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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Donna M. Dopwell entitled “The Impact of Culture and National Origin on Educational Aspiration, Personal Responsibility, and Self-Efficacy: A Comparative Analysis of Views by African Americans and African Caribbeans.” I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Social Work, with a major in Social Work.

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THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIGIN ON EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATION, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND SELF-EFFICACY: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VIEWS BY AFRICAN AMERICANS AND
AFRICAN CARIBBEANS

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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May 2009

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Henry Raymond Hollwedel. Your smile, your knowledge, and your unwavering love will be missed.

I also dedicate this thesis to the sons and daughters of Africa whose many stories have inspired me to take this journey.

Acknowledgements

My journey throughout the master's program and the completion of a thesis was facilitated in many ways by the help of others. It is with humility and respect that I recognize some of these individuals now. Each has provided priceless gifts for which I am eternally grateful.

I would first like to thank my immediate family. To my Mom, Mary Dopwell, your perpetual availability, knowledge, and patience are characteristics I admire and strive toward. To Ricardo Dopwell, my Dad, you continue to exhibit strength and perseverance in the face of adversity that helps influence me today. My brother and Irish Twin, Sean Dopwell, I could not have a more loving and supportive brother than you.

To my extended family: the family I was born into and the family I made, I thank you for a love that transcends culture, race, or any discouraging factors. My grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister-in-law, niece and nephew, have all taught me life lessons, and I continue to be an attentive student. My "sisters" Allison Ashby, Tabitha Forde, and Gina Leveque, you have been such inspirations, and carry beauty inside and outside.

For all of those who believed in my abilities and for those who did not, both groups fueled my desire to succeed in different ways. Therefore, both were important in assisting me to reach this point. Thank you.

To Drs. Rod Ellis and John Wodarski, thank you for agreeing to participate in my thesis committee and for the assistance you have provided. Your knowledge and input are crucial for the success of a student. The information shared by both of you continues to help as I continue through my education and research.

Finally, to Dr. Stan L. Bowie: thank you for believing in me, and for the tools you have provided that have helped me become a true researcher. It is with your teaching style of gentle prodding that I have been able to surpass my own expectations, often before I realize I have done so. My progress is a direct result of your efforts to provide the necessary knowledge. I aspire to be as invaluable a mentor to others as you have been to me.

Abstract

The United States is a country of many cultures and peoples. The different cultures need to be understood in order to best support the success of all individuals in the country. One group that has been present, but has only recently received attention as a valid culture, is African Americans. Further complicating the black identity in the country is the presence of immigrants of African descent. While there is existing research on the subjects of race relations, cultural identities, and perceptions regarding opportunities for success, much of this research is qualitative and some of the research uses a deficit approach toward minorities (Waters, 1999, Rascoe, 2003, Greif, Hrabowski, & Maton, 2000). While the qualitative literature offers important insight into the experiences and beliefs of the participants, it is difficult to generalize to the larger population of African descendants in the country. The current study seeks to address the issue by using a quantitative method.

The study used a cross-sectional design, with a self-administered survey distributed to a purposive sample of African American and African Caribbean participants in several cities in the United States. Statistical analyses were completed using SPSS 17.

Findings indicated that African Americans reported higher levels of educational aspiration and self-efficacy, while African Caribbeans reported higher levels of personal responsibility. Possible reasons included the relative age difference, marital status, spirituality, perceptions of racism and prejudice, and the recent historical election.

Implications for social workers include a need for an understanding that African Americans and African Caribbeans are not part of one group, but separate and culturally distinct groups of African descendents. Another suggestion for social workers with regard to working with people in need of greater personal responsibility and self-efficacy include providing roles and tasks with levels of responsibility, interdependence, and consequence, in an environment that provides a safe and comfortable way for clients to test their understanding of ability and responsibility.

Table of Contents

I	
Introduction	1
Problem Statement	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance	4
Literature Review	5
Slavery and Emancipation in the Caribbean and the United States	5
Experiences of African Caribbeans in the United States	10
African American Experience in the United States	12
Treatment of African Descendants in the Caribbean and the United States	15
Identities of African Descendants Today	17
Biases and Flaws of Existing Research	25
Existing Theoretical Frameworks	27
Summary	29
Methods	31
Variables	31
Research Questions	32
Rationale	32
Instrumentation	33
Data Collection	34
Data Analysis	34
Results	35
Demographic Information	35
Research Questions	37
Discussion and Conclusions	45
Differences	45
Similarities	51
Limitations of the Study	52
Suggestions for Further Research	53
Implications for Social Workers	54
References	56
Appendix A Consent Form	57
Appendix B Surveys	62
Appendix C Tables	71
Vita	78

Chapter 1

Introduction

Problem Statement

Many factors influence a person's opportunities in life. Among these factors are location, economic strength, and educational attainment. Additionally, the institutions of cultural and racial prejudice may further divide those with opportunities and those without. Racism against African Americans is a long-standing problem. African Americans are often labeled as inferior to the dominant culture. The negative perceptions assigned to this group include laziness, lower intelligence, and a lack of desire to succeed. These stereotypes are so deeply ingrained in the society of the United States that others might treat African Americans with disdain and deny opportunities due to their beliefs in the verity of these stereotypes (Tatum, 1997).

Non-dominant groups are often lumped together irrespective of their different experiences and backgrounds. In the United States, "Black" and "African American" tend to be synonymous terms, and thus stereotypes are often attached to both. However, this is not always the case; there is evidence to suggest that immigrants of African descent may be treated better than African Americans (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Population Reference Bureau, 2007; Alfred, 2002; Foner, 1985). This by no means indicates that these immigrants are considered to be on the same level as the dominant culture. African and Caribbean immigrants' levels of employment and income are often not commensurate with their education and previous work experience. Additionally, African Caribbean

immigrants are often excluded from moving to predominantly white residential areas and are therefore confined to areas with high concentrations of African Americans (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006).

Along with the dominant culture, a number of groups' beliefs and consequent actions help to perpetuate the stereotypes and negative treatment of the non-dominant culture. One such community is African Americans; although they may not believe stereotypes against them, the belief of some that racism is an unbreakable barrier to success may result in their lack of effort, not out of laziness, but out of despair.

A second community that helps enable the continuation of the stereotypes is African Caribbeans; many believe the myths about African Americans, and try to separate themselves from African Americans within the community and in the eyes of the dominant culture. By attempting to create a clear line of differentiation, African Caribbeans inadvertently offer an opportunity to make a Cain and Abel comparison: good Blacks versus bad (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006).

Biases in research can also perpetuate the negative views against African Americans. In a review of previous research, Murry, Kotchick, Wallace, Ketchen, Eddings, Heller, et al. (2004) discovered that African Americans have overwhelmingly been completely excluded from research. When they have been included, comparisons were drawn using a deficit approach toward African American participants relative to the dominant culture. The study additionally found that African American males are largely ignored in research, including those who are active in their families. This display of research bias disallows the refutation of the label of the absentee African American male.

Often researchers have missed vital opportunities to understand more closely the intricacies of the non-dominant group.

The dominant culture's view of success is that it can be achieved with hard work and education. But perhaps these assets, while important, are not enough for a person who is already at a disadvantage due to racism, economic status, and a long history of oppression. Americans of all races and cultures must face the reality of actions that help perpetuate racism and cultural biases in the United States. These behaviors only serve to divide a nation, and to allow oppression to continue. Only by acknowledging their existence and the damage they have caused can we move toward healing (Ogbu, 1991).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate similarities and differences between adult African Americans and African Caribbeans living in the United States with regard to their perceptions about educational aspiration, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy. The study compared cultural identity on three separate levels (i.e. Historical Cultural Identity, Subjective Cultural Identity, and Assigned Cultural Identity) relative to the responses of the participants. Additionally, this study questioned the relationship of the dependent variables to related demographic variables, such as childhood socio-economic status, parental educational level, and relationship to the most influential people in the lives of the respondents.

This study supports current literature, positing that “African descended” and “African American” are not synonymous, and to believe so is antithetical to the history and experiences of all peoples of different cultures, including African Americans. A

second goal is to help understand that many African descendents, including African Americans, do not fit the stereotypes often believed about black persons in the United States. In order for more individuals from all groups to have a true opportunity for success in the United States, the barriers of ignorance need to be broken down. This ignorance is shared by African descendants and the dominant culture alike.

Significance

The study is significant because it addresses a gap in the current research, particularly regarding data collection tools. Much of the current research regarding the populations in the study has been qualitative, with the use of personal interviews and direct observation. The surveys to be administered are less time-consuming and offer a more universal response set. Because they are able to be administered to more than one person at a time, the opportunity for a larger sample size is greater using this quantitative method than qualitative research (Rubin & Babbie, 2007).

Another reason this study is significant is the paucity of current study on the topic. There is research comparing and contrasting African American and African Caribbean respondents, but the area is far from saturated. Much of the research is decades old; perspectives may have changed, and it is necessary to appreciate the current challenges facing these groups. As previously mentioned, even the recent literature tends to only have focused on small groups of participants, making it difficult to speculate on whether this is a societal phenomenon or simply one that coincidentally affects a small group of people.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Slavery and Emancipation in the Caribbean and the United States

A review of history indicates that contrasts between African Americans and African Caribbeans have been evident from the arrival of each to their respective destinations in the Americas. One area of divergence stems from the treatment of slaves during slavery in the Caribbean versus in the United States. In the West Indies the slaves were allowed to assume leadership roles, even being trusted to handle business matters in the place of their masters (Clarke, 1966; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006). In the U.S. the same would have been a rare occurrence if it happened at all. Perhaps slaveholders in the U.S. fared better than their Caribbean counterparts in this case, as suggested by the existence and extent of the slave rebellions in the Caribbean.

Skin color also may have had a greater impact on opportunities for Caribbean slaves and their children than in the United States. Fergus (2006) found that Creoles, or those who were of mixed heritage, were more likely to be trusted by owners to take on leadership roles than people of purely African descent. The Creoles often used this trust and their education to their advantage, often becoming leaders simultaneously in business passed to them by their masters and in secret societies. It was also the masters' apparent ignorance regarding the power of secret societies that allowed them to thrive. Europeans mocked the meetings of secret society members as being mere imitations of European social interactions, when in fact these societies could be linked to Africa, and the songs

sung and musical instruments played were often used to relay information regarding impending rebellions.

The emancipation movement in England was simultaneously an influence on the United States and the Caribbean, perhaps officially beginning in 1772 with Lord Chief Justice Manfield making it possible for any slave who entered England to become automatically free. Many prominent figures in the American Revolution did not miss the irony between their fight for freedom from British rule and their subordination of those called slaves. While some did not see a connection, others began to fight for freedom for slaves as well as themselves, through abolition (Bordewich, 2005).

The abolition movement among whites in the U.S. was at least early on a strange marriage between belief in the inherent freedom of all and belief in the inferiority of blacks. A very famous example was Thomas Jefferson, a proponent of abolition who also harbored a level of disdain for those of African descent, even believing they might be of a different species than white people (Bordewich, 2005). In essence, even proponents of abolition tended to stand together with those who were against it in their ideas of their own superiority over those who would be freed.

The United States government outlawed the overseas slave trade in 1808, and the last years of the 18th century saw many slaveholders freeing their slaves. George Washington was among these, freeing his slaves upon his death, while Thomas Jefferson never did (Adderley, 2006; Bordewich, 2005). Perhaps there was a reason why Jefferson felt it necessary to keep his slaves despite his belief in freedom for all.

Just as some black people were already free before the Civil War, some free African descendants were also allowed to vote in the early 1800's. The votes of the free black people in New York verified their power to affect change; twice in a row their ballots allowed for legislators who were sympathetic to the abolition movement to be elected to office (Bordewich, 2005). This troubled lawmakers who were pro-slavery, causing them to enact legislation that would force African Americans to prove financial strength prior to being allowed to vote. This law excluded many African Americans from voting. Thus people who had finally acquired certain freedoms also learned firsthand and painfully that it is possible for some of those freedoms to be taken from them.

Further evidence of the fears of slaveholders and of their subsequent political reactions came in August 1850, with the Fugitive Slave Act. This law made it illegal to help runaway slaves or to hinder slave catchers (Adderley, 2006; Bordewich, 2005). It also disallowed runaway slaves from speaking on their own behalf or trial by jury. In fact, a person who was a mere bystander could be forced to assist in the capture of the runaway. Interestingly, a response of uproar and defiance followed the enactment of this law; perhaps instead of serving its purpose of quelling the heated slavery debate this law had the opposite effect of becoming a catalyst in the cause of abolitionists.

One method for defiance was to participate in the harboring of fugitive slaves. The Underground Railroad was a series of way stations for runaway slaves to get to places where they could live free. Many conspirators, White and Black, endangered themselves to assist in this endeavor. Abolitionists were attacked regularly, and riots

broke out, including one in which the home of the president of the American Anti-Slavery Society was burned down (Bordewich, 2005).

The Underground Railroad, with its rituals and rankings (Bordewich, 2005), offers a similarity to the secret societies of the Caribbean (Fergus, 2006). Several exceptions include the facts that the Railroad was not very secret, that it was considered troublesome to its opposition, and that white abolitionists were instrumental partners with many black abolitionists in this society. In contrast, the secret societies of the Caribbean were hiding in plain sight because the slave owners did not understand the significance, and as a result did not know to be concerned about it. Evidence also does not suggest that white members of society either understood or participated in the Caribbean secret societies.

Underestimation of the strength and ingenuity of African descendants was not unique to the Caribbean. Bordewich (2005) surmises that the success of Harriet Tubman as a leader in the Underground Railroad may be attributed to the fact that she was a black woman. Assisted by an ignorance of white Americans strikingly parallel to that of slaveholders in the Caribbean, Tubman was less likely to be suspected of heading such an operation than a white male specifically because of her perceived intellectual inferiority.

The movement toward abolition was not exclusive to the United States. With the introduction of the British abolition laws the slave trade in the English-speaking Caribbean was outlawed. In an attempt to curb the slave trade, the new law allowed the navy or private citizens to seize suspected slave ships and their captains and crews for trial (Adderley, 2006). If the operators of the ship were convicted, the ship would become

controlled by the British crown, while the captive individuals would become property of the government. However, these new arrivals were not to become slaves; they would either be enlisted in the armed forces or become apprentices for a 14-year period to learn a trade (Adderley, 2006). The newly-arrived Africans were assigned a civil officer to assist them with issues they might face with current employers.

The new African immigrants became a problem according to white inhabitants, who often considered them to be lazy and disruptive to the slaves (Adderley, 2006). It was believed that some of the Africans were a bad influence, encouraging the slaves to become more lazy and difficult to handle than they had been. The development of what was effectively a new class of African in the Caribbean may have assisted in the vision of greater opportunities for African descendants.

Waters (1999) cites one important difference between emancipation in the United States and that in the Caribbean. In the United States, slaves were freed after the Civil War, while in the Caribbean emancipation occurred as a result of a decree passed in Great Britain. Caribbean slave owners were compensated for the loss of their slaves, although many freed slaves continued to work on the plantations. In contrast, many of the slave owners in the United States saw their homes, their wealth, and their livelihood destroyed during the war. It is possible then that a level of resentment was felt in the United States among white former slave owners that was avoided in the Caribbean, and that this same resentment may have fueled some of the oppressive doctrines later passed in the country, including segregation.

Experiences of African Caribbeans in the United States

Ogbu (1991) identified two different groups of minorities within the United States: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary minorities, like the immigrants from the Caribbean, became minorities by their own choice to enter the country. Involuntary minorities were those whose status was thrust upon them without regard for their choice; by slavery, conquest, or colonization. A difference between African Americans and African Caribbeans relates to their statuses as involuntary and voluntary minorities, respectively. While African Americans are largely descendants of people who were brought here against their will to be slaves, immigrants from the Caribbean entered the country voluntarily, often for the sake of economic improvement (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006). The difference in whether a person is a voluntarily or involuntarily minority may influence that person's perception of the environment in which he or she lives.

As previously mentioned, Caribbean immigrants, often known as West Indians, made the decision to enter the United States, usually seeking chances to change their economic status. According to Hine-St. Hilaire (2006), West Indian people have hope and expectations that their descendants' achievements will surpass their own. Many African Caribbean immigrants enter this country with skills used in their home countries. However, they often find themselves working below their training and education once they are here. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2007), immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean are continually underpaid, and their employment not commensurate to their education levels and previous work experience. Many of these

immigrants find themselves victims of a racist society for the first time: they are excluded often from both the African American groups and those of whites.

The exclusion from African American groups is perhaps not entirely undesired by immigrants. A study of African Caribbean immigrants in New York and New Jersey found that, while these immigrants were often confined to areas in which African Americans lived, they tended to find homes of slightly better quality than those of their American counterparts, in neighborhoods that were racially changing, thus establishing their own ethnic communities (Crowder, 1999; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006). This indicates that the newcomers may have been attempting to separate themselves economically from African Americans.

Although it appears that Caribbean immigrants have been able to achieve economically in many cases, some newcomers have had to face the Glass Ceiling since moving to the United States. In Mary V. Alfred's (2002) discussion of her personal experiences as an immigrant from the island of St. Lucia, she mentions her father's desire for his children to be educated and to have opportunities that he did not. She was encouraged by teachers to continue her education, and began teaching on St. Lucia. When she came to the United States after her husband enlisted in the U.S. Army, Alfred was advised that her education in the West Indies was not sufficient to continue teaching in the U.S. Alfred continued her progress toward a master's degree, with little opposition, and actually felt she had quite a lot of support. The support was withdrawn when Alfred decided to enter the Ph.D. program. She was faced with racism, prejudice against immigrants, and isolation from those who had previously supported her advanced status

at the master's level. Alfred's story is reminiscent of previously mentioned points by Hine-St. Hilaire regarding the experiences of immigrants from the Caribbean.

African American Experience in the United States

Some of the aforementioned barriers to success are racism, economic status, and educational level. In many cases, these and other factors may work together as a web of obstruction, hindering the achievement of goals more efficiently than would the existence of one lone barrier. One of the more interesting obstacles for African Americans comes from within the African American community itself.

In his research, Ogbu (1991) found that peer pressure among African Americans may be a detriment to educational success. Peer pressure to go against the mainstream and not succumb to standards set by the dominant culture can often be found within the community. Those who do not reject the mainstream would be equated with so-called Uncle Toms, traitors to their race. Perhaps this is another point of contention between African Americans and African Caribbeans: African Americans might see the immigrants as African descendants who, for the sake of solidarity, should also reject the dominant standards. Immigrants' lack of desire to do so might be viewed negatively by African Americans.

African Americans are by no means hopeless; they have a chance for a successful life. However, it appears that this group needs to work harder than European Americans for the same level of success. For this reason, it is important to consider those beliefs and behaviors that are most likely to achieve positive results within this community.

Family is often a very important support system, and can help foster the achievement of goals. Greif, Hrabowski, & Maton (2000) discuss the influence of African American mothers on the success of their sons. Two influencers of success for African Americans have been education and religion. Because mothers tend to be more religious than fathers, the research focused on the mothers. Out of the thirty-eight mothers interviewed, 60 percent were married, two-thirds had completed college, and half had at least some graduate school education. These numbers were not typical of the African American community, where only thirteen percent of African American women obtain bachelor's degrees (United States Census Bureau, 2008). Eighty percent of the mothers had been raised with fathers in the household, and almost a quarter of the respondents were raised by parents who were college graduates.

The mothers' own childhoods were defined by structure, responsibility, and religion, to different degrees. Most respondents' parents had discussed the importance of education; only one mentioned having been discouraged by her parents from pursuing an education. She had chosen to complete college despite this. Several respondents had been specifically encouraged to surpass their own parents' education levels, which had often ended before high school graduation.

In a similar study, Rascoe (2003) inquired as to how African American single mothers help produce successful middle school boys. Success was defined as consistent good grades and relatively few behavioral problems. Several themes of the mothers' behavior were noted: open, honest communication and close bonding with their sons, as well as seeking and receiving support from extended family, keeping a relationship with

teachers, and instilling discipline and work ethic. Other themes, such as goal setting, the need for physical activity, and God consciousness or spirituality were mentioned. Once again we see ideas of education, responsibility, and faith being important.

A third study, that sought to find a connection between future orientation and success in life, was conducted by Kerpelman and Mosher (2004). Future orientation is related to a person's aspirations. Possession of a strong future orientation helps set goals that allow a person to focus on achieving these goals. Like in the aforementioned studies, it was found that maternal education level, self-efficacy, and beliefs regarding ability to control one's destiny were all positively correlated with future orientation.

Interestingly, respondents of low socioeconomic status were found to have lower aspirations than others. Kerpelman and Mosher (2004) also found that African American females tended to exhibit stronger future orientations than the males. The possible reasons cited include the high percentage of female-headed single-parent households, so that the girls had a greater chance of having a positive same-sex role model than the boys did. In addition, society's low expectations of African American males may affect their own beliefs about whether they will be allowed to succeed. When a person is expected by others to fail, it may affect that person's own expectations. In addition, when others do not see the potential of an individual, there may be an inadvertent decision not to invest time and energy helping the individual to achieve higher goals.

Lower expectations may not only affect the extent to which a person works toward success, but also how self-destructive behaviors are viewed. Murry et al. (2004) discuss the relatively high percentage of at-risk behaviors of African Americans with

respect to the rest of the United States population. Among those issues mentioned are earlier age of sexual behavior and pregnancy and the much higher percentage of HIV/AIDS cases and prison stints in the black community versus other groups. Perhaps this can be explained in part by lower external and internal expectations of African Americans. A person who does not perceive opportunities to advance may be unlikely to observe behaviors that exhibit self-respect.

Treatment of African Descendants in the Caribbean and the United States

The existence of a dominant culture, and one's level of membership in same, may affect a person's understanding of educational and economic opportunities. This is underscored by differences between African Americans and African Caribbeans identified by Hine-St. Hilaire (2006); while the dominant group in the West Indies is overwhelmingly made up of African descendants, in the United States African Americans are in the minority. It is also not uncommon for the people in power to be dark-skinned in Caribbean countries, while in the U.S. we are only recently seeing a rise in the numbers of powerful African descendants (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006). The opportunities in the Caribbean imply the power to achieve goals.

In the West Indies, hard work and higher levels of education have been feasible ways of improving one's class, even for a person of color [(Horowitz, 1971) Hine- St. Hilaire, 2006]. In other words, while racism may still exist, an individual may take advantage of higher education and break through from the oppressed classes. So again, we see that there are opportunities for Blacks, and that these opportunities are considered as attainable.

In contrast, in the United States brown-skinned people have often found themselves excluded in spite of hard work and education levels. An example of this can be found in the research of Ogbu (1991), in which he explored issues of discrimination in Stockton, California. Within the school system, Ogbu found that whether or not African American students performed well in classes, they were overwhelmingly and consistently given mid-level grades. Upon review of the contradiction between notes by teachers of good or improved performance and the actual grades, Ogbu interviewed teachers and found that:

The reward system that blacks experience in the classroom is compatible with the reward system that adult blacks encounter in the wider Stockton community where, historically, they have not been hired, paid or promoted on the basis of education and ability. The school is, therefore, unconsciously preparing black children for their destined future experience in the adult opportunity structure. (p. 271)

In other words, the school system may be attempting to make sure the students do not hope for better than they will actually achieve. Unfortunately, this also contributes to a lack of desire to try; if one always finds the same result regardless of effort, there is no reason to make a greater effort. In an attempt to help the children by not providing false hope, teachers are effectively hurting their students by providing little hope at all.

Where African Caribbeans might recognize an ability to control their own environments, African Americans have found themselves perpetually forced to participate in institutions and settings controlled by whites (Ogbu, 1995; Phinney &

Landin, 1998; Johnson, 2003). In addition, African Americans have had a history of oppression and exclusion that makes them feel they will never really be Americans, regardless of how many generations of their families have been in the U.S. or of their own work (Johnson, 2003). These facts help solidify the feelings of many African Americans that they have little control over their destinies.

Although African Americans might not feel that they will ever be seen as equal, many do seem to understand the importance of education in helping to make the playing field more level relative to current conditions. According to Bauman (1998), educational attainment levels for African Americans over the years have risen, and might even surpass those of whites when certain variables are controlled for. Bauman suggests several possible reasons for the upsurge: the introduction and perpetuation of affirmative action, possible lowered standards for African Americans relative to whites, and high teen unemployment rates that possibly discourage early dropout. It seems, then, that the closing of some doors and opening of others have provided previously unattainable opportunities for black Americans.

Identities of African Descendants Today

In The United States, the term “African American” has often been used to describe any persons of African descent living in the United States. Additionally, this label has been linked with stereotypical features such as laziness, lack of education, and lack of regard for current or future self, among others. However, there are many people of African descent living in the United States who do not identify themselves as African American, and may resent the label and its connotations, as well as the disregard for their

heritage implicit in the classification. Peoples from the Caribbean, specifically the British West Indies, may fit this category. This includes those who were born in the Caribbean and those whose families came from the Caribbean to the United States within the last several generations (Hine- St. Hilaire, 2006; Waters, 1999).

Agreeing with many African Caribbeans, Hine-St Hilaire (2006) believes that the African American and the African Caribbean people should not be grouped together as they often are in the United States. Although both groups share ancestry from Africa and many are descended of people brought overseas with the intent that they would become slaves, their circumstances and environments since their ancestors were brought from Africa have been very different. These differences may have affected their perceptions of self and of their possibilities to achieve.

Caribbean immigrants tend to have strong ties with the countries they hail from, showing great pride in their heritage (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006), while in the African American community it is possible that many feel no connection to any place of origin. One interesting concept discussed by Mary Waters (1999) is the death rates in the Caribbean versus the United States during slave times, and how that might have affected respective identities. In the Caribbean countries, slaveholders appeared to consider it “more economically efficient to work slaves literally to death and import new ones, than to treat slaves well enough that they would survive in sufficient numbers to reproduce” (p. 31). This practice of continually importing new African-born slaves had the effect of allowing for a more prolonged contact with African cultures and traditions in the West Indies than in the United States. It is possible that this practice of treating the slaves as

highly disposable, while abhorrent, may have served to assist in the solidification of cultural identities currently observable in the Caribbean societies. Conversely, the practice of breeding generations of slaves in the United States would have facilitated the decay of a strong cultural identity over the centuries.

Although it appears that African Caribbean immigrants attempt to disassociate with being African American, they are not the only ones. In his dissertation, Evrick Brown (2005) cites research by White & Glick (1999) that indicates that Puerto Ricans of dark skin color often cling to their Puerto Rican heritage as their defining culture, in an attempt not to be called black. This is also observed in Piri Thomas' autobiography, *Down These Mean Streets* (1967), when Thomas discusses how he and a light-skinned friend applied for a job together. After Thomas, a dark-skinned Puerto Rican, was advised that there were no current openings, his lighter-skinned friend was offered a job. Thomas remembers the response of a Black friend, that "a Negro faces that all the time" (p. 104). Thomas' answer was, "I know that, but I wasn't a Negro then. I was still only a Puerto Rican" (p. 104). The response indicates that Thomas had been aware of prejudice and its affect on African Americans, but that since he did not identify himself as Black, he did not realize that others might identify him as such, and therefore treat him accordingly.

The question of the definition of Black is further confused by the differing concepts of the word between people of the United States and people in the Caribbean. Natasha Barnes (2006) recounts the crowning of the first Miss Jamaica in 1954. The winner, Evelyn Andrade, was the daughter of a Black mother and a wealthy Jewish

father. Because of her father's high status in the Jamaican society, Andrade was considered white on the island. However, when Ebony covered the story of Andrade's entrance into the Miss Universe contest, the fact that her mother was Black caused the magazine to identify Andrade as the first Negro contestant ever.

Although racial classification and prejudice is prevalent in the United States and the Caribbean, it is by no means confined to these areas. Nancy Foner (1985) studied similarities and differences between Jamaican immigrants to New York and those to London. One similarity was that migrants to both countries have typically been more skilled as laborers than the average Jamaican, although the two decades preceding the study indicated that a much higher number of professional and non-manual workers headed to New York than to London. This may indicate that these were the individuals with the most desire to emigrate from their country, that these were the most-desired in the destinations, or perhaps both.

A second similarity found by Foner was that respondents in both cities lived in areas with high concentrations of Jamaicans in their respective destination cities. This may possibly have given a necessary comfort to those far from home. The cultural traditions and behaviors may have eased the transition from Jamaica to the new homes.

A third parallel mentioned was that, although black people were discriminated against in Jamaica, it was not nearly as prevalent as in the respective new cities. A possible reason for this is that, "blackness in Jamaica... is not in itself... a barrier toward upward mobility or to social acceptance (Foner, 1985)." Foner cites the Black population of over 90%, and the concept that economic status can override race in Jamaica, as

reasons for the feeling that race is not a great influencer of opportunities. Waters (1999) refers to the oft-utilized Caribbean phrase “money whitens” as an indication that economic status may change a person’s characterization within the racial spectrum. For example, “two people with the exact same skin coloring can be seen as different degrees of white or black if one is middle class and the other is poor” (p. 30). It is striking that in this case the ability to change one’s race, in a way, lies in one’s ability to advance economically.

An interesting distinction between Jamaicans living in London and those in New York, as indicated by Foner’s research, was that those living in New York were victims of a lower level of culture shock than those in London. One reason cited was that New York’s more racially-segregated areas actually provided a buffer, so that Jamaican immigrants found themselves less likely to be regular victims of discrimination than those in London. A second reason was that Jamaicans, who had always considered themselves British and learned about how wonderful Britain was, were shocked to find neither of these beliefs to be completely accurate. In contrast, those who moved to New York did not enter the city with as idealized an assumption about their destination, and therefore experienced less impressive shock levels (1985).

Another possible explanation why people who have decided to settle in New York might experience less culture shock is media influence. In her discussion of Caribbean immigration to New York, Waters (1999) notes that relatively realistic views of racial discrimination prior to entering the country may stem from the increased exposure of Caribbean households in recent decades to American television and radio broadcasts, as

well as music. Because of this, concepts surrounding prejudice and racism that may never have been considered might now be recognized prior to entering the United States, allowing a person to prepare for possible discriminatory behaviors.

Another reason for difference in levels of discrimination between mother country and destination country was that “colored” people, described by Foner as those born of white men and slave women, traditionally had opportunities, including education, that were denied to slaves, creating a class of dark-skinned persons of relatively high status. This too might have positively affected hopes and expectations of Jamaicans of African descent, particularly those of mixed heritage.

Respondents in neither destination city found as fluid a definition of race as they had known in Jamaica. Where in Jamaica, education and economic status can actually trump shades of brown in determining class status, conversely, in both New York and London Jamaicans found that black is black, and their blackness did not bode well for them. The feelings of these newcomers might have been similar to the shock Piri Thomas felt to find that in the eyes of many people in the United States, he was black regardless of his Puerto Rican heritage.

While African Americans still may perceive racism as a problem, there has been a rise in the number of middle class African Americans since the Civil Rights Movement. Waters (1999) explains that this relatively new addition to the middle class does not experience as much discrimination as the lower class African Americans. However, Waters cautions that “American society is a fundamentally racist society. The Caribbean is a society where there is racism” (42). In other words, a system of racism persists

throughout American culture, while in the Caribbean, racism exists, but is not interwoven so deeply into the society. In America, money does not “whiten”, but it may cause the dominant society to accept those with money more readily than those without.

In the United States, the struggle for political correctness seems to have created a dilemma for the discourse on race, where the language of racism has not quite disappeared, but simply become more subtle. Tatum (1997) explains how, in today’s society, white Americans often believe that “Blacks are not worse, but Whites are better.” To illustrate the point, Tatum cites conversations with her white students, who report supporting affirmative action as long as it does not interfere with their own chances for employment. In other words, greater opportunity for African Americans is acceptable unless it results in a decrease in opportunity for the dominant culture. This indicates that people such as those in Tatum’s class either do not know or do not care about the fact that European Americans have such a greater number of opportunities that a small decrease in their offerings still does not deplete their opportunity pool.

Although perhaps a less controversial topic than race relations, cultural identity is a topic that may be related to racism, particularly for African descendants. Cultural identity is at least as fluid as definitions of black, as indicated by participant responses to research. In her 1999 study, Waters discusses second generation immigrants’ beliefs regarding education and racism. Waters found that there were three self-identities among the respondents: first were those who self-identified as immigrant, by the country of origin. The second group considered themselves to be American. The third self-identified ethnically.

Those who considered themselves by the country of origin tended to have views that were in between the others two groups. Respondents who self-identified as American were more likely to perceive themselves to have been affected by racism and tended to have lower education aspirations than those who self-identified ethnically. Participants who considered themselves American also downplayed their parents' ethnicity and connection to their homeland, believing that the dominant American culture only sees them as black, and treats them accordingly. In contrast, those who self-defined ethnically were more likely to have an attachment to their parents' home country and less likely to believe that the dominant culture viewed them only as black. In addition, the ethnically-identified respondents were more likely to be middle class, while the American-identified respondents were more often of a lower socioeconomic status. This indicates that perhaps the economic situation can work in conjunction with race and cultural identity to influence levels of oppression experienced by persons of color (Waters, 1999).

It is possible that the ethnically identified and American identified groups could be categorized within the context of the voluntary and involuntary minorities discussed by Ogbu (1991). In this case, a fourth group might be added to the involuntary minority category: that of persons whose parents are voluntary minorities, but who are involuntary in that they were not given a choice but to become minorities. This would also expand the definition of how a person becomes an involuntary minority, to include those whose parents decided for them.

According to the United States Census Bureau (2008), 28% of all Americans obtain bachelor's degrees. Over thirty percent of white Americans and approximately

eighteen percent of black Americans complete a bachelor's education. Thirty-eight percent of immigrants from the African continent and twenty percent of immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America also have bachelor's degrees upon entering the United States. These numbers indicate that immigrants whose ancestry is African are better educated than their American counterparts, and that at least in the case of immigrants coming directly from Africa tend to be more highly educated even than white Americans. These statistics also indicate that having African blood does not in itself preclude educational achievement opportunities.

Biases and Flaws of Existing Research

While no study is completely infallible, there tend to be specific defects in current studies relative to African descendants. One significant flaw of current research is that investigators tend to aid in the propagation of stereotypes against African Americans. Murry, Kotchick, Wallace, Ketchen, Eddings, et al. (2004) reviewed existing research, with respect to inclusion of African Americans. It was found that much of the research either completely disregards African Americans or takes a deficit approach when comparing African Americans to European Americans. For example, white family behaviors are often used as a standard to which African American families should aspire. Very little attention is paid to possible reasons for, or positive aspects of, African American family behaviors, such as the authoritarian parenting style as a proper response to environmental issues like socioeconomic status and regular exposure to high-stress situations. This indicates both a disregard for the possibility that African Americans have different needs than the dominant culture, and a disbelief in the concept that those needs

must be met by means not currently provided by adhering to acceptable behaviors as defined by the dominant culture.

Another interesting observation by Murry et al. (2004) is that African American males are traditionally omitted from research, even when they are actively participating in the lives of their families. It is possible that this exclusion is at once a result of researcher bias and a means of perpetuating the stereotype of male absenteeism in the African American society. Although it is true that many African American households are headed by single mothers, this does not mean that no fathers are around, or that minority families are the only ones headed by single mothers.

With a view to research regarding educational differences between minorities and other cultures, Ogbu (1991) discusses several problematic characteristics of existing research. First, research generally overlooks the possible existence of factors outside of the control of minorities, such as racism or economic issues that may affect a group's ability to succeed in school. Second, there has been little concern for the minority groups' beliefs and understanding surrounding academic achievement and success. Finally, much of the research explores the behaviors of minorities from the perspective of the dominant culture, effectively ignoring the groups' own views of their behaviors. This lack of understanding is inadvisable, as it may result in a deficit approach such as examined earlier in this section.

Studies such as those by Rascoe and Greif, et al. were flawed, first because both were qualitative. Although a qualitative study allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the individual, it is time-consuming and doesn't often allow for much objectivity.

Also, a qualitative study usually does not allow for larger-scale research: Greif, et al. interviewed 38 participants and Rascoe only interviewed three mothers. However, the research was very important given the dearth of literature regarding African Americans.

Existing Theoretical Frameworks

Previous literature has provided a theoretical background that helps guide the current study. Ogbu (1991) discusses different levels of academic success and possible reasons. Ogbu indicates that those minorities who perform better academically than their less successful cohorts differ in two main respects. The first difference is the “cultural model that guides them (Ogbu, 1991),” or their knowledge about society and how they fit in as minorities. The second difference found is the divergent histories that influence their perceptions of their conditions. To elucidate the point, a deeper look at voluntary and involuntary minorities is useful.

As mentioned previously, voluntary minorities are those who entered into minority status by choice, for reasons such as economic or political necessity, while involuntary minorities were not provided the choice. Some of the second generation African Caribbean immigrants in the study by Waters (1999) might be considered involuntary in that, although their parents chose to move to the United States, the children had no choice. Ogbu (1991) mentions that, while both types of minority might receive the same type of treatment, the proverbial lenses through which they perceive the treatment will guide their reactions. For example, voluntary minorities, when met with discriminatory practices, might consider such barriers as temporary obstacles, which can be countered by hard work and education. In addition, voluntary minorities are more

likely to perceive the discrimination as a result of their status as an immigrant than due to racial or ethnic prejudice.

In contrast, the involuntary minority is more likely to resent discriminatory treatment, and to attribute it to racial or ethnic prejudice. Additionally, involuntary minorities tend to believe that the barriers they face cannot be overcome through any means perceived to be controlled by the dominant culture. Tatum (1997) discusses this as a system of racism, in which the dominant culture benefits from the same system that oppresses others. As Ogbu explains, it is in response to these perceived immovable barriers that many involuntary minorities form a secondary culture, one that in many respects contradicts the teachings of the dominant culture (1991).

To explain the difference in perception between voluntary and involuntary minorities regarding discriminatory treatment, Ogbu (1991) discusses the concept of a dual frame of reference. Those individuals who move to the United States from another country can compare their current situations to the environment in their homelands. Many of these immigrants perceive themselves to be in a better situation than previously. In the event that an individual feels the situation is not better, the option to return to the home country is generally available.

Unlike their voluntary counterparts, involuntary minorities do not have a dual frame of reference. They only know the history and current circumstances facing them in this country, and therefore have no point of comparison. In many cases, these individuals do not have ties to other countries, and would therefore be less likely to explore the

possibility of leaving the current country. The perceived lack of another option may perpetuate the belief in a lack of opportunistic alternatives.

The concepts of voluntary versus involuntary minorities, as well as the dual frame of reference, may be very important in the current study. Involuntary minorities are more likely to resent their position and to view their position negatively than voluntary minorities. Their involuntary status, coupled with their inability to see the possibility of other options for advancement, may further their feelings of hopelessness. This in turn would negatively affect the desire to strive; there is no reason to strive when one has no hope of attainment.

Summary

Existing research has offered insight into the challenges facing African American and African Caribbean individuals, as well as the apparent differences in perception of the two groups regarding such topics as educational aspiration, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy. Those differences seem to be influenced by Historical Cultural Identity, Subjective Cultural Identity, and Assigned Cultural Identity. Additionally, it appears that the extent to which participants in previous research perceived racism to have been an impact in their lives may also be related to their responses regarding these concepts.

A review of the history of the slave trade and slavery in the United States and in the Caribbean also highlights differences in treatment of Caribbean slaves and their descendants versus American slaves and theirs. While in the United States, a child born of a slave was a slave regardless of whether one of the parents was white, in the Caribbean differences in parentage often accorded children of slaves certain rights,

including education, which even their parents may not have had. This is a significant cultural difference, because it has made an impact on many generations that have followed.

The existing literature on the subjects of African American and African Caribbean experiences is very important in indicating what perceptions and factors may affect abilities to succeed in the U.S. However, the current body of knowledge tends to be qualitative rather than quantitative, and as a result there is very little evidence that the phenomenon may be affecting many persons of African descent living in the United States. The current study is quantitative, and seeks to use the response of a greater number of participants to bridge the current gap in research. This will assist in identifying the possible existence of patterns of oppression, and finding opportunities for correcting these patterns.

Chapter 3

Methods

Variables

The independent variable of cultural identity will be divided into three levels: Historical Cultural Identity (HCI), Subjective Cultural Identity (SCI), and Assigned Cultural Identity (ACI). HCI refers to the culture of the person's ancestry. SCI indicates the self-identified culture of the respondent. ACI is the culture the participant states is most often attributed by the dominant racial group in the United States. Demographic variables are included to assist in determining whether other factors may work in conjunction with cultural identity to affect participant responses. These variables include childhood SES, who the respondent was raised by, educational attainment of respondents' parents, and relationship to people of influence.

The dependent variables are perceptions regarding educational aspirations, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy. Educational aspirations indicate whether the participant plans to further education and the highest level of educational attainment the respondent expects of himself or herself. Personal responsibility indicates the extent to which the respondent feels responsible for life events. The extent to which a respondent feels able to control life situations is self-efficacy.

Research Questions

- 1) What is the differential impact of historical cultural identity on educational aspirations, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?
- 2) What is the differential impact of subjective cultural identity on educational aspirations, personal responsibility and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?
- 3) What is the differential impact of assigned cultural identity on educational aspirations, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?
- 4) What is the differential impact of related demographic variables on educational aspirations, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?

Rationale

The rationale for the use of the independent variables is that existing literature suggests that cultural identity may affect educational aspirations and perceptions about personal responsibility and self-efficacy. Moreover, previous studies highlight the possibility that HCI, SCI, and ACI may each relate to a respondent's views regarding the dependent variables. The current study seeks to build on this concept, and to determine whether there may be a higher correlation between one or more of these variables and participant perceptions.

The rationale for the use of demographic and relationship variables is that it is possible that previous and current demography and relationships may influence the lens through which a person views the world and his or her position in same. It is important to determine whether a correlation exists between such factors and the dependent variables, so as to inform possible inferences regarding change.

The rationale for the use of educational aspiration as a dependent variable is that educational aspiration may help indicate expectations of later success of a respondent or the respondent's children. The rationale for the use of personal responsibility as a variable is the apparent lack of a feeling of personal responsibility among those who feel there are many barriers to their success. Self-efficacy as a third independent variable assists in indicating whether the respondent perceives the inner power to control or handle life's situations, including barriers. The indication in literature is that a person who feels generally in control may also perceive higher levels of personal responsibility, and may therefore have higher expectations of self and offspring relative to educational aspirations, presumably leading to more ambitious career goals, than the counterpart who does not report higher levels of self-efficacy and personal responsibility.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in the study incorporated components of the Revised Generalized Expectancy of Success Scale (Hale, W. D., Fieldler, L.R., & Cochran, C.D. (1992) for educational aspirations, the General Self- Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1993) to measure self-efficacy, the Vocational Locus of Control Scale (Fournier & Jeanrie, 2003) and the Internal v. External Control of Reinforcement Scale

(Rotter, 1966) to measure personal responsibility. The scales were tested for reliability relative to the two groups. The scales were found to be reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of .710 for African Americans and an alpha of .680 for African Caribbeans.

Data Collection

IRB approval was obtained in prior to disseminating the surveys. Surveys were distributed to African American and African Caribbean respondents in several cities, including New York City, Knoxville, Tennessee, Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. The instrument was disseminated by hand in locations near Knoxville and Atlanta, and electronically or by mail to locations not easily accessible by car. The completed forms were retrieved using the same methods by which they were circulated.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the statistical analysis program SPSS 17 for Windows. Three statistical procedures were employed for analysis. Frequency distributions were used to determine the demographic information about the sample. The Pearson Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to measure strength of relationship between specific variables. A *t*-test for Independent Samples was used to determine significant differences between variables.

Chapter IV

Results

Demographic Information

Demographics for All Respondents

Out of a total of 121 respondents, 88 reported an African American HCI, and 32 reported an African Caribbean HCI. Ages ranged from 17 to 61, with a mean age of 26.37 years ($SD = 10.168$). The gender of 76% of respondents was female, while 24% were male. Unmarried respondents totaled 93, which was 76.9%, married totaled 20, or 16.5%, and those who indicated being divorced or living jointly totaled 4 (3.3%), respectively. The majority (112) of respondents stated their race was black, while seven respondents indicated biracial or multiracial, and one each stated Native American and Other. The number of respondents born in the United States was 93 (80.9%), the number born in the Caribbean was 21 (18.2%), and one respondent indicated having been born in a European nation. Fifteen respondents reported a childhood SES of Lower Class, 38 reported Working Class, 55 indicated Middle Class, and 12 indicated Upper Middle. Current SES of Lower was reported by 4 respondents, Working Class by 37, Middle Class by 63, Upper Middle Class by 13, and Upper Class by 1. Six respondents indicated a highest education level of high school, 80 indicated some college. Five participants stated they had achieved associate's degrees, 17 respondents indicated having completed a bachelor's degree, 10 reported a master's, medical, or law degree. Three respondents reported completing a Ph.D.

Demographics by HCI

The age range of African Americans was 17 to 59, with a mean of 24.19 (SD= 8.414). The range of ages for African Caribbeans was 17 to 61, with a mean of 32.17 (SD= 12.279). African Americans who reported being married were 9, or 10.2%, while 31.3% of African Caribbeans indicated being married. Unmarried African Americans totaled 73, or 83% of African Americans. Unmarried African Caribbeans were 62.5%, or 20. African Americans reported childhood SES as follows: 11 indicated Lower, 26 stated Working, 44 indicated Middle, and seven reported Upper Middle class. African Caribbeans reported childhood as follows: Lower totaled four responses, Working 12, 11 respondents reported Middle, and five indicated Upper Middle class. Three African Americans reported current SES of Lower, 28 reported Working, 47 indicated Middle, seven stated Upper Middle, and one indicated Upper class. One African Caribbean indicated Lower, nine indicated working, 16 reported Middle, and six stated Upper middle as their current SES. Three African Americans indicated having a highest education level of high school, 67 reported some college, two indicated an associate's degree, eight respondents indicated having acquired bachelor's degrees, six had received a medical, law, or master's degree, and two indicated having acquired a PhD. Three African Caribbeans reported a high school education, 13 indicated some college, two stated associate's degrees, eight reported having acquired bachelor's degrees, four indicated master's, medical, or law degrees, and one reported having a Ph.D.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the differential impact of historical cultural identity (HCI) on educational aspirations, personal responsibility and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?

Educational Aspiration by HCI

For the first part of the question, dealing with educational aspirations relative to HCI, an independent samples t-test was performed. A statistically significant difference was found between the two groups on the item asking, “Do you plan to continue your education?” ($t(114) = 2.930, p < .05$). The mean of the African American group was significantly higher ($m = .93, sd = .256$) than the mean of the African Caribbean group ($m = .73, sd = .450$).

No significant difference was found when testing for a significant difference in educational level expected.

Personal Responsibility by HCI

See Table 1.

Self-efficacy by HCI

See Table 2.

Research Question 2: What is the differential impact of subjective cultural identity (SCI) on educational aspirations, personal responsibility and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?

Educational Aspiration by SCI

An independent samples t test was conducted to determine a differential relationship in educational aspirations based on SCI. No significant difference was found between the AA and AC groups on the basis of race, nationality, or country of birth.

Personal Responsibility Based on SCI

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy Based on SCI

See Table 2.

Research Question 3: What is the differential impact of assigned cultural identity on educational aspirations, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?

Educational Aspiration by ACI

An independent samples *t*- test was conducted to determine a differential relationship in educational aspirations based on ACI. No significant difference was found between the two groups based on an ACI of race. There was not enough data in the Nationality or Other category to compare.

Personal Responsibility Based on ACI

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy Based on ACI

See Table 2.

Research Question 4: What is the differential impact of related demographic variables on educational aspirations, personal responsibility and self-efficacy between African Americans and African Caribbeans?

Demographic of Childhood SES

Educational Aspiration by Demographic of Childhood SES

An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AC to AA based on the related demographic variable of Childhood SES, with regard to educational aspiration. When comparing based on Childhood SES of Lower or Working Class, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the item “Do you plan to continue your education?” ($t(50) = 2.361, p < .05$). The mean for the AA group was significantly higher ($m = .92, sd = .277$) than the mean for the AC group ($m = .67, sd = .488$). There was a significant difference regarding the expected level ($t(41) = 2.748, p < .05$). The mean of the AA group was significantly higher ($m = 6.36, sd = .549$) than the mean of the AC group ($m = 5.80, sd = .632$).

When comparing based on Childhood SES of Middle or Upper Middle Class, there was no significant difference with regard to plans to continue education or level of education expected to complete.

Personal Responsibility by Demographic of Childhood SES

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Childhood SES

See Table 2.

Demographic of Raised By

Educational Aspiration by Demographic of Raised By

An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AC to AA based on the related demographic variable of Raised By, with regard to educational aspiration. When comparing those raised by both parents, a statistically significant difference was found between the two groups on the item “Do you plan to continue your education?” ($t(70) = 3.079, p < .05$). The mean for AA group was significantly higher ($m = .94, sd = .233$) than the mean for the AC group ($m = .68, sd = .478$).

There was no significant difference found when comparing the two groups when Raised By responses were Only One Parent, One Parent and One Other Person, or Other. There was no significant difference found with regard to the expected level of education to be obtained.

Personal Responsibility By Demographic of Raised By

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Raised By

See Table 2.

Demographic of Father's Highest Educational Level

Educational Aspiration by Demographic of Father's Highest Educational Level

An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AC to AA based on the related demographic variable of father's highest educational level, with regard to educational aspiration. A statistically significant difference was found

between the two groups when father's educational level was some college, on the item "Do you plan to continue your education?" ($t(24) = 2.193, p < .05$). The mean for the AA group was significantly higher ($m = .94, sd = .236$) than the mean for the AC group ($m = .63, sd = .518$).

No significant difference was found between the two groups in whether they expected to continue or in the expected level of completion, when father's educational level was high school or less or bachelor's or higher. No significant difference was found between the two groups on expected level of completion when father's educational level was some college.

Personal Responsibility by Demographic of Father's Highest Educational Level

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Father's Highest Educational Level

See Table 2.

Demographic of Mother's Highest Educational Level

Educational Aspiration by Demographic of Mother's Highest Educational Level

In independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AA and AC respondents with regard to educational aspiration based on mother's highest level of education. No significant differences were found when the mother's educational level was high school or less, or some college, on the expectation of continuing education or on the expected level of completion.

A statistically significant difference was found when the mother's educational level was bachelor or higher, on the item "Do you plan to continue your education?"

($t(44) = 2.831, p < .05$). The mean for the AA group was significantly higher ($m = .95, sd = .226$) than the mean for the AC group ($m = .63, sd = .518$).

There was no significant difference found in the level of education expected to complete when the mother's highest educational attainment was bachelor's degree.

Personal Responsibility by Demographic of Mother's Highest Educational Level

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Mother's Highest Educational Level

See Table 2.

Demographic of Most Influential Person

Educational Aspiration by Most Influential Person

An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AC and AA respondents based on educational aspiration relative to the most influential person indicated. A statistically significant difference was found between the two groups when a parent was the most influential person on the item "Do you plan to continue your education?" ($t(75) = 2.056, p < .05$). The mean of the AA group ($m = .93, sd = .260$) was significantly higher than the mean of the AC group ($m = .76, sd = .436$).

No significant difference was found in the expected level of completion, regardless of the relationship to the most influential person.

Personal Responsibility by Demographic of Most Influential Person

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Most Influential Person

See Table 2.

Demographic of Second Most Influential Person

Educational Aspiration by Demographic of Second Most Influential Person

An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AC and AA respondents based on educational aspiration relative to the most influential person indicated. A significant difference was found in whether a respondent expected to continue education when a parent was the second most influential person ($t(56) = 2.658$, $p < .05$). The mean of the AA group was significantly higher ($m = .93$, $sd = .258$) than the mean of the AC group ($m = .67$, $sd = .488$).

No significant difference was found in expected level of completion when second most influential person was a parent. No significant difference was found in whether the respondent expected to continue or the expected level of completion, when the respondent indicated other relative or non-relative as the second most influential person.

A significant difference was found in whether a respondent expected to continue education when no second most influential person was chosen ($t(11) = 2.760$, $p < .05$). The mean of the AA group was significantly higher ($m = 1.00$, $sd = .000$) than the mean of the AC group ($m = .50$, $sd = .577$).

There was no significant difference in the expected completion level between the two groups based on no second influential person chosen.

Personal Responsibility by Demographic of Second Most Influential Person

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Second Most Influential Person

See Table 2.

Demographic of Third Most Influential Person

Educational Aspiration by Demographic of Third Most Influential Person

An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the mean scores of AC and AA respondents based on educational aspiration relative to the third most influential person indicated. No respondents indicated a parent as a third most influential person.

A statistically significant difference was found between the two groups when the third most influential person was another relative, on the item “Do you plan to continue your education?” ($t(53) = 2.408, p < .05$). The mean for the AA group was significantly higher ($m = .95, sd = .226$) than the mean for the AC group ($m = .76, sd = .437$).

No significant difference was found in expected completion level when other relative was chose as third most influential, or in plan to continue or expected level of completion when the third most influential person was either a non-relative or not chosen.

Personal Responsibility by Demographic of Third Most Influential Person

See Table 1.

Self-Efficacy by Demographic of Third Most Influential Person

See Table 2.

Chapter V

Discussion and Conclusions

Differences

Educational aspiration

The results indicate that African Americans were significantly more likely to state that they plan to continue their education than African Caribbeans. This was true for every significant educational aspiration response, regardless of the independent variable introduced. This may indicate that the reason for the difference was not the independent variable, but another factor. The demographic data indicate that the African American respondents were of a younger average age, and less likely to be married, than African Caribbean participants. The difference may be related to the groups inhabiting fundamentally dissimilar life stages. For instance, a younger person with no family responsibilities may perceive a greater amount of freedom with regard to continuing education than a person who has a family.

Another unexplored possibility is current educational level of each group. A person who has already completed college education may be unlikely to indicate an expectation of continuing relative to one who has not. The case may be that the African American respondents are more likely than those African Caribbeans surveyed to be currently attending or preparing to attend college, particularly when the younger average age is taken into account. Upon further investigation, one may also find that the difference in educational aspiration disappears when age is controlled for.

Personal Responsibility

When reviewing personal responsibility it became clear that African Caribbeans provided responses that exhibited a higher level of perceived personal responsibility than African Americans. This may once again be related to the difference in age and marital status between the groups. A person who is older may be more mature due to experience than a younger person. Additionally, a married person may have a level of responsibility to family not shared with a single individual.

Several patterns emerged when considering personal responsibility responses. One pattern is that across almost all independent variables African Caribbeans were significantly more likely to indicate that what happens to them has nothing to do with luck. The only independent variable category that did not see a significant difference on this item was that of mother's educational level. Such a strong level of association with the item indicates that it is perhaps not the independent variable that was introduced which is causing the reaction, but another variable not previously considered. For example, it is possible that African Caribbeans are generally less likely to believe in luck or chance than African Americans. Or perhaps there are different cultural understandings of the meaning of luck or chance. Either possibility might explain the significant difference noticed.

A second pattern occurred with the introduction of the independent variable of SCI. African Caribbeans exclusively reported more personal responsibility in this case. This may indicate that an individual's self-identity is directly linked to how the person views responsibility for the self and actions. Conversely, that HCI only received one

significant response, on the aforementioned item regarding luck, indicates that a person's ancestry may not be as important as the self-identity in determining levels of personal responsibility.

Two further areas where patterns were noticed included the variables of mother's educational level and having chosen another relative as the third most influential person. In both of these cases once again, African Caribbeans perceived higher levels of personal responsibility. It appears that the presence of a mother and of at least three caring individuals in one's life have an impact on a person's sense of ownership of responsibilities. Perhaps this means that a person who has strong ties with several influential people is more likely to feel the importance of personal responsibility than one who does not have those bonds.

Self-efficacy

In contrast to the findings of the personal responsibility items, African Americans were more likely to perceive higher levels of self-efficacy than were their Caribbean counterparts. Although there were fewer categories where African Americans exclusively dominated, it is interesting that they existed. The first pattern observed was on the item indicating the extent to which a respondent felt able to solve problems with effort. What is interesting about this item is that there is a somewhat similar item on the personal responsibility scale that states that a person who tries hard can reach goals. However, on the latter item there was only one area of significant difference between the groups; when comparing respondents raised by one parent, African Caribbeans were significantly more likely to agree more strongly with the statement.

This divergence seems almost like a contradiction, although there are two differences between the items which might provide a clue about the difference in responses. First, the statement on the self-efficacy scale is concerned with the participant's belief in his or her own ability, while the item on the personal responsibility scale indicated a broader view toward people in general. Explored through such a lens, it is possible to see that the respondents are more likely to be confident in their own abilities than in those of others. Second, the first item discussed solving problems, indicating a situation that presented itself for correction, while the second concerns itself with goals that the individual would presumably have had a hand in creating. This distinction may denote that African Americans perceive themselves to have a better ability to react, while African Caribbeans might feel better able to plan and work toward achieving their goals.

Dichotomy between Personal Responsibility and Self-Efficacy

One interesting discovery was the fact that, when the results were reviewed, it was clear that each of the two groups dominated one of the dependent variables of personal responsibility and self-efficacy, meaning that neither group dominated both. This is notable in that it contradicts current literature that indicate that personal responsibility and self-efficacy are interwoven, so that a person with higher levels of reported self-efficacy would be more likely to perceive personal responsibility as well. Because of this dichotomy, it is important to explore possible reasons.

As previously stated, the difference in life stages between African American and African Caribbean participants may affect the responses provided. It is possible that the

average African Caribbean respondent perceives higher levels of personal responsibility because of responsibility to act for the sake of more than the self. It may also be the case that African American respondents are more likely to have feelings of self-efficacy because many of them only have to consider their own needs when making decisions. If we view self-efficacy as a person's ability to say "I can", and personal responsibility as a person's statement that "I should", then it would follow that an individual who is married with children and a mortgage might be more likely to say "I can't do what I want because I should do what I must." In this case, the personal responsibility would hinder the person's ability to do as he or she wishes because other variables must be considered.

Another possible reason for the disparity is spirituality. African Caribbeans were more likely to indicate that luck or chance does not play a role in their lives than were African Americans. African Caribbeans also tended to perceive higher levels of control over their own lives than their American counterparts. It is possible that African Americans were considering the questions from a spiritual or religious standpoint, and were therefore considering the possibility of the presence of a higher power in their decisions. Further exploration into the role of spirituality and religion may offer insight.

A third possibility for the divergence is the difference in perceptions of racism. As mentioned in the literature reviews, African Americans were more likely than African Caribbeans to perceive racism as a barrier to their success. For this reason, an African American may feel that the system of racism in this country is powerful enough to allow or deny opportunities regardless of how hard a person might work in order to deserve options. If this is the case, such an individual might feel less responsibility for self and

future than would someone who does not perceive racism as strongly. Previous literature indicates that African Caribbeans were more likely to consider prejudice against them as a reaction to immigrant status than based on race, and to believe that perceptions could change with hard work on the part of the individual who is experiencing such treatment. The question of the effect of ideas about racism was not explored in this study, but might also provide insight if reviewed.

A final point to consider regarding this dichotomy is recent history. Data collection for the current research occurred during a time when we as a nation had elected the first president of African descent, Barack Obama. Not only the country, but also the world, watched over the past many months as a man of relative obscurity first clinched the democratic nod over favorite Hillary Clinton, and then continued toward the presidency. The chants of “yes we can” are reminiscent of the children’s tale “The Little Engine that Could”, no less because both the man and the fictional train reached their goals. African Americans were privy to the ultimate achievement of a position that some may consider a symbol of the shattering of the last and greatest racial barrier. It is unfortunate that there was no quantitative study available on the same subject from a year or two ago, with which to compare responses and determine a relationship. However, the natural high experienced across the nation’s cities when President-Elect Obama was named such indicates that many citizens felt this was their own victory. Such emotion could have affected the way a person views his or her options and possibilities. Moreover, when we witnessed even other countries celebrating Obama’s election, it is

not unfathomable that the difference between current and previous studies is related at least in part to this recent historic election.

Similarities

While it is important to discuss the differences found between African Americans and African Caribbeans, it is also meaningful to mention that there were some areas where no significant differences were found. For example, on the item that asked the extent to which a person believes success is in his or her own hands, no significant differential response was elicited on any level. A similar lack of significance occurred on the item that asked the participants to gauge whether they feel they have control over things that happen to them. The items that dealt with perceived ability to handle unforeseen situations and expectation to do well in things they try also did not reflect a significant difference. These similarities may indicate that both groups believe they take an active and important part in their own futures.

Another question that had a similar level of response from both groups asked how much respondents felt people's misfortunes are a result of their own mistakes. Neither group seemed to react too strongly to this question. Both groups were more likely to feel that this was only the case sometimes rather than more often. It is possible that the present economic climate or personal experience with unexpected misfortune informed this type of response.

Some additional situations in which there appeared to be no difference included self-efficacy when tested based on HCI, educational aspiration based on SCI or ACI, and self-efficacy by an SCI of race or country. This information suggests that, while cultural

identity may have some relation to a person's self-perception, it is certainly not the only factor that determines how a person understands himself or herself.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the study is the design. In the interest of time and because of a desire to acquire a large number of responses, the study was quantitative. While this was helpful in being able to determine significance and to infer, it also meant that there was no ability to follow up. At times when it might have been beneficial to ask a participant for clarification on a response to a question, I did not have access to the respondent in order to do so. As such, while the results may have answered some questions or clarified some obscurities, the information also created new questions that will need to be answered.

A second limitation is that, also due to time constraints, it was not possible to explore all possible independent variables, such as religion or perceived racism. There was no chance to review the results relative to variables such as age or educational level. For this reason it is not currently possible to know whether and how any or all of these characteristics might relate to responses.

Time issues also precluded the ability to compare the data across multiple cultures. It would have been helpful to be able to evaluate the responses of white, Asian, or Hispanic Americans relative to those of the African American and African Caribbean. Doing so may have highlighted possible areas of similarity or difference between the two that are not shared among the other groups.

A fourth limitation of the study was the unequal number of respondents. There were more than twice as many African American respondents as African Caribbean, and the numbers may have affected the results. Knoxville, the city where collection of a majority of the data occurred does not have a high number of Caribbean inhabitants, and there was very limited time to acquire data from those areas more heavily populated by Caribbean descendents. The use of scales that have been frequently replicated and the method of self-administered surveys may have helped to lessen the effect of this particular limitation, and the instruments were tested for reliability in a further attempt to alleviate this issue.

Suggestions for Further Research

In future studies, it would be beneficial to include religion and spirituality as a variable. Levels of religious or spiritual understanding or feeling may relate to the viewpoints of the respondents. Additionally, perceived racism should be included to determine if levels of perceived racism appear related to self-efficacy or to personal responsibility. The inclusion of other cultures for better comparison would be beneficial for better inference ability.

Another area to explore is the family situation. A closer look at whether a respondent is responsible for a family may also provide insight into the question of whether family obligations affect self-efficacy or personal responsibility responses. Additionally, the strength of kinship networks might affect responses, so this should be added to future research for a more comprehensive understanding.

Because of the difference in age between the two groups it would be prudent to test for possible significant differences in educational aspiration based on this variable. Similarly, it would be good to explore whether current educational level has a correlation with whether a person expects to continue education. This might answer the question of why African American respondents tended to report higher levels of educational aspiration than African Caribbean participants.

Implications for Social Workers

Social workers must strive for cultural competence when dealing with clients. A social worker who believes all peoples of African descent are African American might offend a client who does not consider himself or herself to be African American. The current study helps to shed light on the fact that, while similarities exist, there are many differences between the cultures. Social workers can take such knowledge and better understand the complexities of different cultures of the African dynamic.

The better understanding might lead to greater ability to assist clients who are of African descent. Armed with such knowledge, a social worker might be able to better recognize and quell stereotypes and biases they harbor, as well as those of fellow workers or clients. This may help counteract prejudices and prejudicial practices.

With regard to assisting clients to have greater levels of personal responsibility, it may be beneficial to give such clients their own areas of responsibilities. For example, in a group setting, electing each participant to have a title, explaining the responsibilities and expectations of the title, and delineating and following through with consequences of actions related to the title, might assist a client in need of a greater sense of personal

responsibility. Each person's responsibilities should have some effect on the others in the group, for better understanding that personal responsibility does not only mean being responsible for self, but sometimes for others as well. This type of exercise would offer a safe environment inside of which participants can learn and practice skills related to personal responsibility.

For assistance with self-efficacy, it might be a good idea to provide tasks to be completed. Each task would be more difficult than the last, and positive feedback would help the client realize how much he or she had learned in that time. This would also be held in a safe and welcoming environment and the tasks in both the personal responsibility and self-efficacy groups would be tasks that do not cause undue harm to clients.

One of the premises of this study was that educational aspiration, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy would have a positive correlation. It appears that this is not always the case. It is important that we as social workers consider the possibility that success is not always based on a combination of the three either. As social workers, we are taught to start where the client is; with this in mind, we must understand that success may not be measured the same way for each person, and that just because a person may not fit our descriptions of success does not mean he or she is not achieving to the individual's own standards.

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Appendix A

Consent Letter

Consent Form

Study Title: The impact of culture and national origin on educational aspirations, personal responsibility, and self-efficacy: A comparative analysis of African American and African Caribbean adults

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to compare the impact of culture on attitudes of different populations of African descent. Our areas of interest include your *future goals*, your *personal responsibilities* in achieving those goals, what you may perceive as *obstacles*, your *family characteristics*, and the role of *spiritualism* in your life.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked by a graduate student to complete a survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your name will not appear anywhere on the survey. Upon completion of the survey, it will be returned to the student who will immediately file it among other anonymous surveys for analysis.

There are no risks involved in the study and no incentives are offered for your participation. The benefits of the study, however, are very important. The study will lead to a better understanding of different cultures of the African Diaspora, and evidence-based strategies for promoting positive intercultural relationships in Black and other communities.

All information will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to the two people conducting the study. No references will be made that could link you to the study. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Stan L. Bowie, or Ms. Donna M. Dopwell, University of Tennessee College of Social Work, 326 Henson Hall, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37996 (Phone: 865-974-0692).

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline to participate without penalty. If you change your mind about participating while completing the survey, you may withdraw at anytime without penalty and the survey will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

Your voluntary completion of the survey indicates that you read the above information and constitutes your consent to be a participant in the study.
Thank you for your time.

Appendix B

Survey

**A Survey of Education Aspirations, Personal Responsibility, and Self-Efficacy
Among African American and African Caribbean Adults**

1. Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY) ____/____/____

2. Gender
 - a. ____ Male
 - b. ____ Female

3. Marital Status
 - a. ____ Unmarried
 - b. ____ Married
 - c. ____ Divorced
 - d. ____ Unmarried, living jointly

4. Race (select all that apply)
 - a. ____ White
 - b. ____ Black
 - c. ____ Hispanic
 - d. ____ Asian/Pacific Islander
 - e. ____ Native American/Native Alaskan
 - f. ____ Biracial/Multiracial
 - g. ____ Other (specify) _____

5. In what country were you born? _____

6. What is your nationality?
 - a. ____ United States
 - b. ____ Antigua
 - c. ____ Bahamas
 - d. ____ Grenada
 - e. ____ Jamaica
 - f. ____ St. Vincent & the Grenadines
 - g. ____ Trinidad and Tobago
 - h. ____ Other Caribbean Nation (specify) _____
 - i. ____ Latin America (specify) _____
 - j. ____ Asian nation (specify) _____
 - k. ____ African nation (specify) _____
 - l. ____ European nation (specify) _____

7. How do you usually identify yourself?
 - a. ____ By race
 - b. ____ By nationality
 - c. ____ By country of birth
 - d. ____ Other (specify) _____

8. How do other people usually identify you?
 - a. ____ By race
 - b. ____ By nationality
 - c. ____ By country of birth

- d. ☐ Other (specify) _____
9. What country was your birth father born in? _____
10. What country was your birth mother born in? _____
11. In which city and state do you live now? _____
12. Who raised you?
- a. ☐ Both birth parents
- b. ☐ One birth parent (specify) ☐ father ☐ mother
- c. ☐ One birth parent and another adult (specify below)
_____ father ☐ mother
- d. ☐ Biological grandparent: ☐ paternal ☐ maternal
- e. ☐ Other family member (specify) _____
- f. ☐ Two adoptive parents
- g. ☐ One adoptive parent: ☐ father ☐ mother
- h. ☐ Non-relative (specify) _____
13. What was your father's main job while you were growing up?
- _____
14. What was your mother's main job while you were growing up?
- _____
15. During childhood, what economic group did your family belong to?
- a. ☐ Lower class
- b. ☐ Working class
- c. ☐ Middle class
- d. ☐ Upper middle class
- e. ☐ Upper class
16. Which economic group do you currently belong to?
- a. ☐ Lower class
- b. ☐ Working class
- c. ☐ Middle class
- d. ☐ Upper middle class
- e. ☐ Upper class
17. How many family members lived with you while you were growing up?
- _____

18. What is the highest education level of your father?

19. What is the highest level of education of your mother?

20. Please list, in order of influence level, the three people who were most influential in your life decisions and the highest level of education for each:

Relationship	Education
a.	
b.	
c.	

21. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

22. Are you currently in school?

a. _____ Yes b. _____ No

If you checked "Yes" above, what level? _____

23. Do you plan to continue your education?

a. Yes _____ b. No _____

If you checked "Yes" above, what is the highest level of education you hope/expect to complete? _____

24. What education level do you hope/expect your children to complete?

This section asks the extent to which you feel you have control over your life situations. Please circle or "x" the response that best describes you:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
25. I can manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4
26. I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	1	2	3	4
27. I can solve problems if I give the needed effort.	1	2	3	4
28. I can remain calm when facing problems because I have good coping abilities.	1	2	3	4
29. When faced with a problem, I can solve it on my own.	1	2	3	4
30. I expect to do well in things I try.	1	2	3	4
31. I stay focused on my goals and don't allow anything to distract me.	1	2	3	4
32. It is difficult for me to stop thoughts	1	2	3	4

that interfere with what I need to do.				
33. I can change situations that I don't like.	1	2	3	4
	Always		Sometimes	Never
34. I can find ways to get what I want even if someone opposes me.	1	2	3	4
35. I am able to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4
36. In the future, I expect to reach my goals. (Fix!)	1	2	3	4
37. Making choices doesn't get me anywhere because others decide for me anyway.	1	2	3	4
38. I am mainly responsible for my future.	1	2	3	4
39. Chance and luck play an important role in life outcomes.	1	2	3	4
40. Doing well in school or work is really a matter of luck or chance.	1	2	3	4
41. To succeed in school or work, you only need to work hard.	1	2	3	4
42. There is a connection between how hard I work and my reviews at work.	1	2	3	4
43. When I make plans, I am almost sure I can make them work.	1	2	3	4
44. Bad things that happen to people are at least partly due to bad luck.	1	2	3	4
45. I believe that if you try hard enough, you can reach your goals.	1	2	3	4
46. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays a role in my life.	1	2	3	4
47. I believe it is best to cover up my mistakes.	1	2	3	4
48. I don't understand how my bosses come up with the evaluation reviews they make.	1	2	3	4
49. My success is out of my hands.	1	2	3	4
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
50. I often feel I have little control over the things that happen to me.	1	2	3	4
51. I am willing to admit my mistakes.	1	2	3	4
52. People's misfortunes are results of their own mistakes.	1	2	3	4
53. I don't plan too far ahead because many things are a matter of good or bad luck.	1	2	3	4
54. Becoming successful is simply a matter of hard work.	1	2	3	4
55. Sometimes I feel like I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.	1	2	3	4
56. What happens to me is mostly my doing.	1	2	3	4
57. For me, getting what I want has nothing to do with luck.	1	2	3	4

This section investigates the extent to which other cultures or racism have been a part of your life. Please choose the number that best describes how much you agree, with 1 being “A great deal” and 4 being “Not at all.”

To what extent do you:	A great deal	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
58. believe racism can hinder a person from getting a job?	1	2	3	4
59. feel you have been victimized by racism in the last two years?	1	2	3	4
60. know others who were victimized by racism in the last two years?	1	2	3	4
61. believe your skin color has been a barrier to your success?	1	2	3	4
62. feel you have been the only person of your race in a work environment?	1	2	3	4
63. feel you have been the only person of your race in school?	1	2	3	4
64. feel that you have been the only person of your race in groups of friends and colleagues outside of school or work?	1	2	3	4
65. believe you have had opportunities to learn about other cultures while growing up?	1	2	3	4
66. feel you have had opportunities to learn about other cultures during your adult life?	1	2	3	4
67. feel a close association with members of your own race?	1	2	3	4

This section of the Survey asks questions about your religious background. Please place a check or an “x” in the box that best describes your religious beliefs and practices.

68. How many times have you attended a religious service in the last year?
- A. ☐ More than once a week
 - B. ☐ Once a week
 - C. ☐ 2 or 3 times a month
 - D. ☐ About once a month
 - E. ☐ Once or twice a year
 - F. ☐ None

69. When you have a problem, how important is it to you to be able to rely on religious counsel or teaching to help you with the problem?

- A. ☐ Not at all important
- B. ☐ A little important
- C. ☐ Important
- D. ☐ Very important

70. How important is it for you to believe in God or some other higher power?

- A. ☐ Not at all important
- B. ☐ A little important

- C. ☐ Important
D. ☐ Very important

71. How important is it for you to turn to prayer when you are facing a personal problem?

- A. ☐ Not at all important
B. ☐ A little important
C. ☐ Important
D. ☐ Very important

72. How important is it for you to attend religious services regularly?

- A. ☐ Not at all important
B. ☐ A little important
C. ☐ Important
D. ☐ Very important

This section of the Survey asks questions to find out about your relations with close relatives, how you feel about helping your relatives, and how close you are to them. Please answer the questions by placing a check or an "x" in the space which best describes how you feel, or what your family situation is.

74. If you go out of your way to help a relative, would you:

- A. ☐ Expect them to always go out of their way for you
B. ☐ Expect them to help you out in return only in emergencies
C. ☐ Expect nothing in return
D. ☐ Don't know

75. Has the amount of assistance given to you by your relatives increased, decreased, or remained about the same since you have lived here?

- A. ☐ Increased
B. ☐ Decreased
C. ☐ Remained the same

76. Has the amount of help or assistance you have given to your relatives increased, decreased, or remained about the same since you have lived here?

- A. ☐ Increased
B. ☐ Decreased
C. ☐ Remained the same

77. Has your family ever had to borrow money just to make ends meet?

- A. ☐ Yes, often
B. ☐ Yes, sometimes
C. ☐ No, never

78. In general, if you loan money to a close relative, do you expect to get it back?

- A. ☐ Always expect to get it back
B. ☐ Usually expect to get it back
C. ☐ Rarely or never expect to get it back

79. Do you feel obligated to help family members who are less fortunate than you?

- A. ☐ Yes, without question

- B. _____ Usually, it depends on the circumstances
C. _____ Rarely, if ever

80. In terms of your obligations to your relatives, do you feel that you have:

- A. _____ Given more help than received
B. _____ Received more help than given
C. _____ Given about the same that you have received
D. _____ Don't know

81. If a person in your family "makes it" or "moves up", how much is he or she expected to share with the rest of the family?

- A. _____ A great deal of sharing is expected
B. _____ Some sharing is expected
C. _____ Very little sharing is expected
D. _____ No sharing is expected

82. In general, how many relatives do you have that you feel close to (please indicate the number)

83. On average, how often do you see these close relatives?

- A. _____ almost every day
B. _____ Once or twice a week
C. _____ Once or twice a month
D. _____ Every other month
E. _____ A few times a year
F. _____ About once a year
G. _____ Never

84. How often do you have contact with your relatives by telephone, email, or letter?
- A. ☐ almost every day
 - B. ☐ Once or twice a week
 - C. ☐ Once or twice a month
 - D. ☐ Every other month
 - E. ☐ A few times a year
 - F. ☐ About once a year
 - G. ☐ Never
85. Where do most (more than half) of your immediate family members live? By immediate family, we mean your parents, children, brothers and sisters.
- A. ☐ In my household
 - B. ☐ In the same neighborhood
 - C. ☐ IN this same city
 - D. ☐ In this same country
 - E. ☐ In this same state
 - F. ☐ In another state
 - G. ☐ Outside the USA
 - H. ☐ No immediate family
86. How far, on average, do you live from your close relatives?
- A. ☐ 0 - 10 miles
 - B. ☐ 11 - 30 miles
 - C. ☐ 31 - 50 miles
 - D. ☐ 51 - 150 miles
 - E. ☐ More than 150 miles
87. In general, do you feel that your contact with close relatives is:
- A. ☐ Too much
 - B. ☐ Too little
 - C. ☐ About right
88. Would you say your family members are very close in their feelings to each other, fairly close, not too close, or not close at all?
- A. ☐ Very close
 - B. ☐ Fairly close
 - C. ☐ Not too close
 - D. ☐ Not close at all
89. How easy is it for you to visit your relatives?
- A. ☐ Very easy
 - B. ☐ Somewhat difficult
 - C. ☐ Very difficult
90. How easy is it for your relatives to visit you?
- A. ☐ Very easy
 - B. ☐ Somewhat difficult
 - C. ☐ Very difficult

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this survey!

Appendix C

Tables

Table 1. Personal Responsibility Significant Findings ($p < .05$)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Variable Level</i>	<i>t statistic</i>	<i>Mean and SD for AA</i>	<i>Mean and SD for AC</i>
Bad things that happen to people are not at least partly due to bad luck	Demographic	Most Influential Person Parent	$t(77) = -2.09$	$m=2.09, sd = .763$	$m = 2.50, sd = .512$
Doing well in school or work is really not a matter of luck or chance	ACI	Nationality	$t(4) = -4.667$	$m= 1.00, sd= .000$	$m= 2.75, sd= .500$
	Demographic	Mother's Highest Education Level At Least Bachelor's	$t(45) = -2.181$	$m=2.11, sd = .894$	$m = 2.78, sd = .441$
For me, getting what I want has nothing to do with luck	HCI		$t(115)= -2.217$	$m= 1.77, sd= .919$	$m=2.21, sd= .902$
	SCI	Other	$t(5)= -5.916$	$m= 1.25, sd= 5.00$	$m= 3.00, sd= .000$
	ACI	Race	$t(97) = -2.029$	$m= 1.77, sd= .944$	$m= 2.23, sd= .922$
	Demographic	Childhood SES Middle or Upper Middle	$t(58) = -2.104$	$m=1.71, sd = .986$	$m = 2.27, sd = .799$
	Demographic	Raised By Both Parents	$t(72) = -2.426$	$m=1.70, sd = .944$	$m = 2.30, sd = .923$
	Demographic	Father's Highest Education Level At Least Bachelor's	$t(36) = -2.658$	$m=1.67, sd = .877$	$m = 2.45, sd = .688$
	Demographic	Most Influential Person Parent	$t(76) = -2.884$	$(m=1.65, sd = .935$	$m = 2.33, sd = .913$
	Demographic	Second Most Influential Person Non-Relative	$t(14) = -2.772$	$m=1.17, sd = .577$	$m = 2.25, sd = .957$
	Demographic	Third Most Influential Person Another Relative	$t(53) = -2.472$	$m=1.90, sd = .968$	$m = 2.56, sd = .727$
I am mainly responsible for my future	SCI	Country	$t(11) = -4.780$	$m=2.25, sd = .500$	$m = 3.00, sd = .000$
I believe that if you try hard enough, you can reach your goals	Demographic	Raised By Only One Parent	$t(15) = -2.376$	$m=2.38, sd = .506$	$m = 3.00, sd = .000$
I do not believe it is best to cover up my mistakes	SCI	Race	$t(72) = -2.105$	$m=2.29, sd = .750$	$m = 3.00, sd = .000$

I do not believe it is best to cover up my mistakes	SCI	Race	$t(72) = -2.105$	$m=2.29, sd = .750$	$m = 3.00, sd = .000$
	Demographic	Third Most Influential Person Another Relative	$t(52) = -2.504$	$(m=2.16, sd = .834$	$m = 2.71, sd = .470$
I understand how my bosses come up with the evaluation reviews they make	Demographic	Father's Highest Education Level At Least Bachelor's	$t(33) = 2.332$	$m=2.40, sd = .645$	$m = 1.80, sd = .789$
Making choices will get me somewhere, others do not decide for me	ACI	Race	$t(98) = 2.254$	$m= 2.83, sd= .548$	$m= 2.48, sd= .947$
	Demographic	Raised By Both Parents	$t(72) = 2.007$	$m=2.85, sd = .452$	$m = 2.55, sd = .826$
	Demographic	Second Most Influential Person Non-Relative	$t(14) = 2.931$	$m=3.00, sd = .000$	$m = 2.25, sd = .957$
There is a connection between how hard I work and my reviews at work	SCI	Other	$t(5) = -4.392$	$m=1.50, sd= .577$	$m= 3.00, sd= .000$
To succeed in school or work, you only need to work hard.	Demographic	Childhood SES Lower or Working	$t(50) = -2.353$	$m= 1.70, sd= .740$	$m= 2.27, sd= .884$
	Demographic	Raised By Only One Parent	$t(17) = -2.177$	$m=1.50, sd = .760$	$m = 2.40, sd = .894$
	Demographic	Mother's Highest Education Level High School or Less	$t(34) = -2.275$	$m=1.76, sd = .889$	$m = 2.40, sd = .737$
	Demographic	Third Most Influential Person Another Relative	$t(54) = -2.143$	$m=1.87, sd = .732$	$m = 2.35, sd = .862$

What happens to me is mostly my doing	Demographic	Childhood SES Lower or Working	$t(48) = 2.28$	$m = 2.03, sd = .726$	$m = 1.54, sd = .519$
	Demographic	Childhood SES Middle or Upper Middle	$t(64) = -2.259$	$m = 1.92, sd = .771$	$m = 2.40, sd = .507$
	Demographic	Mother's Highest Education Level Some College	$t(32) = -2.105$	$m = 1.79, sd = .787$	$m = 2.50, sd = .548$
When I make plans, I am almost sure I can make them work	Demographic	Mother's Highest Education Level Some College	$t(32) = -2.132$	$m = 1.93, sd = .604$	$m = 2.50, sd = .548$
	Demographic	Most Influential Person Another Relative	$t(21) = 2.203$	$m = 2.47, sd = .612$	$m = 1.75, sd = .500$

Table 2. Self- Efficacy Significant Findings ($p < .05$)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Variable Level</i>	<i>t statistic</i>	<i>Mean and SD for AA</i>	<i>Mean and SD for AC</i>
I am able to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	Demographic	Most Influential Person Not Chosen	$t(7) = 3.055$	$m = 1.86, sd = .378$	$m = 1.00, sd = .000$
I can change situations that I don't like	SCI	Other	$t(5) = -2.646$	$m = 1.50, sd = .577$	$m = 2.67, sd = .577$
	ACI	Nationality	$t(5) = 3.904$	$m = 3.00, sd = .000$	$m = 1.40, sd = .548$
	Demographic	Mother's Highest Education Level Some College	$t(32) = -2.136$	$m = 1.54, sd = .693$	$m = 2.17, sd = .408$
I can find ways to get what I want, even if someone opposes me	Demographic	Raised By Both Parents	$t(72) = 2.289$	$m = 1.89, sd = .634$	$m = 1.50, sd = .688$
	Demographic	Father's Highest Education at least Bachelor's	$t(36) = 2.082$	$m = 2.04, sd = .649$	$m = 1.55, sd = .688$
	Demographic	Most Influential Person Another Relative	$t(20) = 3.887$	$m = 2.37, sd = .597$	$m = 1.00, sd = .000$
I can remain calm when facing problems because I have good coping abilities	Demographic	Most Influential Person Parent	$t(77) = -2.196$	$m = 1.86, sd = .766$	$m = 2.27, sd = .703$
I can solve problems if I give the needed effort	SCI	Nationality	$t(13) = 4.266$	$m = 3.00, sd = .000$	$m = 2.22, sd = .441$
	Demographic	Raised By Both Parents	$t(72) = 2.297$	$m = 2.54, sd = .573$	$m = 2.20, sd = .523$
	Demographic	Father's Highest Education Some College	$t(23) = 2.559$	$m = 2.67, sd = .486$	$m = 2.14, sd = .378$
I can sometimes solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	SCI	Nationality	$t(13) = 2.561$	$m = 2.83, sd = .408$	$m = 2.11, sd = .601$
In the future I expect to reach my goals	Demographic	Father's Highest Education Some College	$t(23) = 3.774$	$m = 2.94, sd = .243$	$m = 2.38, sd = .518$

<i>Item</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Variable Level</i>	<i>t statistic</i>	<i>Mean and SD for AA</i>	<i>Mean and SD for AC</i>
It is easy for me to stop thoughts that interfere with what I need to do	Demographic	Father's Highest Education at least Bachelor's	t(36)= 2.799	m= 2.00, sd= .620	m= 1.36, sd= .674
When faced with a problem, I can solve it on my own	Demographic	Father's Highest Education High School or Less	t(45)= 2.016	m= 2.03, sd= .609	m= 1.55, sd= .934

Vita

Donna Marie Dopwell was born in Jamaica, NY on May 31, 1979. She was raised there, and attended Our Lady of the Cenacle grammar school in Richmond Hill, NY. As a teenager, she moved to Commack (Long Island), NY. While there, she graduated from Commack High School in 1997. She earned an A.A. in General Studies in 2000 from Suffolk County Community College, Selden, NY, followed by a B.A. in Psychology in 2003 from Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY.

Donna is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.