and Murray (2000)

will be used for this study.

Another essential factor that has been found to affect

adolescent outcomes is parental marital status. Marital

status has also been found to be a key predictor in child

outcomes. Even though mothers tend to be the primary

caretaker of the children in the event that the parental

dyad is interrupted, children tend to still be affected more when both mother and father are not involved in their lives. However, despite the growing rates of divorce and single-female headed households in African American families, fathers are still considered an important link in the socialization of adolescents (Heatherington et al., 1983). Although this paper does not question African American mothers' ability to parent, it does propose that parental marital status will affect child outcomes.

In sum, the present paper asserts that there are two elements to predicting African American adolescent outcomes one being family typology and the other marital status. It is expected that both will significantly influence the development of self-concept and racial/ethnic identity in African American adolescents.

Problem Statement

The present study will examine the effects of family functioning/typology in relation to parenting styles and marital status on African American adolescents' self-concept and racial/ethnic identity. Identity is defined as an integration of self-concept and self-esteem with the

6

perceptions of future development, including an awareness of group membership, expectations, and social responsibility (Spencer 1988). Racial / ethnic identity is defined as attitudes and beliefs an individual holds about his/her racial or ethnic group (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987).

According to Demo & Hughes (1990), the family environment is pertinent to the early development of the child's self concept, personal identity, and racial identity and parents serve as the primary socializing agents for adolescents. It is predicted that an adolescent whose family is classified as cohesive-authoritarian will have a higher sense of racial/ethnic identity and self-concept. On the other hand, adolescents whose parents are either conflictive-authoritarian or defensive authoritarian will have a lower sense of racial/ethnic identity and self-concept.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examined the effects of family function/typology and marital status on African American adolescent's self-concept and racial/ethnic identity development. It is divided into three topical areas. The first section discusses the importance of self-concept and racial identity on African American adolescents. The second explores family functioning, particularly in relation to family types. The third section examines the relationship between marital status on the development of the African American child and his/her family. We conclude the literature review by drawing attention to recurrent themes, which appear to be characteristic of literature on the aforementioned topic.

Self-Concept and Racial/Ethnic Identity

Every human strives for self-identity. For those of minority status in any society, additional issues are often assessed. For instance, recognizable societal differences in social structure exist. Therefore, African American parents are challenged with the responsibility of conveying messages that enable youth to achieve a positive identity,

within a society that promotes inequality. Thus, in
addition to the normal socialization practices that all
parents must address, African American parents must also
instill confidence and cultural appreciation in their
adolescent's (Murray & Mandara, 2000).

Self-concept is affected by a variety of factors.
Some of these factors include social influences, such as
peers and significant others; and also physical
characteristics, such as physical appearance, and gender
(Hartman & Everson, 1996). Self-concept has also been
continuously reported to have positive relationships to
academic achievement, locus of control, and overall self-
esteem. Other studies have found that there is a positive
correlation between positive racial identity and academic
achievement in African American children as well (Gladney,
1998; Greenburg, 1997; Phinney, 1992; Roberts, 1997).

Researchers have also found consistent trends and
associations regarding self-concept and racial identity.
For example studies have shown that African Americans with
heightened levels of racial identities (e.g., pro-Black
attitudes, high African Self-consciousness), as compared to

those who had lower levels of racial identities, scored significantly higher on measures of personal self-esteem (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997; Miles, 1998; Murray & Mandara, 2000), and self-concept (Manning, 1998; Wilson & Constantine, 1999). This sense of self has been proven to be an essential factor in how an adolescent sees him/herself and how they view themselves in the context of the world.

Parents must also attend with the challenge of encouraging racial/ethnic identity develop. Over the years research has proven that a "healthy" racial identification is crucial to African Americans, and its development can affect how the adolescent interacts with others as well as within his/her environment. Researchers have concluded that racial/ethnic identity achievement for a minority is gained through the examination and questioning of prejudice attitudes and assumptions placed on them by society (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Cross, 1991; Phinney, 1989).

For instance, according to Helms (1990), ethnic identity development is the maturation process, in which

African Americans move from internalization of negative

racial messages to adoption of a positive racial group

orientation. Helms theorized that there are five ego

states in establishing a positive ethnic identity they

include: (a) Preencounter, involves the idealization of

Whites (b) Encounter, involves the increased awareness of

racism, (c) Immersion/Emersion, involves the idealization

of African Americans and "Blackness" while denoting

"Whiteness" (d) Internalization, a positive Black identity

while maintaining a balanced perspective of "Whiteness" and

(e) Integrative Awareness involves the appreciation of

one's collective identities and establishing connections

with other ethnic groups who have experienced oppression.

Moreover, theorists have examined the association

between racial identity and psychological functioning in

the domain of the construct "racelessness (RS)"(Fordham &

Ogbu, 1986). The construct RS refers to the behavior and

experiences associated with African American high achieving

students. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest that in adopting

the attitude and beliefs of European culture, African

American students begin to minimize their association with

their own communities' values and belief systems, which create psychological turmoil. It was also found that African American students who were academically successful and reported high RS scores had increased levels of anxiety, depression, and identity confusion. The study further found that those same students who had indicated higher RS scores were also distressed about social approval. Specifically, African American students who seek social approval may deliberately begin to sabotage their academic success to be accepted by their peer groups (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991).

Overall, one could infer that factors such as family functioning/typology and marital status undeniably effect the development of self-concept and racial/ethnic identity in African American adolescents. As such, by understanding the dynamics that influence these two dimensions, social workers could begin to take a closer examination at these given themes and associations, which would then enable them to construct effective service plans in providing for the needs of the family.

<u>Family Environment</u>

One of the most predicting variables of human behavior is the family environment (Barker, 1993). The family plays a significant role in shaping a child's personality, attitudes, and beliefs (Thorman, 1982; Wilson & Kohn 1995). The interaction between the family and the child serves as an intimate environment, in which the child learns from intrafamilial experiences. The family is responsible for instilling a child's motivation and direction that enables the child to survive and to develop into an adult who is able to function as a productive person in society (Hill, 1995).

Hill (1995) also asserts that the influences of family environment and parenting style affect African American child's behavioral outcomes. The role of a parent is to socialize, enhance self worth, and help their children develop a personal frame of reference for behaviors (Thomas & Speight, 1999).

<u>Parenting</u>

Baumrind (1971) is a pioneer on research governing parenting styles. She was able to define three types of

parenting styles that included authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. An authoritarian parent refers to strict compliance with rules in which there is no negotiation or bargaining of the rules set forth by the parent. There is also a strong emphasis on discipline. Authoritative parenting is the most effective of the three styles in which the parent is firm but flexible in establishing rules. This parenting style emphasizes the importance of the child learning the meaning and reasons behind the rules. Permissive parenting refers to a laissez-faire type of environment in which the children are dictating the rules and boundaries are unclear.

Baumrind (1991) found that these three parenting styles were associated with specific behavioral outcomes in children. Authoritarian parenting style is associated with children who are conflicted and irritable, tend to be withdrawn, and have low self-esteem. Authoritative parents rear children who are well adjusted, confidant, exhibit self-discipline, and high achievement. Permissive parenting is associated with impulsivity and aggression in children (Jackson & Foshee, 1998).

14

Although these parenting styles are substantial,

limitations do exist. Baurmrind's research was conducted

on white-middle class families, therefore the parenting

styles lack generalizebility to different ethnic groups

(Starels, 1994). For instance, consider the Chinese

culture in which children are expected to become high-

achievers. Conformity to demands is expected and is

impinged upon them in an intrusive manner. Western scholars

may characterize this as authoritarian and consider Chinese

child-rearing practices unsuitable for a child.

Nonetheless, when considered cultural perspective in is

deemed a successful parenting practice (Chao, 1994).

In efforts to identify parenting styles that were

demonstrated in African American families, scholars begin

to view this group within culture. In several studies it

was found that African American families in general used a

firm approach to parenting and felt it necessary (Staples,

1993; Boyd-Franklin, 1989; & Greene, 1990). African

American parents feel that it is crucial to use a firm

approach to child-rearing practices in order to prepare the

child for a hostile and discriminatory environment

(Bradley, 1998). In short, this would enable the child to thrive in the midst of diversity and protect the child's personhood.

Similar to Baumarind's study, an investigation was conducted by Mandara and Murray (2000), which identified African American family types. The participants consisted of one hundred sixteen 15-year old African American adolescents and their parents. Participants were given two scales. The first was a *Family Environment Scale* (Moos & Moos 1976), and secondly the *African American Family Process Q-Sort* (Peacock 1993). A cluster analysis was performed on data and it was found that three identified parenting styles was employed by African Americans.

The first, cohesive-authoritative refers to families that emphasize personal growth, have intellectual-cultural discussions, and encourage critical thinking. Secondly, conflictive-authoritarian parenting children are not encouraged to express their feelings. There is also great deal of emphasis is placed on achievement. Third, defensive-authoritarian parents are not nurturing or supportive and are critical of their children. Because this

16

study is specific to African American children, the

parenting/family types developed by Mandara and Murray

(2000) were utilized.

Marital Status

The family is the earliest and most persistent

institution for teaching survival, adaptive capacities, and

perseverance. It is the foundation for motivation and

direction. This foundation also enables the child to

develop into a fully integrated adult, who is able to

function competently in society (Lidz, 1976). When the

family fails in its mission to teach these life skills, the

children are likely to experience difficulties in all areas

of social functioning. They may exhibit behavior problems,

and dysfunctional socialization skills (Barker, 1991; Lidz,

1976; Thorman, 1982). As such, the effect of the quality of

the family is greatly influenced by marital status.

There have been studies that suggest that married

persons have higher life satisfaction and happiness than

non-married persons. It was also found that children who

were a product of two-parent homes had fewer difficulties

than those did in one-parent homes. For example, Teachman

and Day (1998) found those children living in two-parent families exhibit fewer behavioral problems and have higher mathematics and reading abilities than children living in single-parent households. However, Family Stress Theory implicates that being married is not always a good indicator. Amaro et al. (1995) found that when married couples experience high conflict, young offspring are better off if their parents divorce than if they remain married. But, on the other hand, when levels of marital conflict are low, the offspring are worse off if their parents divorce.

Beside behavioral difficulties, academic achievement, and marital status has also been linked to drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, social support, and adult development. In sum, it is predicted that marital status will indeed affect the development of the adolescent's self-concept and racial/ethnic identity, which will be discussed in the results of this study.

Thus, it is clearly evident that it is imperative that marital status and family typology be considered when examining the state of the African American families'

maintenance and opportunity in our society. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

1. African American children who are reared in a cohesive-authoritative family type will have a higher self-concept compared to those in conflictive-authoritarian, and as in defensive-neglectful family types.

2. African American children who are reared in a cohesive-authoritative family type will have a higher racial/ethnic identity compared to those in conflictive-authoritarian, and as in defensive-neglectful family types.

3. Those males in two-parent households will have a higher self-concept than those males who are in single-parent households.

4. Those males in two-parent households will have a higher racial/ethnic identity than those males who are in single-parent households.

METHODS

Participants

Archived data from African American Families Child Outcomes Project were utilized for this study. Data was collected over four assessment periods. The first assessments were taken between 1994 and 1995. Wave (2) assessments were between 1995 and 1996, and wave (3) data was collected between 1996 and 1997. For the purpose of this study data from the first wave will be analyzed.

From Wave (1), which is the sample used in this study, a sample of 116 fifteen-year-old African American students (64% female), from various high schools in Southern California and their parents participated in the study. Fifty percent of the parents were married, 37.5% were divorced, and 12.5% were continuously single mothers. Approximately 28% of the parents graduated from high school, and 12% did not report any educational information. Family income was also examined. This information was received by asking parents to rate their levels of annual family income on fifteen $5,000 intervals ranging from $27,000 (SD= $12,000). According to the data,

20

approximately 35% made over $35,000 per year and 20% of the sample made less than $20,000. Both married and non-married families in the study had about two children each. These demographics reflect the general trends for African American families in Southern California (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996).

Data Collection

In the original data collection the participants were part of a larger four-year longitudinal project examining socialization and personality development in African American families. Participant recruitment was accomplished from lists of names and addresses of African American students provided by four school districts. Assessments were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants (e.g., school, home or a Southern California university). Parental permission was obtained for each student prior to participant, and each student received $10 for the single two-hour session.

Instruments

There were three instruments used in the current study. These three instruments are as follows: (1) African

Self- Consciousness Scale (Baldwin & Bell, 1985), (2) The
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), and (3)
Harter. Self-Perception Children Scale (Harter, 1985).

The African Self-Consciousness Scale (ASCSR) is a 42-
item personality questionnaire designed to assess the
personality construct African self-consciousness. African
Self-Consciousness is described as a personality construct
essential to an understanding of African American group
centered behavior and psychological functioning in general
(Baldwin & Bell, 1985; Jackson, Tucker, Bowman, 1982).
Thus, the (ASC) scale conceptualizes African Self-
Consciousness as a unidimensional construct that is
composed of four competency domains. The four additive
competency domains are as follows: (1) awareness,
recognition of one's African identity and heritage, (2)
general ideological and activity priorities placed on Black
survival, liberation, and proactive/affirmation
development, (3) specific activity priorities placed on
self-knowledge and self-affirmation, and (4) posture of
resolute resistance toward "anti-Black" forces and threats
to black survival in general (Baldwin & Bell, 1990).

Participants responded to a seven point Likert-type format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The content of the scale examines attitudes of participants as to social relationships that Blacks should maintain or establish with other Blacks, with Whites, and with political and/or educational organizations. In regards to the psychometric soundness of the scale, the following was established: The reliability coefficient was .90, criterion validity (r=.70), and the scale's convergent validity (r=.80) (Murray, Peacock & Kaiser 1994).

The Harter Children Scale (What I Am Like is a self-perception profile for children (revised of the Perceived competence scale for children), was designed to examine children domain specific judgment of their competence as well as a global perception of their worth and esteem as a person. The revised scale consists of six separate sub-scales, which include: (1) Scholastic Competence, (2) Social Acceptance, (3) Athletic Competence, (4) Physical Appearance, (5) Behavior Conduct, and (6) Global Self Worth.

Each of the six sub-scales contains six items

constituting a total of thirty-six items.   The reliability

of the sub-scales was based on a Cronbach's alpha .70.   The

actual questionnaire filled out by the child is entitled

"What I AM Like", is included in the appendix of this

proposal.

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (THEIM) was

conceptualized as "ethnic pride, feeling good about one's

background, being happy with one's group membership as well

as feelings of belonging and attachment to the group"

(Phinney, 1992, p 159).   The scale was rated on a 5-point

Likert-type scale to which participants evaluated their

feelings from 1: strongly disagree to 5:   strongly agree

(e.g. "I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and

what it means for me").   For a high school sample, the

reported alpha coefficient for the scale was .90 (Phinney,

1992).

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

The data in Table 1 display frequencies and
percentages for family type, gender, parental marital
status, and parent's education. First, Table 1 shows that
families were categorized into one of three specific family
types: cohesive-authoritative (n = 36), conflictive-
authoritarian (n = 37), and defensive neglectful (n = 20).
Moreover, out of a total of 116 adolescents in the study,
64% were female and 36% male (Table 1). Of the 116
respondents, fifty percent of the adolescents' parents were
married (n = 48), thirty-seven and one half percent were
divorced (n = 45), and twelve and one half percent were
continuously single mothers (Table 1). Twenty-eight
percent of the parents completed high school and fifty
percent either had some college or completed college (Table
1).

Table 1

Demographics (<u>N</u> = 116)

	Frequency	Valid %
Family Type:		
cohesive-authoritative	36	44.0
conflictive-authoritarian	37	42.0
defensive-neglectful	20	24.0
Gender:		
Male	44	49.0
Female	52	61.0
Parental Marital Status:		
Married	48	50.0
Divorced	45	37.5
Continuously single Mothers	23	12.5
Parents Education:		
some High school	12	9.0
Completed High School	26	28.0
Some College	44	38.0
Completed College	17	12.0
Did Not Report	17	12.0

As illustrated in Figure 1, 5 respondents had an annual income of $0 to $4,900, 12 respondents had an annual income of $4,901 to $9,900, 11 respondents had an annual income of $9,901 to $14,000, 6 respondents had an annual income of $14,001 to $19,900, 12 respondents had an annual income of $19,901 to $24,000, 7 respondents had an annual income of $24,001 to $29,000, 10 respondents had an annual income of $29,001 to $34,000, 11 respondents had an annual income of $34,001 to $39,000, 17 respondents had an annual income of $39,001 to $44,000, 5 respondents had an annual income of $44,001 to $49,000, 3 respondents had an annual income of $49,001 to $54,000, 4 respondents had an annual income of $54,001 and above (Figure 1).

As illustrated in Figure 2, the age of the parents in the study ranged from 29 to 70 years, with a mean age being 40.4. Since it was assumed that religiosity would effect family environment, the importance of religion was also examined (Figure 3). Two respondents felt that religion was not at all important (1.7%), 2 respondents felt that religion was not too important (1.7%), 24 respondents felt that religion was somewhat important (20.7%), and 76

27

respondents felt that religion was very important

(65.5%)(Figure 3).

Finally, Figure 4 displays the number of children in
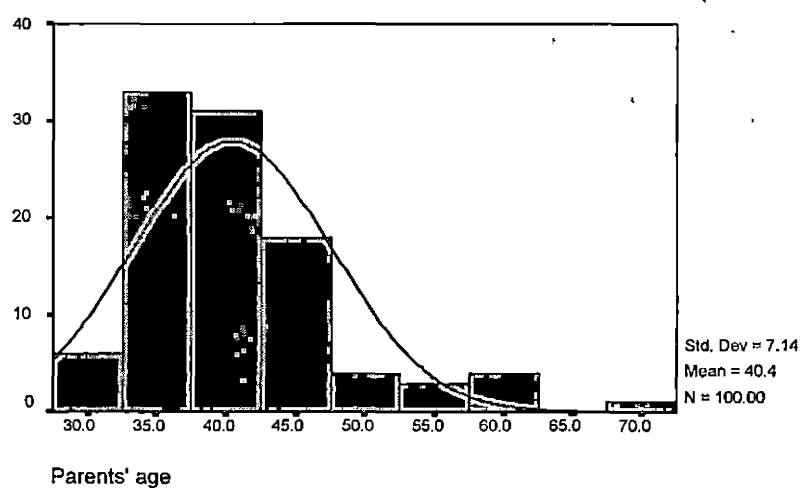
the home.

Figure 1 Age of Parents'
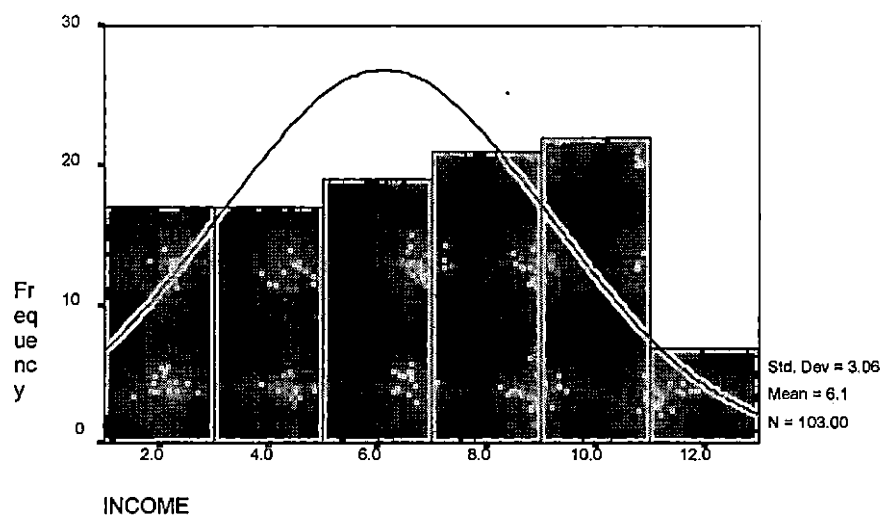

Parents' age

Figure 2 Parental Income

INCOME

Figure 3 Importance of Religion

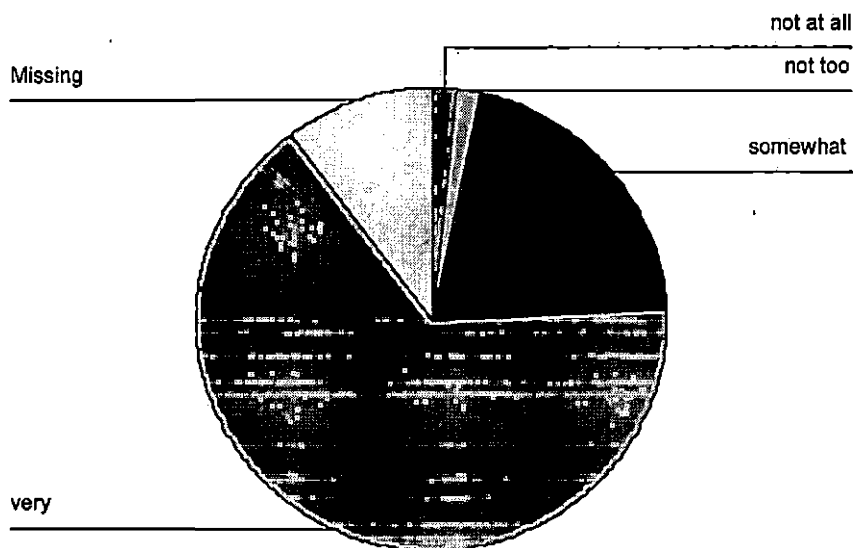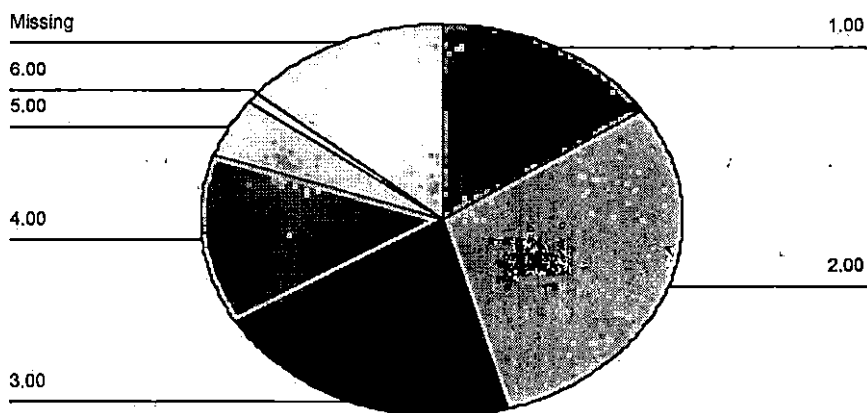

Figure 4 Number of Children in Home

Self-Concept

Table 2 reflects the t-tests, which were computed to determine if there was a significant difference between marital status and each variable that comprised the self-concept component. Of the six t-tests computed, one was statistically significant. The following is a list of the independent variables compromising the self-concept component in relation to marital status: Scholastic Competence, t (98) = 3.012, p=003; Social Acceptance, t (98) = 1.489, p=.140; Athletic Competence, t (98) = 1.099, p=.275; Physical Appearance; t (97) = 1.103, p=.273; Behavioral Conduct, t (98) =.097, p=.923; Self Worth, t (98) = 1.602, p=.112 (Table 3). With the exception of Scholastic Competence, all results show that parental marital status does not inadvertently have a great effect on the African American adolescents' self-concept. However, it was found that parental marital status does indeed significantly affect the development of self-concept in relation to their scholastic competence.

Table 2

t-Tests for Independent Variables Comparing Marital Status
to Self-Concept Factors

	Mean diff.	df	t	sig. 2-tailed
Marital Status-Scholastic Competence	.3186	98	3.012	.003
Marital Status-Social Acceptance	.1712	98	1.489	.140
Marital Status-Athletic Competence	.1653	98	1.099	.275
Marital Status-Physical Appearance	.1779	97	1.103	.273
Marital Status-Behavioral Conduct	-1.099	98	-.097	.923
Marital Status-Self Worth	.2034	98	1.602	.112

An analysis of variance was conducted on the six self-concept domains to determine if there is a significant

difference between family type and the development of self-concept in African American adolescents. It was predicted that African American adolescents who are reared in a cohesive-authoritative family type would have higher self-concept than those who are reared in conflictive-authoritarian and defensive-neglectful family types would. The univariate analysis (ANOVA) revealed that family type is significant in regards to the following: Scholastic Competence $F(2) = 3.786$, $p=.026.$; Social Acceptance $F(2) = 8.347$, $p=.000$; and Self-Worth $F(2) = 3.952$, $p=.022$ (Table 3). The significance of this test tells us that family type greatly effects the development of self-concept in African American adolescents. More importantly, we could infer, that the children who are reared in a cohesive family type will have the best chance of high self-concept development.

Table 3

<u>Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Comparing Family Type to Self-Concept Factors</u>

	Groups	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>F</u>	Sig.
Scholastic Competence	Between	2.032	2	1.016	3.786	.026
	Within	28.446	106	.268		
	Total	30.479	108			
Social Acceptance	Between	4.960	2	2.480	8.347	.000
	Within	31.490	106	.297		
	Total	36.449	108			
Athletic Competence	Between	1.8257	2	1.238	2.378	.098
	Within	2.8922	106	.521		
	Total		108			
Physical Appearance	Between	1.8257	2	1.245	2.030	.136
	Within	2.8587	106	.613		
	Total		108			
Behavioral Conduct	Between	1.8148	2	1.783	6.900	.002
	Within	2.9106	105	.258		
	Total		107			
Self-Worth	Between	1.8257	2	1.463	3.952	.022
	Within	3.1899	106	.370		
	Total		108			

34

Racial/Ethnic Identity

Table 4 reflects t-tests comparing the effects of parental marital status to racial/ethnic identity. It was proposed that those adolescents' in two-parent households would have higher levels of racial and ethnic identity than those who reside in single-parent households. Ironically, the results of the tests indicated that there was no significance for neither racial nor ethnic identity in relation to parental marital status. The results of this test tells us that the development of an African American adolescent's racial/ethnic identity is not contingent upon whether his/her parent(s) is single or married.

Table 4

t-Test for Independent Variables Comparing Marital Status to Racial/Ethnic Identity

	Mean	df	t	2-tail sig
Marital Status-Racial Identity (ASC)	-1.89	99	-30.184	000
Marital Status-Ethnic Identity (MEIM)	-1.74	98	-26.223	000

An analysis of variance was further conducted to determine if there is a significant effect between family type and racial/ethnic identity development in African American adolescents. It was predicted that African American adolescents who are reared in a cohesive-authoritative family type would have higher levels of racial and ethnic identity than those who are reared in conflictive-authoritarian and defensive-neglectful family types. The results of the analysis indicate that significance was found; Racial Identity $F(2) = 5.647$, $p=.005$; Ethnic Identity $F(2) = 4.127$, $p=.019$. More specifically, the results of this test show us that the family typology is essential in the development of racial/ethnic identity in African American adolescents.

Table 5

<u>Analysis of Variance(ANOVA)Comparing Family Type to Racial/Identity Factors</u>

Family Type		Mean Dif.	<u>n</u>	<u>Std Error</u>	Sig.
*ETHNIC IDENTITY					
cohesive- authoritarian	conflict defensive	.1496 .3513	24	9.046 .1049	.228 .003
conflictive- authoritarian	cohesive defensive	-.1496 .2017	40	9.046 .1063	.228 .145
defensive- neglectful	cohesive conflict	-.3513 -.2017	43	.1049 .1063	.003 .145
*RACIAL IDENTITY					
cohesive- authoritative	conflict defensive	6.257 .2242	25	6.890 7.846	.636 .014
conflictive authoritarian	cohesive defensive	-6.2572 .1616	39	6.890 8.027	.636 .114
defensive- neglectful	cohesive conflict	-.2242 -.1616	.44	7.846 8.027	.014 .114

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of family typology and parental marital status on African American adolescents' self-concept and racial/ethnic identity. The Harter children scale, that was used to measure the participants' self-concept, had six domains. Domains included (1) scholastic competence, (2) social acceptance, (3) athletic competence, (4) physical appearance, (5) behavioral conduct, and (6) global self-worth. Parental marital status had no significant effect on the participants' self-concept.

Although, non-significant findings were not expected in explanation of the actual findings according to Michelle & Bracken (1994) the construct "self-concept" is influenced very little by demographic characteristics of an individual. They further state that self-concept is multidimensional in that it may be difficult to measure and that further longitudinal research is needed to determine how self-concept is influenced by important human conditions.

However, with family typology significance was found in regards to self-concept. Significance was found with

several domains including scholastic competence, social acceptance, behavioral conduct, and global self-worth. This would indicate that family typology is important in the development of the adolescent's self-concept. Undoubtedly, family plays an important role in the development of self. In support of these findings as cited by Thorman, 1982; Wilson & Kohn 1995, the family plays a significant role in shaping the adolescent's personality, attitudes, and beliefs

It was also expected that adolescents who are reared in a cohesive-authoritative family type would have higher racial/ethnic identity compared to those in subsequent family types. The results indicated that racial/ethnic identity is affected by family typology. It is inferred given the literature review that cohesive-authoritative family type influenced these results. According to Mandara and Murray (2000), this family emphasizes personal growth in regards to recreational activities, intellectual-cultural discussions, and encourages family members to be assertive.

Marital status did not affect racial/ethnic identity. Again, this may indicate that family constellations do not play a significant role in the development of racial/ethnic

identity within the adolescent. Racial/ethnic identity is defined as attitudes and beliefs an individual holds about his/her own ethnic group (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). Parental marital status may not be a good indicator as to gauging rather or not an adolescent racial/ethnic identity is influenced. Other indicators may be involved such as the socialization messages that are employed by parents in teaching their children in becoming race aware.

Overall, these results supported the premise of this project in that African American adolescent outcomes are affected by the context in which they are reared.

CONCLUSION

The central lesson to be learned from this project is African American life is unique unto its own. No longer should research persist in viewing the African American family from a deficit model. As one can learn from this project, African American parents have central issues that are important in rearing a child. One can also gather from this project that there are at least three identified family types in which African American households are composed. It is important to highlight these family types because of its usefulness in maintaining healthy black families.

Limitations

This project identified issues regarding African American adolescents. Although pertinent information was gained from the project, limitations do exist within the present study. First, the population sampled was exclusively from high schools within Southern California, and therefore generalizability may be limited. Second, all measures were self-reported in which participant biases may have influenced the results of the instruments. Third, retrospective data was relied upon in which participants

were expected to recall from memory in answering the questions.

Implications to Social Work

Social Work should be concerned about this issue because increased knowledge and sensitivity about the interrelationships between the concepts of race, culture, and social class will enhance and broaden social workers' frames of reference and help them to develop culture specific plans of intervention for people of color. This study will also heighten social workers' understanding of how external and internal factors affect children and their families, which consequently affect child behavioral outcomes.

Suggestions for Further Research

For future research a more representative population sample in which results may be generalized should be considered. Additionally, a longitudinal investigation as to how self-concept may be affected by demographic characteristics needs to be studied. It is the hope of the authors that this topic continues to be researched in looking at African American family life and the influences it plays in part to African American children who are our

42

future leaders of tomorrow. This very topic is the essence

of ensuring the African American community.

APPENDIX A: Approval Letter for Archive Data

Subject: Re: Permission to use data from the African
             American Research Project

Date: 12/1/1999 9:59:49 AM Pacific Standard Time

From: victory@ucracl.ucr.edu (Carolyn Murray)

Reply-to: carolyn.murray@ucr.edu
To: Wisha25@aol.com

Dear Masters Thesis Committee Members:

Tuwesha Mitchell and Rameika Phillps, both CSUSB social work graduate
students, have my permission to use the racial identity and academic
data from the African.
American Families Project. Our data use policy stipulates that:

1. Graduate students and undergraduate students may upon acquiring
    permission be allowed to review", analyze and write-up specific
    variables from the African American Families Project to fulfill a
    degree requirement (e.g., Masters, PhD., Honors Thesis, etc.),
    However, a project staff member must be present for data use
    activities. Co-authorship with a project staff member is NOT
    required.

2. Any persons, students or otherwise, using the data publication
    consideration must co-author with a member or members of the
    project staff.

3. Data use is limited to the variables agreed upon.

4. Data use is limited to the themes agreed upon.

Mr. Jelani Mandara, a third year graduate student, will supervise data
use activities.

The African American Families Project sees research as the most
important activity of it's faculty, post doctorates, and graduate
students. We welcome the opportunity to facilitate the training of
other students.

    Sincerely,
    Carolyn B. Murray
    Principal Investigator
    909-787-5293

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