

ACADEMIC AND CIVIC OUTCOMES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATES  
OF HISTORICALLY BLACK AND HISTORICALLY WHITE HIGH SCHOOLS

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## **ABSTRACT**

**KRISTEN BELL HUGHES: Academic and Civic Outcomes of African American Graduates of Historically Black and Historically White High Schools**  
(Under the direction of Rune J. Simeonsson, Ph.D.)

The purpose of this study was to examine how high school experience impacts adult outcomes for African Americans across time given changes in academic, social, and political climates. This research is very much needed to help the African American community identify what factors are related to individuals giving back to their community through civic engagement in order to promote self-sufficiency within the African American community. The study design explored the role of these factors by comparing the personal high school experience, long-term outcomes of civic engagement and academic attainment as well as racial identity perceptions of African American graduates of historically Black high schools (HBHSs) and historically White high schools (HWHSs). Statistically, 2x3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) designs were run to compare group outcomes by school type and graduation year. Overall results indicated that African American graduates did not differ significantly on long-term outcomes or personal racial identity as a function of school type, but HBHS graduates reported more positive school experiences compared to HWHS graduates. Study results provide support for the contribution of Historically Black Institutions in secondary education with implications for identification of factors related to academic attainment and civic engagement.

## **DEDICATIONS**

This body of work is dedicated to the educators of today's children who are committed to making a positive difference in the lives of all children.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

HBHS	Historically Black High School
HWHS-PW	Historically White High School-Predominantly White
HWHS-PB	Historically White High School-Predominantly Black
SES	Socioeconomic Status
HBCUs	Historically Black College and Universities
PWIs	Predominantly White Institutions
HS	High School

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The adult outcomes of African Americans are of increasing concern as financial stability and healthcare issues continue to impact many Americans and governmental programs. While state and national governments strive to achieve balanced budgets; many government assistance programs that were expanded during the beginning of the Recession and geared toward middle-class and low-income populations are now being cut (Chapell, 2013; Whitehouse, 2013). These cuts and proposed cuts are causing many Americans to wonder how they will pay their bills, keep their homes, and feed their families (Pilkauskas et. al, 2012). For many Americans, particularly minority Americans, education is perceived to be the means for improving their economic and social status in society (Tillman, 2009). However, education by itself cannot assure a healthy quality of life. What a person achieves with his or her education is important. In today's highly competitive work environment, a college degree is often required to gain an interview for many occupations and those without postsecondary education often suffer the most during times of economic hardships (Hoynes et. al, 2012). However because a diploma or GED is required to gain entry into a college or university, the high school experience often determines a person's life direction as an adult.

For some individuals, high school is the last opportunity they will have to receive free formal education. For society, high school is sometimes the last opportunity to reach, influence, and prepare youth with the skills necessary to be productive citizens and

competitive workers. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how the high school experience impacts later outcomes as an adult. Furthermore, it is important to understand if the impact of the high school experience on long-term outcomes has differed overtime as a result of changes in academic, social, and political climates. Self-sufficiency for middle-class and low-income individuals is even more critical today than in prior years. This line of research is very much needed to help the African American community identify how high school environments influence an individual's long-term success. It is also important for the African American community to understand what factors are related to individuals giving back to their community through volunteerism, activism, and employment in order to promote self-sufficiency within the African American community.

On average, students with high academic achievement and high school diplomas have more access to college scholarships, jobs, and educational opportunities that can better their quality of life (Hoynes et. al, 2012; Orfield et al., 2005; Saunders, Davis, Williams, and Williams, 2003; Wimberly, 2002) and the community in which they live. Much of the literature on closing the achievement gap between Whites and Blacks, indicates that inequality exist in the American education system today (Fletcher and Tienda, 2010). Although "Brown vs. Board of Education" decision forced Americans to take a serious look at education, Black children particularly in urban areas still lag behind academically (Clark, 2003; Fratoe, 1980; Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2003). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has sought to address issues of inequality in America's education system. However, dropout rates, expulsion rates, and

underperformance on standardized test still continue to plague America's school systems (Bonneau, 2008; Childs Trend Data Bank, 2008; Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2003).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Factors impacting academic achievement of African American children such as low economic status, poverty, family structure, student motivation have all been cited throughout the literature. Although studies have been conducted on academic outcomes based on the racial make-up of a school, it has typically been at the College or University level. Some studies argue that "environments that require African Americans to interact with European American students will result in more positive educational experiences (Fordham, 1988) and that predominantly White institutions (PWIs) provide superior academic resources (Wenglinsky, 1995). Other research (Fleming, 1981, 1984; Fordham, 1988; Hughes, 1987) on PWIs found that African American students who were socially and academically successful at PWIs tended to have less connection to African American culture (Chavous, 2000). Additional research on racial identity (e.g. Baldwin et. al, 1990; Taub & McEwen, 1992) has suggested that accepting mainstream views or lack of connectedness to African American culture is harmful to African American students' academic and social development (Chavous, 2000). On the other hand, others have argued that only a race homogeneous institution can fulfill the social and academic needs of African American students (Tillman, 2009; Baldwin et. al, 1987; Coleman, 1990) such as that of a historically Black institution (HBIs) (Chavous et. al, 2004).

The aim of this study is to clarify the findings of previous research of African American academic achievement in the high school context and identify which high school environments produce graduates that are leaders within the African American community. This study is designed to compare African American high school graduates' perceptions of their racial identity, high school climates, which includes school pride, as well as, their long-term outcomes (academic attainment and civic engagement) as a function of their high school experience. In reviewing research evaluating the impact of school environments based on academic achievement and long-term outcomes, previous studies have rarely made a distinction between high school environments that are predominantly African American due to “middle-class or White flight” and historically Black high schools (HBHSs) that were originally established for African Americans and continue to educate primarily African American populations. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies investigating the relationship between civic engagement and high school environment at time of graduation. As many HBHSs still tend to be located in primarily African American communities, it is important to investigate the impact of graduation status on community investment to identify factors related to people giving back long-term to their community in order to keep African American communities flourishing.

### **Research Questions**

When assessing the role of racial history of a school, the premise is that historically Black high schools will foster more positive perceptions of racial identity, school pride and climate, and long-term outcomes for African Americans compared to other high school environments. To test this assumption, the study will assess these

factors by looking at the racial history of three types of high school environments established in the United States prior to segregation and that continue to exist after integration: (1) historically Black high schools (HBHSs); (2) historically White high schools that are still predominantly White (HWHSs-PW); and (3) historically White high schools that are now predominantly Black and/or minority (HWHS-PB). By following-up African American graduates from these three high school environments, four research questions will be addressed: (1) Do African American graduates significantly differ in the long-term outcome of academic attainment based on their high school graduation status (HBHS graduate, HWHS graduate-PW; and HWHS graduate-PB) and year of graduation (1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1970-1979)? (2) Do African American graduates significantly differ in the long-term outcome of civic engagement based on their high school graduation status (HBHS graduate, HWHS graduate-PW; and HWHS graduate-PB) and year of graduation (1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1970-1979)? (3) Are African American HBHS graduates significantly different from other African American graduates in their school experience? (4) Are African American HBHS graduates significantly different from HWHS-PW African American graduates on their perceptions of personal racial identity including centrality, public regard, and private regard?

To examine these issues, a literature review was conducted on African American graduates academic and long-term outcomes using UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries' academic search engines for articles and books located in PsycInfo, ERIC, and Google Scholar by searching with the combination of the following phrases: "academic achievement", "African Americans", "graduates", "socioeconomic status", "racial identity", "pride",



“long-term outcomes”, “school climate”, “predominantly Black educational environments” and “predominantly White educational environments”. Articles ranging from 1985-2012 related to African American academic achievement in different environments were selected to be included in the review.

Initially, a review will be made of the literature to identify changes in African American long-term outcomes overtime. Previous research on the relationship between the perception variables (racial identity, school climate and school pride) and long-term outcomes (including academic achievement and civic responsibility) will be reviewed and gaps in the current research will be identified in order to clarify the aims of the present study.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### **Independent Variables**

**School Environment/Type.** Defined by the history of the school prior to integration in terms of whether it was originally a historically white school or historically black school, as well as, the current racial proportions of the school (i.e. predominantly black or white).

**High School Socioeconomic status.** Defined by reported family income and use of government programs during high school.

**Gender.** Defined by reported identification as a male or female.

### **Dependent School Experience Variables**

**School Climate.** The physical and psychological aspects of the school that are

most susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place; measured by self-reports on School Climate subscale of Quality of School Life Scale.

**School Pride.** The amount of personal pleasure or satisfaction that a person feels in the achievements, accomplishments, or successes of their school environment; measured by a student's responses to questions about their school, involvement in school activities, and alumni participation; measured by self-reports on School Pride Scale.

### **Dependent Personal Experience Variables**

**Racial Identity.** Defined by one's perception of their individual significance in belonging to their racial group on their life (centrality), personal perceptions of people belonging to their racial group (private regard), and perception of society's view of their racial group (public regard) on the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) scales of centrality, public regard, and private regard.

### **Dependent Outcome Variables**

**Academic Attainment.** Defined by an individual's self-report of their highest level of educational experience and degree(s) earned on the Demographic Survey.

**Civic Engagement.** Defined by an individual's involvement in their community within the last 5 years on the Center for Information and Research on Civic Engagement (CIRCLE) Civic Engagement Quiz.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE RIVIEW**

#### **Changes Overtime in Long-Term Outcomes for African Americans**

In the history of the United States, many political movements have occurred to change African Americans' access to academic, communal, and employment resources to improve their quality of life. From slavery, to Reconstruction era and Jim Crow Laws, thru the Civil Rights Movement, and Post-Civil Rights era; African Americans have experienced racial violence, voter suppression, denial of economic and resource opportunities, and have been marginalized as a race in general (Hillard, 2006; Tillman, 2009). During the times of Reconstruction, schools were established for African American and White children under "Separate but Equal" and racial segregation. Although under the "separate but equal" system, African Americans did prosper as a population economically and politically by being able to own property, educate their children, establish civic associations, banks, churches and invest in their communities (Hillard, 2006; Tillman, 2009; Shircliffe, 2006) African Americans still had limited access to updated educational materials and no rights to vote on political laws that impacted their communities. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Brown vs. Board of Education banned racial discrimination, forced integration of schools, and allowed African Americans to have more access to economic and political self-sufficiency (Rury & Shirley, 2012; Tillman, 2009; Bankston, 2002), but inequalities still exist.

The Coleman report of 1966 led some educators and researchers to believe that African Americans fared better in desegregated school environments that tended to be located outside of predominantly African American communities (Bankston et al., 1996; Mickleson, 2003). The Coleman Report (1966) compared academic outcomes of blacks in desegregated schools versus those that were in segregated schools (Mickleson, 2003). It was found that backgrounds of fellow students, specifically the race of students, impacted academic achievement with blacks in segregated schools having poorer academic outcomes than those in desegregated environments (Bankston et. al, 1996). The Coleman report cited the lack of intangible resources in schools with heavy minority concentrations as a primary factor (Bankston et. al, 1996). Intangible resources can be defined as supportive home environments in which parents and/or other caretakers have time to attend school functions, volunteer, and give back to their child and school. With many African American children coming from dual or single-working parent homes; parents contributing thru intangible means may be limited in certain school climates. A review of recent research and literature shows that acquiring culturally-sensitive, appropriate and effective tangible and intangible resources for educating African American youth remain problematic (Tillman, 2009).

In trying to understand the issues discussed in the Coleman Report (1966), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began collecting data on educational, vocational, and personal development of students. NCES began with the 1972 cohort of high school seniors and followed them through 1986; the 1980 senior class and the 1980 sophomore class made up the two cohorts initially studied. Every cohort was studied

every two years through 1986, with the 1980 class being surveyed for an additional year in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics). Overall, the NCES data supported the idea that African Americans have made educational and economic gains since the 1970s. From 1972 to 1992, the proportion of Black seniors in the highest SES quartile doubled (Ingels Ben Dalton, 2008). Black-White gaps in annual earnings for men were greater in 1983-1989 and 1986-1992 samples than they were in 1979 (Jacobson et. al, 2001). Educationally, African Americans had the same or higher college attendance and completion rates as their similarly educated White counterparts (Jacobson et. al, 2001). However although there have been many gains, African American youth tended to still earn less per year than Whites for overtime and were more likely to be unemployed than White workers (Jacobson et. al, 2001).

Although gains have been made for African Americans, there are still gaps in the academic and economic achievement rates between African Americans and Whites that can ultimately impact their quality of life and self-sufficiency. For example, although results from the National Educational Longitudinal Study show a majority of African Americans as finishing high school and graduating with a high school diploma, African Americans are still more likely to be unemployed when compared to Whites and earn lower wages when employed (Wimberly, 2002). Education level may account for the discrepancy in wage earnings with a smaller number of African Americans holding postsecondary degrees when compared to their White counterparts (Wimberly, 2002). Support for this theory can be found in the results of a study by the U.S. Department of Education, (2001b). Findings showed when the wages of African American and White

college graduates were compared, there was little difference in their employment rates (as cited in Wimberly, 2002) suggesting that increasing educational attainment levels of African Americans may help to close the gap in employment rates between Blacks and Whites. However to increase educational attainment rates, educators need to know what factors contribute to African Americans seeking postsecondary education upon graduation and if educational attainment levels are related to their quality of life.

Although the National Educational Longitudinal study looked at the achievement of African Americans and long-term outcomes overtime, it only looked at student socioeconomic levels, racial make-up of the student populations, as well as staff and faculty training levels. They did not look at the history of the schools, particularly the predominantly Black schools, to determine if there were significant outcome differences for African Americans that graduate from historically Black high schools. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some of the schools established under segregation for African Americans and Whites remain, but their school climate and racial-makeup may be different. When looking at the United States' educational history and schools established during segregation that continue to operate several years after integration, it is assumed that there are three categories of schools in existence: historically Black high schools (HBHSs); historically White high schools that are still predominantly White (HWHSs, PW); and historically White high schools that are now predominantly Black and/or minority (HWHS, PB). The Coleman Report (1966) found that desegregated environments proved better for African American outcomes when compared to segregated environments. Follow-up research from the Coleman Report by the National

Center for Education Statistics has shown that African Americans have made gains. However, employment rates and wages for African Americans still fall behind their White counterparts and attainment of postsecondary degrees may account for this discrepancy. Therefore, it is important to investigate the relationship between history of a school environment and long-term outcomes for African Americans. Quality of life for African Americans is an important aspect to explore further.

### **Quality of Life**

An important aspect of African American outcomes is their quality of life. A person's quality of life is impacted by his or her physical, emotional, intellectual, and cultural satisfaction with life. These quality of life variables may range from concrete factors including income, education, civic engagement, and marital status to abstract factors including self-esteem, optimism, extraversion, and neuroticism (Oishi et. al, 1999). Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that a person's lower level needs must be addressed before they can receive satisfaction from meeting their higher level needs (Oishi et. al, 1999; Hagerty, 1999). In order of significance, the first level of needs includes physiological needs of water, air, and food. The second level includes feelings of safety. The third is belongingness and feeling loved which is impacted by a person's perceived connection to their family, friends, community and culture. The fourth is self-confidence in one's ability. The fifth is self-actualization which allows people to use their abilities to accomplish their goals. Access to financial or community resources often determine a person's ability to meet their lower level needs. With the value of a high school diploma steadily decreasing as the technological demands of the workforce

increase (Wimberly, 2002); people without postsecondary education may be limited in their ability to access resources to meet their basic needs leading to a lower level of quality of life.

However, other research (Moller & Sterns, 2012; Wimberly, 2002) has indicated that the high school experience may have a significant impact on a person's lifelong learning outcomes, goals and beliefs. Moller & Sterns (2012) found that the nature of students' curricula/track in high school predicts labor market income in early adulthood, regardless of educational attainment after high school. Furthermore within the school climate, "racialized perceptions of student ability, motivation, and behavior affect track assignment, and decisions on the part of many different stakeholders—teachers, administrators, parents, and students—influence course-taking patterns" (p 1047). In more rigorous courses, minority students may feel isolated and devalued due to the social climate, may avoid taking these classes (Moller & Sterns, 2012), and therefore perpetuate the inequality in the labor market by limiting their skill set needed to obtain highly skilled occupations. Additional research (Wimberly, 2002) supports the idea that high school experience and school climate influences African Americans' long-term outcomes and postsecondary educational attainment.

Using the National Educational Longitudinal data, Wimberly (2002) found that African American high school students have high aspirations for attending postsecondary education institutions after graduation, but only half of those well-intended African Americans are pursuing those goals two-years after high school graduation. This figure is staggering when compared to their white counterparts. Two years after high school



graduation, approximately three-quarters of white students were attending college in 2000. Although in 2000, graduation rates for African Americans increased to approximately 85%, African American graduates pursuing their goal of postsecondary education have not increased at the same rate. Wimberly (2002) identified three factors impacting African American educational expectations, aspirations, and enrollment in postsecondary education including: (1) a school's ability to address the student needs and implement programs that address those needs; (2) staff's sensitivity and awareness of cultural, social, and economic diversity issues that allow them to build relationships with students and the school districts willingness to provide training in these areas if needed; and (3) student availability to school-based and school-sponsored activities that encourage participation of all students and connect them to adults, mentors and support systems in their school. For all students, particularly minority students, assistance in navigating the high school experience is essential in assuring students acquire the skills necessary to obtain jobs or postsecondary education after high school graduation (Moller & Sterns, 2012; Wimberly, 2002). For African American students, particularly those whose parents have little experience in successfully navigating the high school educational system themselves, race and socioeconomic factors can negatively impact the students' interactions with educators and increase their chances of being placed in courses that do not lead to high paying jobs after high school graduation (Moller & Sterns, 2012).

Further investigation of racism effects on the quality of life (Utsey et. al, 2002) and racial identity (Yap et. al, 2011) of African Americans identified significant variables

of gender effects (Utsey et. al, 2002, Yap et. al, 2011) and a need to belong (Yap et. al, 2011) For elderly African American women and men, institutional racism was a significant predictor of an individual's overall level of vitality, social functioning, emotional well-being, and mental health. In this study, many of the elderly African Americans grew-up during the times of segregation and Jim Crow laws and these experiences likely contributed to racism being a significant predictor of mental health functioning for African American men and women (Utsey et. al, 2002). Although racism was significantly related to quality of life outcomes for African American men and women, African American men had significantly higher levels of race-related stress than African American women. This discrepancy may be indicative of the chronic exposure to racism and discrimination that African American men experience in society (Utsey et. al, 2002). It also may be indicative of African American women's need to belong and foster interpersonal support systems that serve as protective factors against racism (Yap et. al, 2011).

To further understand the possible mediating relationship of group membership perception on racial identity and well-being, Yap et. al (2011) conducted a study of 161 African American women and men ranging in age from 18-86 years old. Racial identity was divided into three dimensions of centrality, private regard, and public regard. Racial centrality was defined as whether people viewed their race to be a significant part in their self-concept. Private regard was defined as the extent to which an individual feels comfortable about their racial identity. Public regard was defined as people's perceptions of how society views their racial group. Perception of group membership was also

divided into positive and negative functions; belongingness, the positive function and discrimination, the negative function. Results of the study show that belongingness “mediated the effects of centrality and private regard on life satisfaction, and discrimination mediated the effect of public regard on life satisfaction” (Yap et. al, 2011, p 94). Racial centrality and private regard were significantly related to belongingness for both men and women. However, gender effects were found with higher levels of belongingness being related to greater life satisfaction for women only. An examination of the perceptions of life satisfaction variable indicates that forming interpersonal relationships and having a sense of belonging may be more important for African American women than African American men; which is consistent with other research (Chavous, 2004). Despite the gender differences found in both studies when looking at the relationship between race and quality of life, for African American men and women, positive perceptions of their racial group have positive impacts on their well-being (Yap et. al, 2011) and perceived racism significantly impacts quality of life and mental health (Utsey et. al, 2002) .

Research on quality-of-life outcomes for African Americans as a function of their high school experience is limited. Furthermore, there is a lack of data that explains the association between high school experience, postsecondary attainment and performance (Fletcher and Tienda, 2010). Studies that have focused on the high school experience have found that the high school experience can significantly impact a person’s attainment of postsecondary education (Wimberly, 2002) and acquisition of skills necessary to obtain high paying jobs after high school graduation (Moller & Sterns, 2012).

Other studies on African American outcomes (Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Yap et. al, 2011; Utsey et. al, 2002) have identified racism, financial strain, social support, and psychological wellbeing variables as being related to quality of life outcomes for African Americans. Furthermore, research has shown that in order for people to feel confident and capable of directing their life, lower level needs of food, shelter, safety, and belonging need to be addressed (Oishi et. al, 1999; Hagerty, 1999). This is particularly important for African Americans as they are disproportionally living in low resourced environments that make it difficult for them to meet their basic needs. However given previous research on African Americans (Chavous, 2003; Eccles, 2006), racial identity levels may serve as a protective factors in meeting lower level of needs, as well as, higher level needs of self-confidence and self-actualization. Therefore, research on racial identity and academic achievement will be explored as higher levels of academic attainment are associated with greater rates of financial stability related to meeting a person's basic needs.

### **Racial Identity and Academic Attainment**

Racial identity is a “multidimensional construct made up of components that incorporate ethnic awareness, sociopolitical attitudes, and cultural or in-group versus out-group preferences” and is defined as a person's belief about the significance of race in his or her life (Chavous et. al, 2003, p 1078). In conducting their research, Chavous et. al, (2003) used the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) beliefs to address the two perspectives of race and achievement beliefs in African Americans. This model looked at racial centrality, private regard, and public regard on the academic achievement

of African Americans. Based on significantly different ratings by African Americans on the three variables, Chavous et. al, (2003) identified four groups of racial identity for African Americans including “buffering/defensive”, “idealized”, alienated”, and “low connectedness/high affinity”. .

Two of the groups, “buffering/defensive” and “idealized” had higher academic attainment when compared to the two groups of “low connectedness/high affinity” and “alienated”. Overall, “having high centrality, strong group pride (private regard), and positive beliefs about society’s views of Blacks (public regard) were related to more positive academic beliefs” (Chavous et. al, 2003, p 1086). In contrast, African American students in the alienated group that were low on all three dimensions of private regard, public regard, and centrality, also “felt the most negative about their group”, “had the most negative academic attitudes”, the highest number of dropouts by 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and lowest college attainment when compared to other African American racial identity groups (Chavous et. al, 2003, p 1086). Furthermore, “youth’s own personal group attitudes and feelings about their group influenced their educational behavior more strongly, regardless of their societal views” (Chavous, 2003, p 1086).

Similarly, in a study by Eccles et. al, (2006), racial identity was related to student achievement. Eccles et. al, (2006) found that in contrast to Fordham and Ogbu’s research (1986), African American youth, when compared to European American youth, attached “greater personal importance to school achievement” and “perceived general utility of education” (p 415). Increased anticipation of future discrimination was positively related to students being more committed to their educational success (Eccles et. al, 2006). In

both studies, racial identity worked as both promotive and protective factors by compensating and shielding against perceptions of racial discrimination (Eccles et. al, 2006; Chavous et. al, 2003). Both of these studies demonstrate how African American students' racial identity beliefs impact their academic behaviors, and these behaviors affect their academic achievement (Chavous et. al, 2003; Eccles et. al, 2006).

Research has shown that racial identity beliefs are related to quality of life factors (Yap et. al, 2011) and student achievement by serving as promotive and protective factors against perceived racial discrimination (Chavous et. al, 2003; Eccles et. al, 2006).

Research (Wimberly (2002) has also shown that African Americans have postsecondary educational aspirations similar to their white counterparts, but over half have not pursued these goals two-years after high school graduation. Research has not explored the potential relationship between racial identity and long-term outcomes to see if African Americans that pursue postsecondary educations have differing racial identity beliefs than those who do not. Additionally, although research (Wimberly, 2002; Moller & Sterns, 2012) has shown that high school environmental factors are related to African Americans postsecondary aspirations and job acquisitions after high school graduation, there is still a lack of studies examining this relationship. Given a gap in research that looks at how high school environments fosters racial identity and impact long-term quality of life outcomes of African Americans including postsecondary academic attainment and civic engagement, there is a need to further explore these associations to understand what school climate factors positively impact African American outcomes. .

## **School Climate**

As previous research has shown (Moller & Sterns, 2012; Wimberly, 2002), another important factor that has been linked to adult outcomes overtime is the high school experience which is influenced by the climate of the school. School climate “reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are most susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place” (Tableman & Herron, 2004, p 2). A school climate can be measured by people’s feelings about their school environment. In Freiberg’s analysis (1999), school climate is defined as “the heart and soul of a school” (p 11). Freiberg further states that “school climate is about that quality of a school that helps each individual feel personal worth, dignity, and importance, while simultaneously helping create a sense of belonging to something beyond ourselves” (p 11). In a healthy school climate, students feel nurtured, teachers feel excited about working, and all members of the school feel empowered (Freiberg, 1999).

Previous research on school integration has found that African American children in urban and suburban public schools often feel alienated and that no one cares (Rury & Hill, 2012; Hurley & Lustbader, 1997). Students reporting these feelings lack a school climate in which they feel connected to their environment. Students’ perform better when they have a support system (Wimberly, 2002; Hurley & Lustbader, 1997). Students’ perceptions of school often depend on their development of a strong, relationship with a caring school adult (Wimberly, 2002; Hurley & Lustbader, 1997). Hurley and Lustbader’s (1997) analysis of drop-out prevention and support systems led them to

conduct a 5-year program called Project Support. The study targeted 4 districts of middle school children living in at-risk situations in the suburbs of New York City. Hurley and Lustbader (1997) found that the strong relationships developed between students, school staff, family and peers led to the success of their program. By engaging the students in the educational process, a positive climate was created which led to a decrease in the potential negative effects of students' home, school and community (Hurley & Lustbader, 1997). This positive climate was lacking before the program was introduced. As a result, the strategies of Project start (including modeling of expected positive behavior, sense of responsibility for self and others, practicing reflection and respect for positive risk-taking, maintaining a safe and nurturing environment, and breaking down barriers) are now being initiated in other programs (Hurley et. al, 1997).

A support system not only maintains a level of expectant behavior from the student, but also supports the student emotionally in order to maintain this expectant behavior. The school climate helps to shape the behavior of students (Bryk, A. et. al, 2010; Tillman, 2009; Wimberly, 2002). In a school that fosters a healthy school climate, this support and guidance does not only come from the teachers and administration, but from fellow peers. A study by Gottfredson (2006) on school-based delinquency prevention program of high-risk youth found that those students involved in the program showed an increased commitment to education, decrease in dropout rates, increase in retention, graduation, and scores on standardized test. The program produced these results by creating a more positive school climate for students, staff and the community. When compared to other schools, students in the program showed a decrease in



suspension rates, fewer negative experiences in school, and a decrease in delinquent and drug-related activities (Gottfredson, 2006).

School leadership is important in establishing positive school climate. The principal of the school sets the tone for the school (Bryk, A. et. al, 2010; Tillman, 2009; Dinham, et. al, 1995; Freiberg, 1999; McPartland, et. al, 1998). In a case study of an urban school in Baltimore over two years, McPartland et. al (1998) found that principals that did not give their staff and faculty autonomy within their departments typically led schools with poor academic success. The principal establishes a vision for the school and empowers the right people to implement that vision thereby increasing the pride and sense of ownership for everyone in the school (McPartland et. al, 1998). In another study on teacher innovation conducted in nine different schools with similar socioeconomic status, the outcomes for each school were very different as a result of the leadership of the principal (Freiberg, 1999). In a healthy school climate, everyone from student to administrator feels empowered to make the gains towards strong academic achievement.

A lack in financial and community resources makes it difficult for schools that serve students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds to adequately address student population needs. Lack of financial resources and support systems impact the school climate (Farkas, 2003). As a disproportionate percentage of African Americans live in low-socioeconomic communities (Orfield and Lee, 2005), African Americans are highly concentrated in the schools labeled as low-performing (Bankston et. al, 1996; Orfield et. al, 2005). High poverty schools tend to have higher teacher turnover rates and a higher concentration of less qualified teachers (Orfield et al., 2005); both factors impact the

quality of school life. A survey by the U.S. Department of Education in 2004 revealed that schools with at least a 75 percent or more low-income student population, reported “three times as many uncertified or out-of field teachers in both English and science” when compared to schools with a smaller low-income student population (Orfield et. al., 2005). In order to avoid sending their children to schools with uncertified or out-of-field teachers, parents with more financial and social resources tend to place their children in higher performing schools with a more equal proportion of middle-class students, leading to the perpetuation of inequality (Bankston et. al, 1996).

An investigation of school climate research suggests that many factors including principal leadership, student variables (e.g. race, socioeconomic status, family structures, feeling of belongingness, etc.), teacher characteristics, and community resources impact student outcomes. School climates are often established in a top down fashion with principals setting the tone for a supportive, nurturing, and enriching school environment (Bryk, A. et. al, 2010; Tillman, 2009; Dinham, et. al, 1995; Freiberg, 1999; McPartland, et. al, 1998). A teacher’s ability to support his or her students and to provide an enriching experience is impacted by his or her feelings of autonomy, educational qualifications, and personal experiences.

For African American youth, positive school climates are important in supporting successful academic achievement and feelings of belongingness (Tillman, 2009; Wimberly, 2002; Hurley, 1997). Research has also shown that supportive school climates can help off-set the potentially negative factors of students’ home lives (Gottfredson, 2006, Orfield et. al, 2005). Although desegregation efforts utilized busing

to improve quality of schools and resource distribution (Mickelson, 2003; Bankston and Caldas, 2002), educational and wage earning gaps still persists and impact African Americans' quality of life. Furthermore, middle class flight by both African American and White families perpetuates the cycle of educational inequality and makes it difficult for low-resourced schools to excel (Bankston and Caldas, 2002; Osterman, 1991). Review of school climate research typically cites the racial composition of the school as being a significant variable in student academic outcomes. However a lack of research on high school environments and African American long-term outcomes makes it difficult to determine whether a distinction needs to be made between the HBHSs, HWHSs, and PBHSs high schools when looking at African American long-term outcomes across generations. Furthermore, the racial history of American schooling makes it difficult to discuss the relationship between school climate and racial concentration of schools without acknowledging the history of oppression within American schools for ethnic minorities. Therefore, research evaluating the effects of African Americans perceptions of oppression within the school climate and racial concentration of the school on African American outcomes needs to be explored.

### **Racial Concentration and School Climate**

The goals of the school sometimes conflict with that of the family (Bankston and Caldas, 2002). Historically, schools exist for two main purposes in a democratic society: 1) to facilitate the redistribution and access of resources (Bankston & Caldas, 2002) and 2) to promote national civic responsibility (Balsano, 2005). The goal of promoting social equality of opportunity can conflict with that of the family and individual. "Families exist

to promote the competitive interests of their own children” (Bankston and Caldas, 2002, p 7). This sometimes dichotomous relationship between school goals and individual goals of the family impacts the racial concentration and climate of a school. Furthermore, it makes it more difficult for school districts to get high resourced families to attend lower-resourced schools that tend to be predominantly minority. Even African American families that can financially choose to send their children to any school of choice, opt to send their children to predominantly white schools in order to avoid the perceived effects of predominantly minority school environments.

Integration of schools has led to further segregation of neighborhoods; White families have increasingly moved to school districts with small minority populations in order to avoid being in a majority minority school district. The flight previously known as White flight is now more properly labeled as “middle class flight” (Osterman, 1991) as both White and African Americans are moving away from heavily minority neighborhoods in order to distance themselves from undesirable school climates at predominantly minority schools (Hastings et. al, 2005; Bankston and Caldas, 2002). People who avoid predominantly African American schools may perceive African Americans as lacking educational, social, and economic resources necessary to promote a healthy academic environment, particularly African Americans from lower SES backgrounds (Orfield et al., 2005). Some Whites and African Americans may view the presence of African Americans in the school as a negative regardless of their socioeconomic status and do not perceive predominantly minority school environments

as having a school climate conducive to promoting positive outcomes for their children (Bankston et. al, 1996).

When examining the second historical goal, schools have been traditionally responsible for providing students with skills necessary to become productive citizens that give back and foster the well-being of their communities (Tillman, 2009; Flanagan et. al, 2007; Balsano, 2005). Regardless of ethnicity, civic engagement is an important tool that promotes positive development among students and “represents an avenue for youth to get involved in the process of preservation of their own and their communities’ positive development over time” (Balsano, 2005, p 189). The climate of the school will determine how students learn about and carry-out their civic responsibility (Flanagan et. al, 2007). Different schools fulfill this civic obligation of educating and producing productive citizens in different ways. Some only discuss civic responsibility within the context of the history classes, while others expand civic responsibility into the mission of the school by requiring students to state the pledge, participate in volunteer opportunities, and expanding current events into all areas of academic life. Civic responsibility could come in implicit forms of stating the pledge or explicit forms of learning about the city, state, or national history and governmental expectations that a student lives. Regardless of the format in which civic responsibility is taught, schools are the means by which “all members of the younger generation can develop a sense of themselves as part of the body politic” (Flanagan et. al, 2007, p 422). Developing civic responsibility in the school setting may be even more important for African Americans, as minority populations tend

to be more skeptical of government, more aware of discrimination, and less likely to believe that the “American Dream” will happen for them (Flanagan et. al, 2007, p 424).

However the school climate can determine the way a school or individual teacher chooses to impede the knowledge of civic duty on students (Flanagan et. al, 2007). Teachers convey messages to students in their interactions that can shape students perceptions about social inclusion and tolerance within their classroom (Flanagan et. al, 2007). The messages that teachers convey establishes the climate within the classroom and school. Lessons about civic responsibility learned in high school can impact students’ sense of civic responsibility as an adult after graduation. For those students who do not have opportunities to engage in volunteer and civic activities within their community, the school may be the only avenue for which a student has to learn about and participate in civic engagement. In the long-term, lack of civic engagement may impact an individual’s sense of self-advocacy within their community on local and global levels (Flanagan et. al, 2007; Balsano, 2005). “Civically engaged youth tend to have an increased sense of their own competencies, be more internally driven to get involved in prosocial activities, and have higher self-esteem” (Balsano, 2005, p 188). The difference in how schools frame and make relevant historical references to student experiences for their civic duty and the effectiveness of schools in producing civic leaders may be related to the historical foundation and resources of the school which impact the school’s ability to meet the needs of the student population that it was designed to serve (Balsano, 2005).

When the needs of the total student population are not taken into account, particularly for minority students, “civic marginalization can occur either because youth

have no access to or means for involvement in civic engagement or because the civic engagement opportunities existing in their areas are not ethnically and culturally sensitive or do not address communal issues of importance to the local youth” (Balsano, 2005, p 195). Schools that do not take into account the needs of the youth and community that they serve may purposefully or unintentionally relay historical information, create a school environment that is oppressive, and marginalizes civic involvement. Feelings of marginalization leave some minorities viewing the academic setting as just one of several aspects of the social system created to privilege certain groups of people and oppress other groups (Hillard, 1988). However for all students regardless of ethnicity, Flanagan et. al (2007) found that “youth were more committed to the kinds of public interest goals that sustain a democratic polity (serving their country, helping people in need, and working to improve race relations) to the extent they felt their teachers were respectful of and fair to all students and insisted on students respecting one another” (p 429). Therefore, a respectful and fair school climate is important in fostering civic responsibility for African Americans.

Research by Ogbu (1990; Ogbu and Simons, 1998) on “involuntary minorities” has demonstrated that the historically oppressive context of the academic setting can complicate the academic achievement for African Americans (Nasir et. al, 2006, p 456). African American students often come from circumstances in which the home culture does not match that of the mainstream school culture; a culture that values independence, working on task that do not interest students, restraint in one’s actions, and rational thinking over emotional expression (Hollins et. al, 1994). Boykin’s research focuses on

changing the school climate in order to view the culture that African American children bring to school as a benefit and not a deficit (Boykin, 2000; Boykin, 1978). In studies that focus on teaching African American students in ways that allow them expression, align with their interest, offer flexibility, and are supportive; African Americans have succeeded academically (Allen, 1992; Boykin, 2000; Davis, 1994).

In an oppressive or non-nurturing environment, when students encounter hardships academically or socially, they typically have no one for support. Human functioning is a result of *reciprocal interactions* (Bandura, 2001) between personal characteristics (e.g. thoughts, beliefs), environmental features, and behaviors (Schunk et al., 2007). In Peter's analysis (1987) of Jane Elliot's "A Class Divided" experiment, the important relationship between cognitive skills and human interactions was identified. By dividing her all White class into "brown-eyed" and "blue-eyed" people, and discriminating against students according to their eye-color; Elliot demonstrated the negative impact of oppression on student's academic performance and behavior within the classroom. After one day of being oppressed, those students assigned to the "inferior" group expressed reluctance to come to school. Results reflected placement of students in the "superior" group "obviously pushed them to do better work than before" (Peters, 1987, p 37). In the academic setting, African American students' perceptions of deliberate and unintentional racial stereotype threats may "depress academic performance, through their anxiety-inducing effects on thought and problem-solving" (Nasir et. al, 2006, p 457).



For oppressed populations, education is a means of obtaining power, liberating, and exerting resistance (Rury and Hill, 2012; Tillman, 2009; Shircliffe, 2006; Bankston and Caldas, 2002). Most students want to succeed and know the importance of academic success; even those that drop-out or have poor academics. However, they may not see this goal being within their grasp because they feel marginalized within the school environment and do not perceive their school climate to be positive or supportive.

For example, research by Borman and Rachuba (2001) analyzed the academic resilience of 40,000 minority students from three grade cohorts over a four-year period. The results indicated that minority students had poorer levels of internal locus of control, academic self-efficacy and were exposed to school environments that were less conducive to academic resilience. However, the percentage of non-white students in the schools had little impact on the resiliency status of the students. The research concluded that strong and supportive relationships with teachers were key to resilient students being more successful when compared to non-resilient students (Borman et al, 2001). These findings emphasize the importance of school climates that protect students from the potentially negative effects of their family life, school, and communities as the key to academic success (Borman et. al, 2001). Researchers have consistently found that the characteristics that students bring to schools have more impact on academic achievement than curriculum, policies, and resources (Bankston et. al, 1996; Farkas, 2003). African American students need to be in supportive environments that will help to strengthen their resilience when they encounter academic and social hardships (Sanders, 2000). By acknowledging and nourishing a student's academic potential and linking this potential to

career goals; teachers, counselors, and administration create a school climate that is relevant and supportive (Sanders, 2000).

An environment of support must be one that is not only encouraging, but offers the student a sense of belonging (Phelps et. al, 2001). The necessity of belonging does not have to come from a large number of individuals. In a study asking students that once lived in poverty what proved important in their upward mobility to middle class, a majority of responses included a significant adult relationship in which a teacher, counselor, or coach provided them with guidance or took interest in them as individuals (Clark, 2003). The individuals that provide a child with support need to be consistently accessible (Phelps et. al, 2001). When students do not have any or enough support to meet their individual needs and are confronted with academic or social obstacles, they stop trying.

At the secondary level, research (Mickleleson, 2003) that has specifically investigated the relationship between racial composition of a school and academic outcomes, found predominantly African American environments to be disadvantageous for African American students academic success. Mickleleson (2003) looked specifically at the short-term and long-term outcomes of 8<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> African Americans based on the racial make-up of their school environment within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. Mickleleson (2003) reaffirmed that desegregation is significantly beneficial for African Americans. Mickleleson (2003) looked at the history of the school system, and discussed the consequences of desegregation for African Americans. When investigating the short term effects, Mickleleson reported that predominantly Black schools and

classrooms had significantly negative effects on Black and White student academic outcomes. However, Mickleson did acknowledge that tracking in schools limited African Americans access to better teachers and resources in desegregated schools, a finding consistent with other research (Moller & Steams, 2012). In terms of long-term effects, Mickleson (2003) found that African Americans attending desegregated environments tended to obtain higher educational and occupational levels than those who did not. Additionally, they were more likely to live and work in integrated environments and express less interracial hostility and fear of Whites.

Similar results by Bankston et. al (1996) found minority concentration to be a negative influence on African American academic achievement “independent of patterns of behavior and habits prevailing in schools and independent of the socioeconomic level of schools” (p552). In their study, they analyzed 42,041 Louisiana public school students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade by controlling for individual traits and family characteristics of African American students to determine if these factors impacted the academic achievement of students. Bankston et. al (1996) found that personal habits (i.e. watching TV, studying, and reading) had significant but weak influences on academic performance. Additionally, parental socioeconomic status was the second strongest predictor of academic achievement with race being the primary, suggesting that students with higher educated parents perform better on academic tests. Overall, some research (Mickleson, 2003; Bankston et. al, 1996) shows a significant negative effect on academic outcomes for African American and White students when looking at the relationship between school climate and racial concentration, independent of the socioeconomic status of the school.

However, further research of the Louisiana Public School systems by Bankston and Caldas (2002) found that the number of single-parent families, not racial concentration of the school, is the strongest predictor of academic performance, followed by the socioeconomic levels of students. When the number of single-parent families within a school was controlled for, the correlation between racially segregated schools and academic outcomes is no longer significant. Furthermore, since research has shown benefits in African Americans attending predominantly Black schools, Bankston and Caldwell (2002) suggest that “these benefits may be offset if these predominantly Black schools are dominated by students from single parent-families” (p 203). Support for the significant relationship between family structure and student academic outcomes can be found in the high academic achievement of Vietnamese students. Within the Louisiana Public schools, Vietnamese students tend to come from lower-socioeconomic families that have immigrated into the United States. However, the tightly knit family structure of many Vietnamese students serves as a protective factor against the potentially negative effects of growing-up in poverty and helps to foster high academic achievement (Bankston and Caldwell, 2002).

In other research on predominantly African American high schools (Saunders et. al, 2004), when gender is taken into account, minority concentration has been related to positive academic outcomes for African American females. Research by Saunders et. al (2004) conducted at an all-African American high school found African American females to have more favorable graduation rates than African-American males. For females, grade point average was also more greatly associated with greater self-efficacy

than males. This may imply that girls in the study had stronger academic skills, greater effort, and stronger intentions to finish the school year when compared to males. However for both genders, higher self-perceptions were associated with stronger intentions to finish the present year in school suggesting that the more equipped a person feels they are to complete academic tasks, the more determined they will be to complete the school year. Therefore when comparing grade point average and intentions of females and males, it makes sense that females reported higher levels of academic self-efficacy and importance of school because their GPAs were higher than their male counterparts. However, there were no gender differences found between racial identity or levels of self-esteem. Lack of gender effects suggests that for African American youth in all-African American school environments, self-esteem and racial identity may not be affected by an individual's perception of his or her academic ability, particularly for African American males.

Other research at the university level (Chavous et. al, 2004) has proven that predominantly African American school climates are nurturing academically and socially for African American males and females. A study by Chavous et al (2004) looked at the impact of race and gender on African American students at historically Black institutions (HBIs) and predominantly White institutions (PWIs) at the college level. Among other things, the study aimed to see how gender and institution type moderated the relationships between stereotype expectations and academic outcomes (sense of belonging, academic competence, and academic performance). They found significant differences in the average high school GPA of African American students based-on their

institution. African Americans at predominantly White institutions had higher high school GPAs on average than those at HBI. The difference between incoming freshman GPAs may reflect a tradition of HBIs enrolling African American students who otherwise might not be able to attend college because of social, financial, or academic barriers (Allen, 1992).

Additional findings by Chavous et. al (2004) found that all African American students reported racially biased evaluations or treatments in classes regardless of their attendance at an HBI or PWI. However, African American students attending HBIs felt less racially stereotyped treatment in their classes than did African Americans attending PWIs. This significant difference suggests that African American students at HBIs may feel a stronger sense of belonging and connection than African American students at PWIs, and these feelings of belonging shelter them from racial issues and discrimination. Additionally, African American women at HBIs had significantly higher academic competence than did African American women at the PWI. For African American women, social variables of belonging and connectedness may be important in fostering academic competence levels. Furthermore because stereotype expectations did not differ significantly for African American men and women in either setting, the assumption that African American women feel like double-minorities in academic settings did not hold true.

However some gender differences were found and indicated similar findings to the Saunders et. al (2004) study in which African American females tended to have a more positive self-concept and higher academic performance than African American

males (Chavous et. al, 2004). Gender differences in race-related perceptions were related to the presence of African Americans in particular disciplines and not the academic setting overall. Furthermore, African American men and women tended to have different experiences at PWIs with women's academic self-concept being less negatively impacted by perceptions of discrimination (Fleming, 1984). African American men may experience greater negative effects of perceived discrimination at PWIs because African American men are less prevalent, and therefore have fewer African American role models or support systems when encountering negative stereotypes in these environments. Additionally, stereotype expectations were a stronger predictor of GPA for men than for women at PWIs suggesting that African American men tended to be more impacted by stereotypes than African American women at a PWI. However at HBIs, stereotype expectations impacted academic performance for African American women more than African American men. At HBIs, where race is less important, women may attribute discrimination to their identity of being a woman versus being African American (Chavous et. al, 2004).

An earlier study by Allen (1992) examined the outcomes of 2,500 African American college students enrolled in PWIs and HBIs. Study results indicated HBIs are beneficial for African American college students. Allen found that Black students who attended PWIs reported lower academic achievement, lower levels of social involvement, lower college grades, higher grades in high school, and less favorable relations with their professors than African Americans who attended HBIs (1992). Allen attributed the academic success of African American students that attended HBIs to their individual

characteristics and quality of social and academic life on the campus (1992). Students who felt that they chose the right college also reported being more socially involved. Not surprisingly, those students who had positive faculty relationships and peer relationships (both Black and White) had the greatest social involvement. Additionally as other research has shown, Allen (1992) found a positive relationship between African American students' perceptions of and responses to the academic environment and outcomes. A review of African American outcomes based on the racial history of the schools suggests that African American students at HBIs reported better academic performance, greater social involvement, and higher occupational aspirations than students at PWIs. Furthermore, African American students at HBIs tended to emphasize feelings of engagement, connection, acceptance, and extensive support and encouragement. The presumed positive correlation between high social integration and high academic performance is not necessarily true for African Americans at PWIs. African American students that attend PWIs may express high levels of social alienation and disconnection, but they are often able to maintain high academic performance levels despite these feelings (Allen, 1992).

The history of American schools makes it difficult to analyze the relationship between racial concentration of a school and African American outcomes without addressing potentially oppressive school practices and climates. Goals of the school can often be in conflict with that of a family, leading to a dichotomous relationship in which middle class flight makes it difficult to get high resourced families to integrate predominantly minority schools. Lack of equal distribution of resources can lead to



oppressive school climates for African Americans. The emphasis of civic responsibility within the school climates can help to reinforce African American students' sense of belonging, increase feelings of competency, and levels of self-esteem (Balsano, 2005). However, school climates that do not emphasize civic responsibility or teachers that do not take a culturally sensitive approach in relaying information, can create academic environments that further isolate and oppress African American youth and impact their academic performance (Balsano, 2005). Additionally, research (Borman et. al, 2001) has indicated that strong and supportive relationships with teachers was key to resilient African American students being academically successful, and racial concentration of non-white students in the schools had little impact on the resiliency status of African American students when encountering academic difficulties.

An investigation of African American outcomes based on the racial history and racial concentration of the schools produces mixed findings. Some researchers (Mickleson, 2003; Bankston et. al, 1996) have identified minority concentrated school climates as negatively impacting African American students' academics at the secondary level. Other researchers (Bankston & Caldas, 2002) have found that the family structure of students was more predictive of school achievement, not racial concentration; findings similar to other research (Borman et. al, 2001). At the college or university level, minority concentrated environments have proven to be beneficial for students in term of feelings of belonging and academic achievement. Gender differences were also found, with females often achieving at higher rates in PWIs and HBIs (Chavous et. al, 2004). Some studies have looked at the outcomes of African Americans overtime based on the

racial composition and climate of their high school (Mickelson, 2003; Bankston et. al, 1996, Bankston & Caldas, 2002, Coleman, 1966), but these studies have not explicitly made a distinction between high schools that are predominantly Black versus high schools that are historically Black when reporting African American outcomes based on high school environment. Other research (Rury & Hill, 2012; Shircliffe, 2006) has researched the history of integration for historically Black high schools using the experiences of African American leaders, teachers, students, and activists that were born before and after integration. This research takes a primarily qualitative approach by describe how historical events have impacted the efficacy of integration (Rury & Hill, 2012), or by relaying changes in historically Black high school environments across time that resulted in many historically Black high schools being closed, while others were restored (Shircliffe, 2006). This information is important in describing how and why some African Americans perceive historically Black high schools to be important school climates for the African American community (Rury & Hill, 2012; Shircliffe, 2006). However, the research has not statistically compared the long-term outcomes of graduates from historically Black high schools to those from other high school environments across time. Due to a lack of extensive mixed-methods or quantitative research that distinguishes between high school environments that are historically Black, historically White predominantly White, and historically White, predominantly Black, exploration of long-term outcomes for African Americans should be explored further to see if differences exist between African Americans based on the racial composition and history of their high school. The differences in studies finding predominantly African American

environments as negatively or positively impacting the academic achievement of students may be in the students' perceptions of their school which can impact their behavior and academic performance. Therefore, an important dimension to study would be school pride.

### **School Pride and School Climate**

An important dimension of school climate is its contribution to the sense of school pride. School pride can be defined as the amount of personal pleasure or satisfaction that a person feels in the achievements, accomplishments, or successes of their school environment. People demonstrate school pride in their conversations with others and through their actions. In a healthy school climate, everyone takes pride in working together to accomplish school goals (Clark, 2003). Perry (1908) described school pride as things that are developed over time and essential to establishing the school climate (as cited in Freiberg, 1999). If everyone has a vested interest and pride in the success of the school, and view their experience as valuable; then they will ensure that future alumni will uphold the legacy of the school (Perry, 1908 as cited in Freiberg, 1999). Perry (1908) believed that school pride can be developed by giving students examples of prideful moments, school assemblies, school athletics, school organizations that promote social interactions that model the school goals, school papers that allow students to express themselves in an intelligent manner, and an enthusiastic alumni that expresses the high ideals of academic excellence and can provide material donations to the school. A school climate that allows for positive social interactions in which friendships can develop between students, faculty, and staff, can lead to an increase in

school pride (Garrido, Cobb, & Jackson, 2004). School climate helps to define the amount of school pride developed in students.

In a study of the school climate of Boston's high schools, surveys revealed that school pride was lagging in most schools (Sibley & Garcia, 2004). The areas of the greatest pride in the Boston schools were athletics and academic reputation (Sibley et. al, 2004). Research by McPartland et al (1998) of a Talent Development Program found that as perceptions of school climate improved so did students' feelings of pride in telling others about their school. When compared to the control high school that did not receive the Talent Development curriculum, the students in the Talent Development School reported 16.2% higher level of pride in telling others that they attend that school. Along with advancing the school pride, the school climate of the school increased the graduation rate (McPartland et. al, 1998). In a study of school climate and leadership of three secondary schools, Dinham et. al (1995) reported that the principal's emphasis on school pride in one school was related to people reporting a positive school climate. Gottfredson (1986) looked at the impact of Project PATHE (Positive Action Through Holistic Education) on eight, predominantly African American middle and high schools in South Carolina (as cited in Welsh, 2000). Gottfredson (1986) reported, amongst other things, that extracurricular activities that included a school pride program resulted in a reduction of suspensions and delinquent behavior.

When the academic and social aspects of student life merge to create a school climate emphasizing learning, high academic achievement can occur (Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000). The research has shown that positive school pride is related to positive

perceptions of school climate. However, there is limited research investigating differences in school pride amongst African Americans based on the racial concentration and history of the school. During times of segregation, African Americans may have had a different level of school pride for a school climate that was established for African Americans by African Americans, than they do today. During segregation, HBHSs were the only option for attendance for African Americans (Rury & Hill, 2012; Tillman, 2009; Hillard, 1988). However, after integration, African Americans have more school choice options including public, private, and charter schools. Overall, there is a gap in research exploring the generational changes in African Americans levels of school pride and perceptions of school climate based on high school environment.

### **Role of School Climate on African American Outcomes**

During the time in which the United States is becoming more of a global community, some researchers may question the relevance of studying historically Black high schools. However, some of the greatest African American leaders and professionals (e.g. Ernie Barnes, William Bell, Jeanne Lucas, Andre Leon Talley, Biff Henderson, Thomas Stith, III, Ezell Blair, Debra Lee, Allyson Kay Duncan, and Rodney Rogers) have a foundation in the Black community and have graduated from a historically Black high school. However, it is not clear if historically Black high schools are still producing many of the great leaders within the African American community today. Although there are a limited number of historically Black high schools still in existence, historically Black high school graduates may contribute more to the African American community on average when compared to African American graduates of other high school

environments; contributions that may or may not be related to their postsecondary academic achievement.

This review of literature has identified various factors impacting long-term outcomes of African American high school graduates. Although African Americans have made educational, occupational, and financial gains across the years, gaps still persists when comparing African Americans and Whites (Wimberly, 2002; Tillman, 2009; Bankston & Caldas, 2002). Racism, financial strain, social support, cognitive engagement, and psychological wellbeing are factors related to quality of life outcomes for African Americans (Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Yap et. al, 2011; Lewis et. al, 2011; Utsey et. al, 2002). Basic needs of food, shelter, safety, and belonging need to be addressed in order for African Americans to meet their higher needs of self-confidence and self-actualization (Oishi et. al, 1999; Hagerty, 1999) and achieve academically (Chavous, 2004). The high school experience may have a significant impact on a person's lifelong learning outcomes, goals and beliefs (Moller & Sterns, 2012; Wimberly, 2002), but for African Americans, the academic setting can be one of several aspects of the social system created to privilege certain groups of people and oppress other groups (Hillard, 1988). The contributions of Ogbu (1990), Flanagan et. al, (2007), and Boykin (2000) demonstrate that the historically and potentially oppressive context of the academic setting can complicate the academic achievement of African Americans. Supportive school climates, ones that emphasize civic responsibility, can increase a person's school pride by cultivating a nurturing, fair, and supportive environment that protects African Americans from potentially negative factors in the school environment, home life and

community. Additionally, civic responsibility fostered within the high school can lead to civic engagement and self-efficacy within the community after graduation. However, the conflicting goals of schools and high-resourced parents can make it difficult to achieve equal opportunity for all students by means of integration.

Student's socioeconomic status, family structures and perceptions of their school climate have proven to impact their academic achievement and socialization of students (Israel et. al, 2001; Hastings et. al, 2005; Orfield et. al., 2005; Phelps et. al, 2001; Chavous et. al, 2002; Chavous et. al, 2004; Chavous, 2000; Allen, 1992; Bankston & Caldas, 2002). Gender and racial identity have been related to an individual's opinion of their school environment (Saunders et. al, 2003; Chavous et. al, 2002) with positive racial identity beliefs promoting academic behaviors related to high academic achievement (Chavous et. al, 2003; Eccles et. al, 2006). Although there has been substantial research looking at drop-out rates, low-performance of predominantly minority schools, and underperformance of African American students, (Sanders, 2000; Bridgeland et. al, 2006; Wise, 2007) a gap in research still exists.

What have been looked at very minimally are predominantly African American high school environments that lead to positive African American outcomes. A person is shaped by the factors in their environment (Kao, 2000); therefore, the history of oppression within American schools makes it very important for African Americans to be surrounded by examples of success to which they relate. A positive school climate is necessary for African Americans to be resilient students and academically successful (Borman et al, 2001). In school environments today, a deficit model of African American

academic achievement focuses on what can be done to help African Americans and suggests that something is lacking in African Americans; particularly African Americans from low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Boykin, 1978; Hollins et. al 1994; Kao, 2000). African Americans need to be able to visualize themselves as being examples of educational excellence. Perceiving the African American race as a role model for academic excellence may be difficult with research that supports the belief that African Americans fare worse academically in predominantly African American schools at the secondary level (Bankston et. al, 1996; Mickelson, 2003). The experiences of many successful African Americans have proven that African Americans are capable of academic success in predominantly black schools (Sanders, 2000; Bryk et. al, 2010; Rury & Hill, 2012), but this research has not focused on outcomes specifically at the high school level. Research on African Americans in predominantly and historically Black colleges and universities has shown that these school climates are beneficial for African American students (Allen, 1992; Davis, 1994), but there is a need to replicate findings on the impact of historical schools on high school outcomes. Furthermore, there is minimal research exploring the dynamics in relationships between African American graduates' long-term outcomes, perceptions of racial identity, school pride and school climate based on the historical background of the high school environment. Therefore, this research will specifically look at the relationship between the perception factors (racial identity, school pride and school climate) and African American long-term outcomes (academic attainment, and community investment) based on graduation status



(HBHS graduate or Non-HBHS graduate) across three time periods (1990-1999, 1980-1989, 1970-1979).

Conducting this research is important in determining whether current methods of using standardized test scores to measure school performance translates to positive life-outcomes for African American graduates. When policy makers use standardized test scores to determine the success of HBHSs, these schools often fall below the standard; resulting in many HBHSs being closed or watched closely by the national and state educational reformers. The results of this research can add to present research looking at the effects of integration on African Americans and HBIs (Rury & Hill, 2012; Shircliffe, 2006; Landson-Billings, 2009; Bankston & Caldas, 2002). Furthermore, by gaining current information about the long-term outcomes of African American graduates; African American communities can understand any potential relationships between racial concentration and history of the school to those African American graduates that demonstrate civic responsibility by giving-back, volunteering and/or working within organizations to promote the betterment of the African American community. Lastly by looking at the school's historical context and African American graduates' views of the schools, this research is designed to identify significant differences overtime between predominantly Black school climates that were historically founded for African Americans and those that have changed to predominantly African American schools due to middle-class and white-flight by looking at African American self-reports of their current life-outcomes post-graduation. Looking at the academic experiences of African American students in the context of historical time, led to the advancement of four major

hypotheses regarding their perceptions of high school, personal racial identity, and long-term outcomes:

- 1) The long term outcomes of academic attainment for African American graduates of HBHS will be significantly higher than that of African American graduates of HWHS-PW and HWHS-PB across three time periods (1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1970-1979).
- 2) The long term outcome of civic engagement for African American graduates of HBHS will be significantly greater than that of African American graduates of HWHS-PW and HWHS-PB across three time periods (1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1970-1979).
- 3) The personal perceptions of school experience (i.e. school climate and school pride) for African American graduates of HBHSs will be significantly more positive than those of African American graduates of HWHS-PW and HWHS-PB across three time periods (1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1970-1979).
- 4) Identification with personal racial identity factors of centrality, public regard and private regard of African American graduates for the HBHS will be significantly higher than that of African American graduates of HWHS-PW and HWHS-PB across three time periods (1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1970-1979).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODS**

The study was designed to analyze results from three high school environments/types. However the planned inclusion of HWHS-PB was dropped due to the difficulty of recruiting participants to the study. The description of study methods and analysis of data will therefore be based on the two school environments of HBHS and HWHS-PW.

#### **Participants**

A sample of high school graduates who identified themselves as African American were recruited from the two selected high schools. The high schools were located in a central urban city within North Carolina. In the 1950s, the school district from which these schools were selected had segregated schools in which there was no voluntary integration of races. The legally enforced desegregation of schools did not begin until 1959. By 1965, a “Freedom-of-Choice” plan was implemented by the school system to allow students the right to voluntarily choose their schools regardless of their race (Truelove, n.d.). However, the school system remained primarily segregated until the court ordered desegregation that proposed all high schools and junior high schools would be integrated by the fall of 1969, with an extra year allotted for elementary schools (Truelove, n.d.)

The HBHS was selected in that it had always been a predominantly African American school, and had existed for generations in the African American community. It remained a HBHS after desegregation in 1969 and through the process of voluntary integration by White students in the following years. The HBHS is defined as “historically black” because it was established to educate only African American students in 1887, continued to educate primarily African American students several years after integration, and has continued to educate primarily African American students. The approximate school size over the years has been 1,000 students with the senior graduating class sizes ranging from 150-300 students.

The HWHS, PW, defined as “historically White”, was selected in that it was established in 1963 as an all-white high school for the purpose of educating only White students. The desegregation of the school in 1969 and voluntary integration of the school by African American students included an influx of middle-class African American and Caucasian families. However after the process of integration began, the population of the school has continued to remain predominantly White. The approximate school size over the years has been 1800 students with senior graduating class sizes ranging between 400-500 students.

The racial make-up of the schools in this study is defined by the percentage of African Americans in the school compared to students from other racial backgrounds. Predominantly Black high schools were defined as those schools in which African Americans represent the largest percentage of the total student population when compared to other races.

Participants in this study were individuals who graduated post-segregation (1970-1999) from the selected schools in the district. By controlling for the time span of graduation, the study was designed to capture persons who had time to finish any post-secondary training and establish themselves within their community. The study was also designed to eliminate any environmental factors of school climate that may impact self-reports of individuals who graduated from a school during the time when the selected schools were still legally segregated (1969 and before).

Prior to initiating the study, approval was sought for the study from the Institutional Review Board at UNC. Once approved, participants from the selected schools were invited to participate in the study through various solicitation methods. Directors of the alumni associations at the selected schools were contacted to gain support for conducting the research. Once support was given, the surveys were placed on the alumni website and Facebook pages of the three selected schools. The Alumni Directors also emailed potential survey respondents informing them of the location of the survey and providing a direct link to the survey. People were able to access the link to their survey by clicking on it via the emailed link or alumni website. Paper copies of the survey were also provided to respondents if requested. Additionally, participants were recruited at alumni events (e.g. homecoming games) by obtaining potential respondents emails in order to provide them with a link of the survey. High School alumni who agreed to participate received the chance to be entered into a raffle.

The recruitment procedures resulted in data that included a sample of 35 African American graduates from the HWHS-PW (9 male and 26 female) and 83 African

American graduates from the HBHS (31 male and 52 female). From the HWHS-PW, 17.1% graduated between 1970-1979, 51.4% graduated between 1980-1989, and 31.4% graduated between 1990-1999. From the HBHS, 56% graduated between 1970-1979, 14.3% graduated from 1980-1989, and 29.8% graduated from 1980-1989. Demographics for each school environment are visually represented in Table 1.

Table 1. African American Graduate Sample Demographic Characteristics

High School Environment/Type	HWHS-PW		HBHS		TOTAL	
Variable	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
<b>Total Sample</b>	35	29.4%	84	70.6%	119	100%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	9	25.7%	31	36.9%	40	33.6%
Female	26	74.3%	52	61.9%	78	65.5%
<b>Graduate Year</b>						
1970-1979	6	17.1%	47	56%	53	44.5%
1980-1989	18	51.4%	12	14.3%	30	25.2%
1990-1999	11	31.4%	25	29.8%	36	30.3%
<b>HS Family SES</b>						
Lower-class, Not working	2	5.7%	1	1.2%	3	2.5%
Lower-class, Working	4	11.4%	26	31%	30	25.2%
Middle-class, Not working	--	--	1	1.2%	1	0.8%
Middle-class, Working	27	77.1%	53	63.1%	80	67.2%
Upper-class, Not working	--	--	1	1.2%	1	0.8%
Upper-class, Working	2	5.7%	2	2.4%	4	3.4%
<b>HS Gov Assistance</b>						
Yes	3	8.6%	2	2.4%	5	4.2%
No	31	88.6%	76	90.5%	107	89.9%
Not Sure	--	--	4	2	4	3.4%
Unanswered	--	1	--	2	3	2.5%

**HS GPA**

Mostly A's	4	11.4%	10	11.9%	14	11.8%
Mostly A's & B's	12	34.3%	31	36.9%	43	36.1%
Mostly B's	6	17.1%	15	17.9%	21	17.6%
Mostly B's & C's	9	25.7%	20	23.8%	29	24.4%
Mostly C's	4	11.4%	5	6%	9	7.6%
Mostly D's	--	--	3	3.6%	3	2.5%

**Current Academic  
Attainment Post HS**

High School Graduate	1	2.9%	4	4.8%	5	4.2%
Some Community College	2	5.7%	2	2.4%	4	3.4%
Community College Grad./Assoc. Degree or Certificate	1	2.9%	2	2.4%	3	2.5%
Some College	5	14.3%	10	11.9%	15	12.6%
College Graduate	9	25.7%	24	28.6%	33	27.7%
Some Post-Graduate hours	1	2.9%	12	14.3%	13	10.9%
Master's Degree/Physician Assistant	12	34.3%	19	22.6%	31	26.1%
Professional Degree (Ph.D., MD, JD)	3	8.6%	10	11.9%	13	10.9%
More than one Professional Degree	1	2.9%	1	1.2%	2	1.7%

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Across the two school environments, there were some similarities. Females accounted for the largest percentage in both environments. Additionally, most participants reported that their family did not receive any form of government assistance during high school and their SES status was working, middle-class. Academically, most of the respondents across the school environments reported receiving either A's and B's or B's and C's during high school.

## **Instruments**

The data collection process involved the use of five different instruments to assess the dependent variables of academic attainment, school climate, school pride, racial identity, and civic engagement. A self-report survey was developed to secure information on high school grades, academic achievement level after high school graduation, household pre-tax income (during high school), and whether or not the graduate received free-or-reduced lunch while in school.

### **School Climate**

To assess the relationship between school environment and research variables; 4 items from two subscales on The Quality of School Life Scale (Epstein & McPartland, 1976) were used: Satisfaction with School and Reaction to Teachers. The full scale is a 27-item, with all responses scored on a 0 to 1 scale. The reliability of the original Satisfaction with School scale is .79 for secondary and .81 for elementary. The Reactions to Teacher original subscale has a reliability of .73 for secondary and .64 for elementary. For this study, original questions were phrased for students currently enrolled in school and modified to fit the context of this study population; high school graduates and not current students. Also, the scale was modified to a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to allow for more specificity in participant responses and to increase the chances of finding differences between groups. The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for the measure was  $r=.55$ .



### **School Pride**

To assess the relationship between school pride and school climate, selected items from The School Pride Scale (Bell Hughes & Livingston, 2008) were used. The School Pride Scale is a 10-item scale that assesses graduates' feelings of school pride expressed by their willingness to donate their time and money to the school, attend school functions, and stay involved with their school upon graduation. Responses to these questions were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). Scores for all questions were summed with high scores on these questions reflecting a strong sense of school pride for the high school. The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for the measure was  $r=.88$ .

### **Racial Identity Scale**

To assess the relationship between racial identity and research variables, two selected scales from the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) were administered to participants: Centrality Scale and Regard Scale. There were 20 selected items total on the two scales with a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 for each question. The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for the 8-item Centrality scale measure was  $r=.73$ . The Regard scale is divided into two subscales: Private Regard Subscale and Public Regard Subscale. The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for the 6-item Private Regard subscale measure was  $r=.68$ . The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for the Public Regard subscale was  $r=.80$ . Once reverse scored items were adjusted, all items were summed with higher scores reflecting stronger levels of racial identity.

### **Civic Engagement**

To assess the relationship between civic engagement and research variables, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) Civic Engagement Quiz was administered. Items were modified into a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4, allowing participants to indicate the extent to which they participated in each civic activity within the past 5 years. The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for the measure was  $r = .90$ .

### **Free Response**

In addition to the structured questions, a free response section was added to the Long Term Outcome Scale to allow participants the opportunity to describe their school pride and perceptions of their high school climate, as well as any impact they felt high school may have had on their long-term outcomes. Respondents were given a prompt and asked to comment in their own words about their high school experience.

### **Variables**

In addressing the first research question, three variables were used: high school type, graduation year, and academic attainment.

In addressing the second research question, three variables were used: high school type, graduation year, and civic engagement.

To address the third research question, four variables were used: high school type, graduation year, school climate and school pride.

In analyzing the fourth research question, five variables were used: high school type, graduation year, as well as, the three racial identity variables of centrality, public regard, and private regard.

### **Analytic Procedure**

SPSS Statistics (PASW Statistics) was used to investigate all research questions. All collected data was screened for assumptions of normality, homogeneity, skewness, and missing data. Participant surveys missing over half of the answers were eliminated from the analysis. Data consisted of summary scores. For the dependent variables of school climate, school pride, racial identity and civic engagement, mean scores were calculated for participants in each school environment, with the exception of the academic attainment variable which was a one item scale. For each variable, follow-up tests investigated differences across the two schools and for the different time periods. The free response section of data was analyzed qualitatively for potential themes related to the variables of interest.

**Research question one.** To test research question one, a 2x3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to assess the relationship between high school type and graduation year on the outcome variable of academic attainment.

**Research question two.** To test research question two, a 2x3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to assess the group differences based on high school type and graduation year for the outcome variable of civic engagement.

**Research question three.** This research question was designed to test for group differences for in personal experience variables of school climate and school pride. An

ANOVA was run to assess the relationship between high school type and graduation year on the personal experience variable of school climate. Another ANOVA was run to assess the relationship between high school type and graduation year on the personal experience variable of school pride.

**Research question four.** Research question four was designed to test for statistical differences on the personal identity variable of racial identity based on school type and graduation year. A 2x3 ANOVA was run to assess the relationship between group membership and centrality. Another 2x3 ANOVA was run to evaluate the relationship between group membership and private regard. Finally, a 2x3 ANOVA was run to analyze the relationship between group membership and public regard.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Preliminary Analysis

The first step in analyzing the data was to examine descriptive statistics on the variables. These are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Means of Variables based on School Type for Total Sample

Variable	HWHS-PW N=35, *N=34			HBHS N=84		
	<i>M</i>	SD	Range	<i>M</i>	SD	Range
Academic Attainment	6.60	1.90	2-10	6.57	1.79	2-10
School Climate	14.80	2.53	10-19	15.89	2.79	6-20
School Pride	34.15*	4.98	23-45	38.29	5.72	11-45
Centrality	38.53*	8.80	21-56	40.24	7.86	23-56
Public Regard	20.91*	6.59	6-36	21.61	5.32	12-35
Private Regard	38.59*	2.74	30-42	38.83	3.86	22-42
Civic Engagement	27.56*	7.65	15-45	28.96	9.29	13-52

An inspection of the variables based-on school type reveals that HBHS graduates had higher means for all variables, with the exception of academic attainment, when compared to HWHS-PW graduates. For academic attainment, the mean value suggests that most participants from each school type had at least a college degree. An analysis of skewness for each variable indicated that all variables were normally distributed for both

school environments. The variables of academic attainment, school pride, and private regard were slightly negatively skewed for both school types, suggesting a higher number of larger values, but these levels of skewness were within the accepted range of variability ( $\pm 3$ ). A review of kurtosis for each variable indicated that the HWHS-PW was normally distributed for each variable. The HBHS kurtosis levels indicated a flatter distribution for the school pride (5.91) and private regard (6.40) variables with both having moderately positive kurtosis. These distributions are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2. All other kurtosis levels for the HBHS responses indicated normally distributed responses.

Figure 1. Distribution of score for variable Private Regard for HBHS

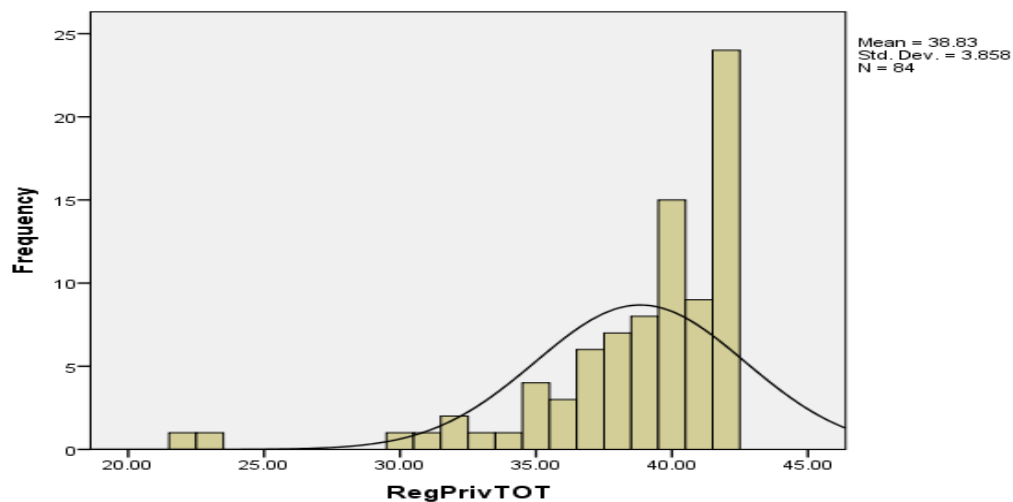
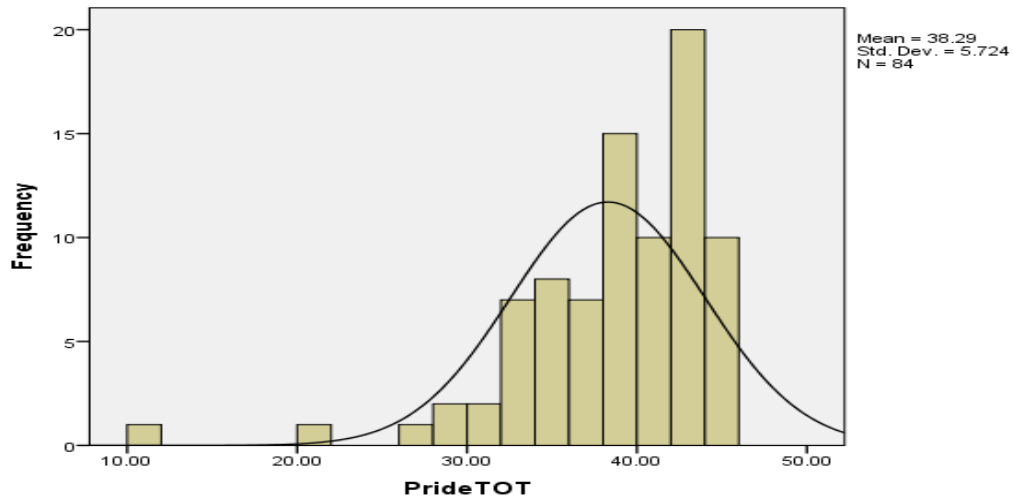


Figure 2. Distribution of scores for variable School Pride for HBHS



The next step in analyzing the data was to examine descriptive statistics on the variables based on Graduation Year. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Means of Variables based on Graduation Year for Total Sample

Variables	1970-1979 N=53, *N=52			1980-1989 N=30			1990-1999 N=36, *N=35		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Academic Attainment	6.58	1.84	2-10	6.00	1.64	2-8	7.06	1.82	2-9
School Climate	15.98	2.57	10-20	15.93	2.56	12-20	14.67	3.02	6-20
School Pride	38.28	5.48	11-45	36.67	5.35	25-45	35.66*	6.44	20-45
Centrality	39.58	7.68	25-56	39.30	8.40	21-54	40.37*	8.78	23-56
Public Regard	21.85	5.95	8-36	21.37	5.027	12-32	20.77*	5.93	6-35
Private Regard	38.77	3.92	22-42	38.70	2.37	33-42	38.80*	3.92	20-45
Civic Engagement	29.94*	9.15	13-52	26.87	8.93	15-47	27.97	8.21	13-48

An inspection of the variables based on graduation year indicated that school experience variables of school climate and school pride, as well as, scores for civic engagement and public regard decreased over time for the total sample. Reviewing the academic attainment overtime, 1990-1999 graduates had the highest level of degrees followed by 1970-1979 graduates. A review of assumptions of normality indicated that variables were normally distributed in terms of skewness across groups. The kurtosis level for the private regard variable for 1970-1979 (5.58) and 1990-1999 (7.10) indicated flatter than normal distributions with both having moderately positive kurtosis. These distributions are presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4. All other variables were normally distributed in terms of kurtosis.

Figure 3. Distribution of scores for variable Private Regard for 1970-1979 Graduates

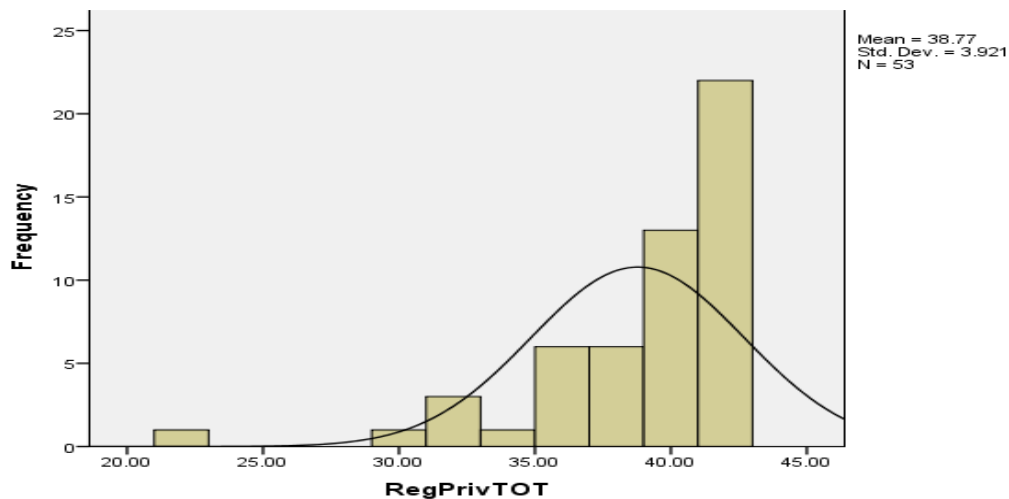
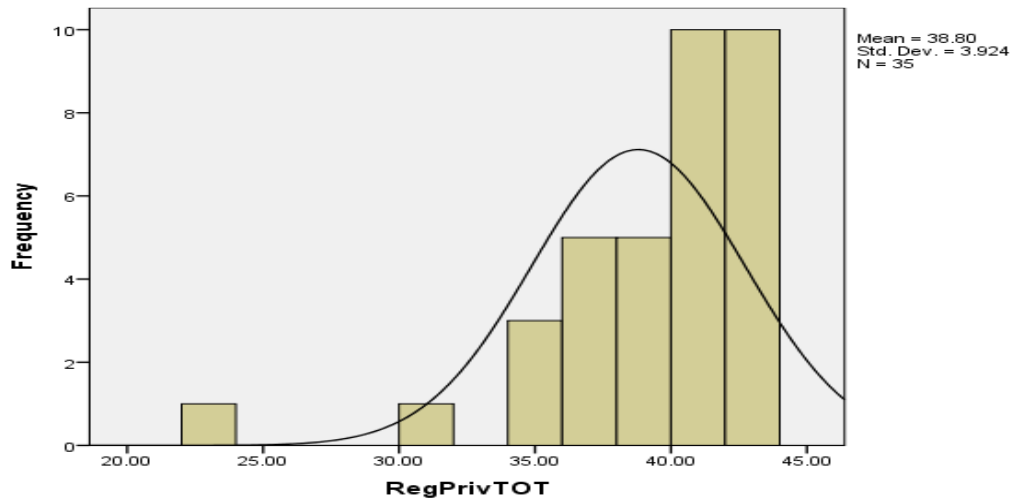




Figure 4. Distribution of scores for variable Private Regard for 1990-1999 Graduates



The next step in analyzing the data was to examine descriptive statistics on the variables based on school type and graduation year. These are presented in Table 4 (HWHS-PW) and Table 5 (HBHS).

Table 4. Means of Variables based on Graduation Year for HWHS-PW Graduates

Variables	1970-1979 N=6, *N=5			1980-1989 N=18			1990-1999 N=11, *N=10		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Academic Attainment	7.17	2.14	5-10	6.00	1.68	2-8	7.27	1.95	3-9
School Climate	14.33	2.42	11-18	15.28	2.67	12-19	14.27	2.41	10-19
School Pride	36.83	3.82	31-42	34.278	4.82	25-45	32.30*	5.50	23-39
Centrality	39.83	8.45	33-56	38.11	9.27	21-54	38.50*	8.96	24-53
Public Regard	21.17	10.78	8-36	21.56	4.59	12-29	19.60*	7.21	6-30
Private Regard	38.83	2.23	36-42	38.83	2.41	33-42	38.00*	3.65	30-42
Civic Engagement	28.80*	11.28	15-45	26.83	8.49	16-41	28.18	4.19	22-35

An inspection of the variables for HWHS-PW graduates based-on graduation year revealed that academic attainment levels were lowest for 1980-1989 graduates, but their school climate levels were the highest. School pride levels for HWHS-PW graduates decreased overtime. A review of assumptions of normality indicated that variables were normally distributed in terms of skewness across groups. The kurtosis level for the private regard variable for HWHS-PW graduates in 1970-1979 indicated moderate positive kurtosis (3.59) and is presented in Figure 5. All other variables were normally distributed in terms of kurtosis.

Figure 5. Distribution of scores for variable Private Regard for 1970-1979 HWHS-PW Graduates

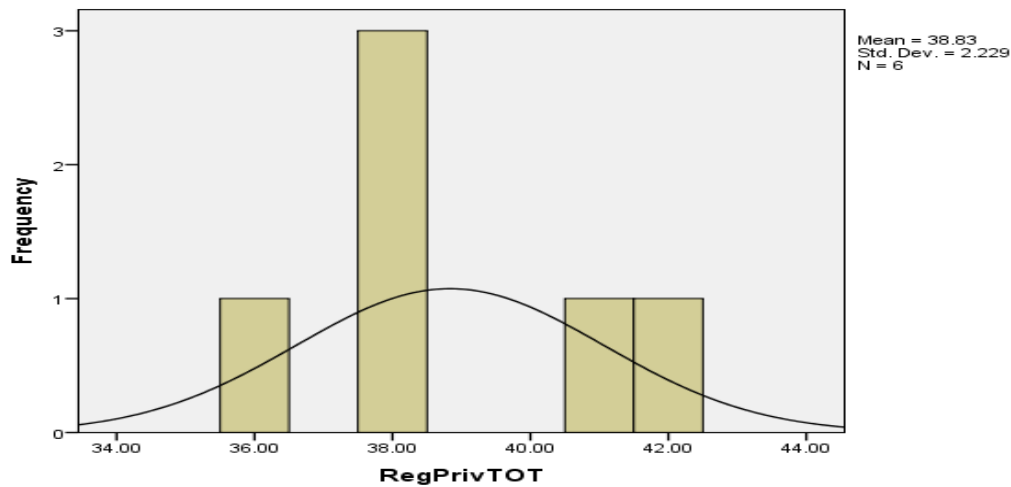


Table 5. Means of Variables based on Graduation Year for HBHS Graduates

Variables	1970-1979 N=47			1980-1989 N=12			1990-1999 N=25		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Academic Attainment	6.51	1.82	2-10	6.00	1.65	2-8	6.96	1.79	2-9
School Climate	16.19	2.53	10-20	16.92	2.11	14-20	14.84	3.29	6-20
School Pride	38.47	5.66	11-45	40.25	4.00	33-45	37.00	6.39	13-48
Centrality	39.55	7.67	25-55	41.08	6.87	29-51	41.12	8.78	23-56
Public Regard	21.94	5.23	12-33	21.08	5.82	12-32	21.24	5.43	16-35
Private Regard	38.77	4.10	22-42	38.50	2.39	33-42	39.12	4.06	23-42
Civic Engagement	30.06	9.04	13-52	26.92	9.94	15-47	27.88	9.53	13-48

An inspection of the variables for HBHS graduates based-on graduation year revealed that academic attainment levels were lowest for 1980-1989 graduates, but their school pride levels were the highest. School climate perceptions were the lowest for HBHS graduates in 1990-1999. Civic engagement levels were highest for HBHS graduates in 1970-1979. A review of assumptions of normality indicated that variables were normally distributed in terms of skewness across groups. However, the kurtosis levels for graduates between 1970-1979 (5.14) and 1990-1999 (10.21) on the private regard variable was positively distributed. These distributions are presented in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Additionally for the 1970-1979 HBHS graduates, positive kurtosis was indicated for school pride levels (11.01) as shown in Figure 8. All other variables were normally distributed in terms of kurtosis.

Figure 6. Distribution of scores for variable Private Regard for 1970-1979 HBHS

Graduates

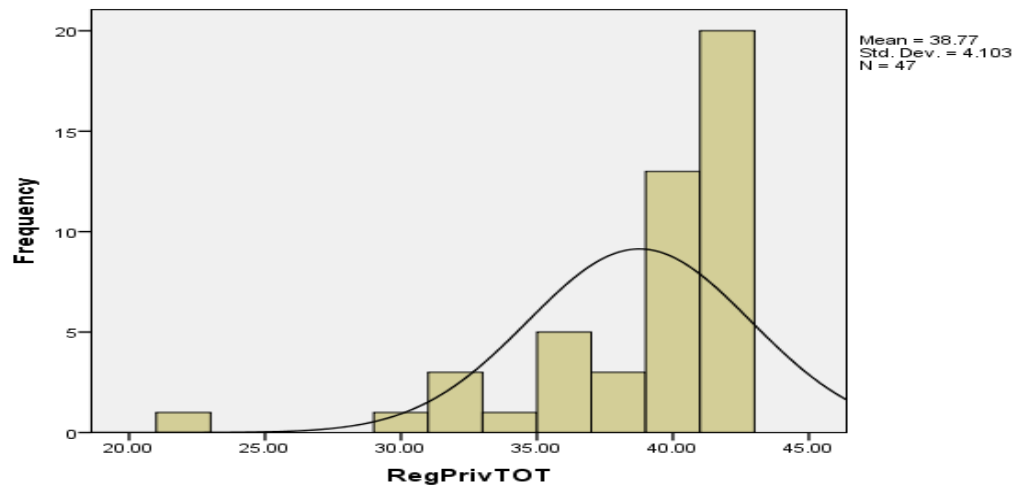


Figure 7. Distribution of scores for variable Private Regard for 1990-1999 HBHS

Graduates

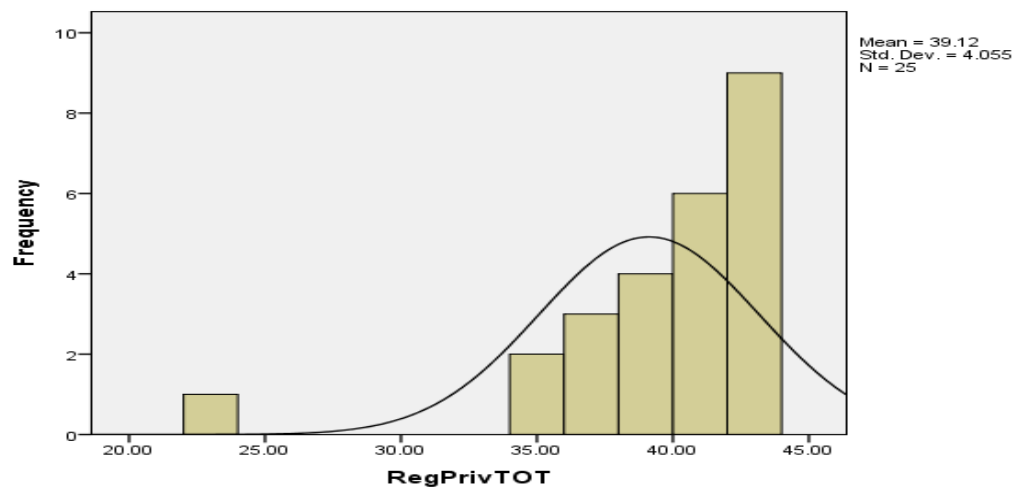
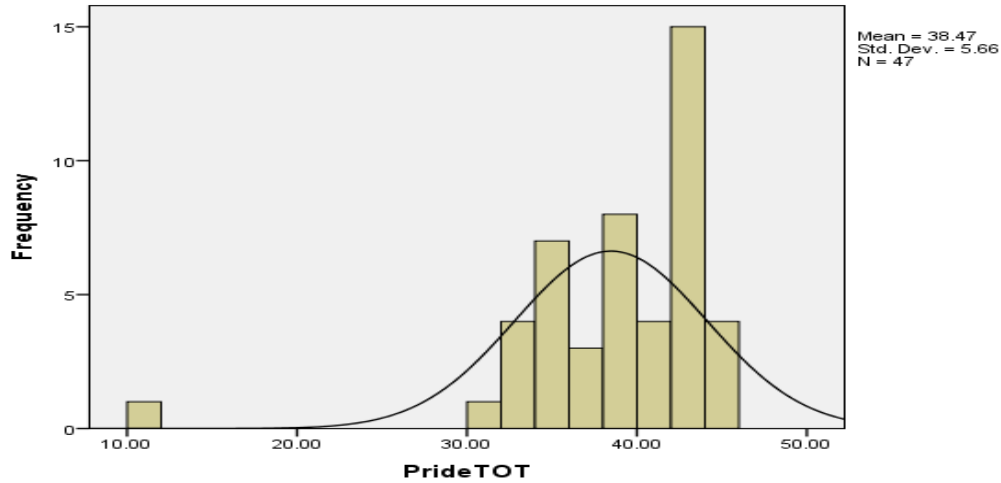


Figure 8. Distribution of scores for variable School Pride for 1970-1979 HBHS

Graduates



### Research Question 1

The first research question was designed to ask if there were any significant differences in outcomes of academic attainment as a function of high school type and graduation year. This question was tested with a 2 x 3 ANOVA (school type x graduation year). Results indicated that there were no significant interactions for academic attainment as a function of high school type and graduation year. There were no main effects for school type. There was a main effect for graduation year  $F(2, 119)=3.01, p \leq .05$ . Post Hoc tests using the Tukey method revealed that the statistical difference existed between 1980-1989 ( $M=6.00$ ) and 1990-1999 ( $M=7.06$ ) graduates, with 1990-1999 graduates having overall higher levels of academic attainment. The results of significance tests are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance of Academic Attainment

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	4.25	1.31	.27
School Type	1	2.05	0.63	.43
Graduation Year	2	9.78	3.01	.05
School Type x Graduation Year	2	0.66	0.20	.82

### Research Question 2.

The second research question was designed to ask if there were significant differences in the outcome of civic engagement as a function of high school type and graduation year. This question was also tested using a 2 x 3 ANOVA (school type x graduation year). The analysis revealed no significant interactions for civic engagement. Additionally, there were no main effects for school type and graduation year. The results of significance tests are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Analysis of Variance of Civic Engagement

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	41.16	0.52	.76
School Type	1	2.23	0.03	.87
Graduation Year	2	36.57	0.46	.63
School Type x Graduation Year	2	3.57	0.05	.96

### Research Question 3

The third research question was designed to assess if there were differences in school experience variables of school climate and school pride as a factor of high school type and graduation year. Using a 2x3 ANOVA (school type x graduation year) for school climate and for school pride, results indicated that there were no significant interactions for school experience variables. However, there were main effects for school climate  $F(1,119)=5.02, p \leq .05$  and school pride  $F(1,118)=10.78, p \leq .01$ , based on

school type. The main effect for school climate indicated that the perception of school climate for HBHS graduates ( $M=15.89$ ) were significantly better than the school climate perceptions of HWHS-PW graduates ( $M=14.80$ ). Additionally, the school pride of HBHS graduates ( $M=38.29$ ) was significantly higher than the school pride of HWHS-PW graduates ( $M=34.15$ ).

Although graduation year did not significantly impact reported personal experiences of school climate  $F(2,119)=17.614$ ,  $p \leq .09$  or school pride  $F(2, 118)=2.364$ ,  $p \leq .10$ , results approached significance. A main effect for graduation year on personal experience variables (school climate and school pride) may have been found with a larger sample. A summary of these findings can be found in Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 8. Analysis of Variance in School Climate Perceptions

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	16.49	2.29	.05
School Type	1	36.09	5.02	.03
Graduation Year	2	17.61	2.45	.09
School Type x Graduation Year	2	3.29	0.46	.63

Table 9. Analysis of Variance in School Pride

	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	116.30	3.86	.00
School Type	1	324.45	10.78	.00
Graduation Year	2	71.13	2.36	.10
School Type x Graduation Year	2	29.52	0.98	.38

#### Research Question 4.

The fourth research questions was designed to ask if there were any significant differences on personal racial identity variables of centrality, public regard, and private

regard as a function of group identification. Using three separate 2x3 ANOVAs (school type x graduation year), results indicated that there were no significant interactions for racial identity variables. Additionally, there were no main effects identified between personal identity factors of Centrality, Public Regard or Private Regard based on school environment or graduation year. Visual representation of these results are located in Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12.

Table 10. Summary of Variance in Centrality based-on Variables

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	26.82	0.39	.85
School Type	1	60.45	0.89	.35
Graduation Year	2	0.325	0.01	.995
School Type x Graduation Year	2	18.59	0.27	.76

Table 11. Summary of Variance in Public Regard based-on Variables

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	9.70	0.29	.92
School Type	1	8.04	0.24	.63
Graduation Year	2	9.39	0.28	.76
School Type x Graduation Year1	2	8.07	0.24	.79



Table 12. Summary of Variance in Private Regard based-on Variables

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5	1.99	0.15	.98
School Type	1	1.11	0.08	.77
Graduation Year	2	0.35	0.03	.97
School Type x Graduation Year	2	4.19	0.32	.73

### Follow-up Analyse

In order to explore the role of gender, relationship of variables and their contributions in predicting outcome variables for African American participants, follow-up analyse were conducted. Independent t-sample tests were run to assess gender differences based on school type. Correlations were run to explore relationship between study variables. Regression analysis were conducted to understand the relationship between racial identity factors and outcome variables of academic attainment and civic engagement. These follow-up analyses are described in the following sections.

**Gender Differences.** Previous racial identity literature (Chavous et. al, 2004; Yap et. al, 2011) has identified gender differences in life outcome variables for African Americans. Therefore to assess gender differences based-on school type across selected variables (academic attainment, civic engagement, school climate perceptions, school pride, HS GPA, centrality, private regard and public regard), independent t-sample test were run. The results for HWHS-PW graduates are shown in Table 13. The results for HBHS graduates are shown in Table 14.

Table 13: Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables by Gender for HWHS-PW Graduates

Outcome	Group						95% CI for		
	Male			Female			Mean		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Academic Attainment	5.44	2.07	9	7.00	1.70	26	-2.97, -.14	-2.24*	33
HS GPA	4.44	1.13	9	5.04	1.51	26	-1.72, .529	-1.08	33
Civic Engagement	27.75	7.46	8	27.5	7.85	26	-6.15, 6.65	.80	32
School Climate	15.44	2.74	9	14.58	2.47	26	-1.13, 2.86	.88	33
School Pride	36.89	3.89	9	33.16	5.02	25	-.04, 7.50	2.01	32
Centrality	41.78	7.61	9	37.36	9.04	25	-2.48, 11.31	1.31	32
Private Regard	39.33	3.94	9	38.32	2.21	25	-1.16, 3.19	.95	32
Public Regard	21.89	8.59	9	20.56	5.88	25	-3.94, 6.61	.51	32

\*  $p \leq .05$ .

Significant differences between males and females were found for HWHS-PW graduates in academic attainment levels, but not for HS GPA, school climate, school pride, civic engagement, centrality, private regard, or public regard. The significant differences in academic attainment indicated that African American males from HWHS-PW environments had overall lower levels of academic attainment ( $M=5.44$ ,  $SD=2.07$ ) than African American female graduates of HWHS-PW ( $M=7.00$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ;  $t(33)=-2.24$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ).

Table 14: Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables by Gender for HBHS Graduates

Outcome	Group						95% CI for		
	Male			Female			Mean	t	df
	M	SD	N	M	SD	n	Difference		
Academic Attainment	6.55	2.12	31	6.50	1.60	52	-.67, .96	.35	81
HS GPA	4.71	1.47	31	4.96	1.55	52	-.94, .43	-.73	81
Civic Engagement	29.10	9.50	31	28.50	8.90	52	-3.52, 4.72	.29	81
School Climate	15.90	2.51	31	15.90	3.00	52	-1.28, 1.28	-.00	81

School Pride	38.29	6.33	31	38.15	5.37	52	-2.46, 2.73	.11	81
Centrality	40.52	7.00	31	40.17	8.44	52	-3.24, 3.92	.19	81
Private Regard	37.90	4.02	31	39.33	3.71	52	-3.15, .30	-1.64	81
Public Regard	20.26	5.02	31	22.40	5.43	52	-4.53, .24	-1.79	81

\*  $p \leq .05$ .

There were no significant differences between male and female HBHS graduates on the selected variables of academic attainment levels, HS GPA, school climate, school pride, civic engagement, centrality, private regard, or public regard.

**Relationship of Variables.** A correlation matrix was generated to examine the relationship between survey variables and outcome variables. Results are located in Table 15.

Table 15. Correlation Matrix of Survey and Outcome Variables

Variable	HS Clim.	SPri	Cent.	Pub Reg	Priv Reg	Civ Eng	Acad Att	HS Type	Grad. Yr.	HS GPA	HS SES	HS GA	Gen
High School Climate (HS Clim.)	1.00												
School Pride (SPri)	.28**	1.00											
Centrality (Cent)	.13	.19*	1.00										
Public Regard (PubReg)	.00	.04	-.24**	1.00									
Private Regard (PriReg)	.04	.22**	.33**	.13	1.00								
Civic Engagement (CivEng)	.09	.10	.38**	-.13	.15	1.00							
Academic Attainment (AcadAtt)	.07	-.03	.17*	-.17*	.01	.36**	1.00						
High School Type (HS Type)	.18*	.32**	.10	.06	.03	.07	-.01	1.00					
Graduation Year (Grad. Yr)	-.20*	-.20*	.04	-.08	.00	-.11	.09	- .22**	1.00				
HS GPA	.22**	.02	.15	-.15	-.03	-.23**	.33**	-.01	.21*	1.00			
HS SES	-.08	.07	-.01	.23**	.04	.12	.16*	-.14	-.07	.12	1.00		
HS Gov. Assist. (HS GA)	.02	.02	.01	.00	.03	.16*	.06	.18	-.06	-.02	.27**	1.00	
Gender (Gen.)	-.06	-.12	-.09	.10	.10	-.04	.08	-.11	-.05	.11	-.05	-.16*	1.00

\*p&lt;.05, \*\* p&lt;.01

The correlational analysis revealed significant relationships between school experience variables of School Pride and School Climate ( $r=.28, p\leq .01$ ), School Climate and High School Type ( $r=.18, p\leq .05$ ), School Climate and Graduation Year ( $r= -.20, p\leq .05$ ) and School Climate and high school GPA ( $r=.22, p\leq .01$ ). School Pride was also related to High School Type ( $r=.32, p\leq .01$ ) and Graduation Year ( $r= -.195, p\leq .05$ ).

The personal experience racial identity factor of Centrality was significantly related to perceptions of School Pride ( $r= .19, p\leq .05$ ), Public Regard ( $r= -.24, p\leq .01$ ), Private Regard ( $r= .33, p\leq .01$ ), Civic Engagement ( $r=.38, p\leq .001$ ) and Academic Attainment ( $r=.17, p\leq .05$ ). Public Regard was related to Academic Attainment ( $r= -.17, p\leq .05$ ) and High School SES ( $r= .23, p\leq .01$ ).

The outcome factor of Civic Engagement was significantly related to Academic Attainment ( $r= .36, p\leq .01$ ), Graduation Year ( $r= -.23, p\leq .01$ ) and receiving Government Assistance during High School ( $r= .16, p\leq .05$ ). Centrality perceptions were also significantly related to Private Regard ( $r= .33, p\leq .01$ ) and Civic Engagement ( $r= .38, p\leq .01$ ). Civic Engagement was significantly related to Private Regard perceptions ( $r= .15, p\leq .05$ ). Additionally the outcome factor of Academic Achievement was significantly related to High School GPA ( $r= .33, p\leq .01$ ) and High School SES ( $r= .16, p\leq .05$ ).

The independent variable of Graduation Year was significantly related to High School Type ( $r= -.22, p\leq .01$ ) and High School GPA ( $r= .21, p\leq .05$ ). Additionally, receiving High School Government Assistance was significantly related to High School SES ( $r= .27, p\leq .01$ ) and Gender ( $r= -.16, p\leq .05$ ).

## Regression Analysis

**Outcome Predictors.** Review of the correlation table indicated certain variables were related to civic engagement and academic attainment. To clarify these relationships, variables identified as being significantly related to the outcome variables were selected for inclusion in models to predict civic engagement and academic attainment. The three subscales of racial identity were used in the subsequent analysis.

To assess the moderating role of centrality in the relationship between school climate perceptions and civic engagement an interaction term was created and regressed on civic engagement. Also, HS GPA and school type were included in the model. The overall model was significant and explained 17% of the variance in civic engagement,  $F(5,118)=4.75$ ,  $p \leq .001$ . HS GPA was a significant predictor of civic engagement ( $b=.18$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). School type was not a significant predictor of civic engagement ( $b=-.04$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Centrality did not moderate the relationship between school climate perceptions and civic engagement ( $b=.02$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). These results are located in Table 16.

Table 16. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Civic Engagement (N = 118)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
HS GPA	1.36	.53	.23**	1.37	.53	.23**	1.07	.51	.18*	1.07	.52	.18*	1.07	.52	.18*
School Type				1.43	1.73	.07	.79	1.64	.04	.80	1.67	.04	.79	1.70	.04
Centrality							.37	.09	.35**	.38	.09	.35**	.36	.46	.33
School Climate										-.01	.286	-.00	-.05	1.22	-.01
Centrality x School Climate													.00	.03	.02
$R^2$		.05			.06			.17			.17			.17	
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		6.50			.68			16.06			.001				
														.001	

*Note:* School Climate and Centrality were centered at their means.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

To assess the moderating role of centrality in the relationship between school climate perceptions and academic attainment an interaction term was created and regressed on academic attainment. Also, HS GPA and HS SES were included in the model. The overall model was significant and explained 14% of the variance in academic attainment,  $F(5,118)=3.66$ ,  $p \leq .01$ . HS GPA was a significant predictor of academic attainment ( $b=.29$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). HS SES was not a significant predictor of academic attainment ( $b=.13$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Centrality did not moderate the relationship between school climate perceptions and academic attainment ( $b=.28$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). These results are presented in Table 17.



Table 17. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Academic Attainment (N = 118)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
HS GPA	.40	.11	.33**	.38	.11	.31**	.36	.11	.29**	.36	.11	.29**	.36	.11	.30**
HS SES				.21	.15	.122	.22	.15	.13	.22	.15	.13	.22	.15	.13
Centrality							.03	.02	.13	.03	.2	.13	-.01	.10	-.06
School Climate										.00	.06	.00	-.12	.26	-.18
Centrality x School Climate													.00	.01	.28
$R^2$			.11			.12			.14			.14			.13
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		13.93			1.95			2.22			.00				
														.21	

Note: School Climate and Centrality were centered at their means.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

To assess the moderating role of private regard in the relationship between school climate perceptions and academic attainment an interaction term was created and regressed on academic attainment. Also, HS GPA and HS SES were included in the model. The overall model was significant and explained 12.5% of the variance in academic attainment,  $F(5,118)=3.23$ ,  $p \leq .01$ . HS GPA was a significant predictor of academic attainment ( $b=.31$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). HS SES was not a significant predictor of academic attainment ( $b=.12$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Private regard did not moderate the relationship between school climate perceptions and academic attainment ( $b=.63$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). These results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Academic Attainment (N = 118)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
HS GPA	.40	.11	.33**	.38	.11	.31**	.38	.11	.31**	.38	.11	.31**	.38	.11	.31**
HS SES				.21	.15	.12	.21	.15	.12	.21	.15	.12	.20	.15	.12
Private							.01	.05	.02	.01	.05	.02	-.14	.23	-.28
Regard															
School										.01	.06	.01	-.35	.54	-.53
Climate															
Private													.01	.01	.63
Regard x															
School															
Climate															
$R^2$			.11			.12			.15			.15			.15
$F$ for change in $R^2$		13.93			1.95			3.33			.07				
															.44

Note: School Climate and Private Regard were centered at their means.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

To assess the moderating role of public regard in the relationship between school climate perceptions and academic attainment an interaction term was created and regressed on academic attainment. Also, HS GPA and HS SES were included in the model. The overall model was significant and explained 15% of the variance in academic attainment,  $F(5,118)=3.98$ ,  $p \leq .01$ . HS GPA was a significant predictor of academic attainment ( $b=.28$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). HS SES and public regard did not moderate the relationship between school climate perceptions and academic attainment ( $b=-.33$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). These results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Academic Attainment (N = 118)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
HS GPA	.40	.11	.33**	.38	.11	.31**	.34	.11	.28**	.34	.11	.28**	.34	.11	.28**
HS SES				.21	.15	.12	.28	.15	.16	.28	.16	.17	.30	.16	.17
Public Regard							-.05	.03	-.17	-.05	.03	-.17	.03	.13	.10
School Climate										.02	.06	.02	.14	.20	.22
Public Regard x School Climate													-.01	.01	-.33
$R^2$			.11			.12			.15			.15			.15
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$		13.93			1.95			3.33			.07				
															.44

Note: School Climate and Public Regard were centered at their means.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

The present study investigated the role of high school environments and graduation year on long-term outcomes for African American adults. The first research question asked if African American HBHS graduates would have significantly higher rates of academic attainment across graduation years when compared to African American HWHS-PW graduates. The second research question examined whether African American HBHS graduates would have significantly higher rates of civic engagement across graduation years when compared to African American HWHS-PW graduates. The third question investigated whether African American HBHS graduates would have significantly more favorable school experiences in terms of their perceptions of high school climate and levels of school pride when compared to HWHS-PW graduates. The fourth research question assessed if HBHS graduates would have significantly higher personal racial identity beliefs of centrality, public regard, and private regard when compared to African American HWHS-PW graduates.

For the first research question, the statistical analysis indicated that African American HBHS graduates did not achieve significantly higher rates of academic achievement than African American HWHS-PW graduates. However, when comparing the levels of academic attainment across time periods for the total sample, 1990-1999

graduates had significantly higher levels of academic attainment when compared to 1980-1989 graduates.

The statistical analysis for the second question indicated that African American HBHS graduates did not report significantly higher rates of civic engagement than African American HWHS-PW graduates. Additionally, when comparing the levels of civic engagement across time periods for the total sample, there were no significant differences.

Testing the third research question indicated that African American HBHS graduates reported significantly higher perceptions of school climate compared to African American HWHS-PW graduates. Additionally, African American HBHS graduates reported significantly higher levels of school pride than African American HWHS-PW graduates. No statistically significant differences were found for school experience variables across time.

Statistical analysis of the fourth research question indicated that there were no significant differences between African American graduates of HBHS or HWHS-PW in terms of the personal racial identity variables of centrality, public regard, or private regard. Across time, there were no significant differences for reported civic engagement levels.

In the following sections, the research questions concerning African American long-term outcomes of academic attainment and civic engagement as well as perceptions of school experience (school climate and school pride) and personal racial identity (centrality, public regard and private regard) over-time are discussed. These findings are

interpreted drawing on existing research. Limitations of the study are identified and discussed. Lastly, research implications and future directions to further extend the research findings are considered.

## **Review of Findings**

**Changes overtime for African Americans.** This study aimed to explore whether there were significant differences in outcomes of HBHS and HWHS graduates and if there were changes over time in African American high school graduates' academic attainment, civic engagement and perceptions of school climate, school pride, and racial identity since the integration of schools in 1970. This question was of interest given the educational and governmental policy changes that occurred to increase the access of African Americans to education and economic resources (Rury & Shirley, 2012; Tillman, 2009; Bankston, 2002) . The finding of significant differences in academic attainment across the years for African American high school graduates are supported by research on generational changes in society (Martin & Tulgan, 2006; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009).

Research (Martin & Tulgan, 2006; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009) has indicated that there are societal changes that influence the academic attainment, personality, beliefs, and career paths of specific generations over time. The specific years for each generation vary across the research ( Martin & Tulgan, 2006, Wong et. al, 2008, Coomes & DeBard, 2004). However, Martin and Tulgan's research (2006) most closely aligns with the defined cohorts for this study and will be utilized in explaining generational differences.



In the current study, 1970-1979 graduates were typically born between 1953-1962 and are considered a part of the second generation of Baby Boomers (born from 1946 to 1964) according to Martin and Tulgan's research (2006). As the Baby Boomers were born during the time of Civil Rights, Women's Movement and Watergate, they are described as a political, ambitious, and hard working generation, who believed that change occurs from the inside by utilizing one's education to achieve career success (Martin & Tulgan, 2006).

1980-1989 graduates were typically born during 1963-1972 and are defined as Generation X (those born between 1965 to 1977). African Americans born into Generation X typically attended integrated schools, were possibly raised in 1<sup>st</sup> generation middle class families, and experienced the effects of increased divorce rates as a family dynamic. This generation is sometimes characterized as individualistic, risk-seeking and cynical. They tend to value their personal goals as more important than work-related goals and change jobs more than previous generations (Wong et. al, 2008). Research has shown that Generation X tends to volunteer and join civic organizations at higher rates when compared to the Baby Boomer generation (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009).

1990-1999 graduates were typically born between 1973 and 1982 with a majority being characterized as Generation Y (those born between 1978 to 1989). Being born in the internet decade, Generation Y's access to technology, unlimited access to information and opportunities led them to being defined as more diverse in their experiences and cultural interactions when compared to previous generations (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009).

However they are similar to Generation X in their lack of belief in job security or life-long careers.

The civic engagement reported by African American graduates within the past 5 years did not significantly differ across the 3 cohorts with most participants reporting moderate levels of engagement. Research has indicated that the rise in materialism undermines civic engagement (Rahn & Transue, 1998) and may explain the moderate levels of civic engagement for this study. However, research by the National Conference of Citizens (NCoc) indicated that with the election of the first African American president in 2008 and re-election in 2012, civic engagement has increased for all Americans in the recent years, particularly for those parents of school-aged children (National Conference of Citizens, 2012; National Conference of Citizens, 2013). Given that many of the study participants are in their early 30s to late 50s, their levels of civic engagement may be linked to that of their parental status. Additionally, the 2008 America's Civic Health Index survey found that African Americans are more civically engaged, when compared to other ethnic groups (National Conference of Citizens, n.d.). Lastly the current study findings are consistent with research by Reisenwitz and Iyer (2009) that found similarities between Generation X and Generation Y in terms of volunteer levels.

**School Experience Across Time.** Between 1970 and 1999, several educational policies (e.g. integration, school busing changes, restructuring of the school system, etc) and governmental policies (e.g. voter suppression, Post-Civil Rights movements, etc.) occurred. The impact of these changes on perceptions of school experience was not

measured across generations in this study. However, African Americans who graduated closer to the time of integration did not report significantly more or less favorable school climate and school pride levels when compared to African Americans who graduated 30 years later.

In addition to these broad policy changes, leadership changes were likely occurring within the schools across time. Research has shown that the principal and other school leaders play an essential role in establishing the school climate (Bryk, A. et. al, 2010; Tillman, 2009; Dinham, et. al, 1995; Freiberg, 1999; McPartland, et. al, 1998). Whatever leadership changes may have occurred over the 30 years covered in this study, African American graduates' perceptions of their school climate remained relatively similar across each 10 year cohort. The experience of students with school leadership can be illustrated by the following quote from a study participant who is now a teacher:

“My life was impacted by high school by causing me to treat my students with respect and dignity and not carry over [to] them some of the negative characteristics displayed by some of the hateful teachers I had for instructors. I had some content strong teachers during high school and quite a few encouraged me to go on to college even though my counselor told me I was not college material and not to apply.”

Another participant stated: “Teachers as well as the administration seemed to genuinely care about preparing us to compete whether we were going to college or directly into the workforce.”

Although school climate is typically established in a top down fashion, research has reported that a strong relationship with one person can impact students' perceptions of school (Wimberly, 2002; Hurley & Lustbader, 1997). For African American graduates, a positive relationship with one or a few individuals may have influenced their overall perception of their high school climate.

Furthermore, similar to previous literature and research (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Perry, 1908 as cited in Freiberg, 1999; Clark, 2003) this study suggests that students feel proud of their school experience. Although the school choices for African American students have widened, levels of school pride across the years have remained relatively consistent along with their perceptions of school climate.

**Gender Differences.** Previous research has indicated gender differences in the achievement rates of African Americans with females obtaining at higher rates within PWIs (Chavous et. al, 2004). The results of this study support these research findings with African American female graduates of HWHS-PW environments reporting significantly higher rates of academic attainment than African American male graduates of HWHS-PW. No other significant differences were found amongst HWHS-PW male and female graduates for HS GPA or other selected variables possibly because of the limited number of males in the sample. Additionally, no significant differences were found across study variables for African American males and females of HBHS environments.

**Personal Racial Identity.** Although the United States has become more diverse and multiracial since the times of Civil Rights Movement and integration (Jackson III,

2012); the study results suggest that racial identity perceptions of African Americans sampled did not significantly differ across generations. Additionally, for African Americans, attending a HBHS did not significantly strengthen or weaken reported racial identity perceptions when compared to HWHS-PW African American graduates. A potential explanation for this is that although the HBHS was an environment composed of African American leaders, teachers, and students, the curriculum of the school may not have varied significantly from that of the HWHS-PW. When compared to HWHS-PW graduates, HBHS students may have not received any more instructional information about African American leaders, entrepreneurs, and inventors within academic disciplines. This point may be illustrated in the two comments from HBHS graduates:

“It was very disheartening to only learn about the “Black” legacy of [my city] while reading a book for class at my [Predominantly White University]. Perhaps such knowledge and [the city’s] rich history may have helped to diminish thoughts of inferiority and encourage more community involvement.”

While another HBHS graduate stated:

“I believe my high school experience was good in some ways. I enjoyed activities such as band, working on the newspaper, playing sports, and I had academic success. Many of the teachers tried to provide us with culturally relevant instruction in the history classes and exposed us to some historical literature. What I felt was absent was a culturally relevant science and mathematics approach. Most of us had no idea of the historical contributions of African and

African Americans to the legacy of Mathematics and Science. Understanding this phenomenon may have enhanced the learning in these subjects.”

Additionally, recent research on Black Identity Development (Jackson III, 2012) suggests that there are other factors impacting an individual’s racial identity outside of the high school experience. The racial identity formation in African Americans is influenced by Black cultural experiences within the family structure, school setting, and other socializing institutions (such as faith-based institutions and social clubs) that impact their racial identity beliefs. Although the period of 1960s and Civil Rights Movement was a racially charged time, racial identity is not solely defined by a person’s experiences of racism. The salience of Black culture a child experiences growing-up through their family interactions, school experiences, and other social institutions (faith-based institutions and social clubs) are also important factors that impact a person’s racial identity development outside of their racism-based experiences that occur inside and outside of the school setting (Jackson III, 2012).

The high school years are a critical period in a youth’s acceptance of their Black identity because during this time, they typically enter the Acceptance stage in the Black Identity model (Jackson III, 2012). During this stage, African American youth begin developing their understanding of racism through their choices and actions. However, Black culture experiences and family structure reinforcements of culture impact a person’s racial identity development prior to and after the Acceptance stage. These factors are not directly connected to the high school experience and were not captured in this study.

**High School Type and Academic Attainment.** Research has shown that African Americans must have their basic needs met before they can focus on higher needs of self-confidence and self-actualization (Oishi et. al, 1999; Hagerty, 1999) and academic achievement (Chavous, 2004). The SES levels of students have been linked to school climate perceptions and student academic attainment (Orfield et. al, 2005, Hastings et. al, 2005). In that 82.8% of the HWHS-PW graduates and 67.9% of HBHS graduates described their families as middle class to upper-class, no statistically significant difference in academic attainment was found between African American graduates of HBHS and HWHS-PW schools in this study. A relationship was found between high school SES levels and HS GPA with 62.9% of HWHS-PW graduates and 66.7% of HBHS graduates reported receiving either mostly A's, A's and B's, or B's during high school. Thus for over half of the African American graduates in this study, the SES levels may have afforded them lifestyles in which they were able to focus on their academics because their basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing were being met. This statement may be supported by quotes from graduates of both school types. A HWHS-PW graduate stated, "Many of my classmates came from families who had a college background, either attending college or working at the universities. Obtaining higher education was the norm." Another HBHS graduate stated, "Attending and successfully completing high school was expected from my family." Therefore the family expectations of educational excellence, as well as middle-class status, may have been significant influences on the academic achievement of many graduates sampled.

Although HS SES was not significantly correlated with HS GPA in this study; it was significantly related to academic attainment after high school graduation which is consistent with other research examining high school environment factors and postsecondary aspirations and attainment (Wimberly, 2002; Moller & Sterns, 2012).

The lack of statistically significant differences in academic attainment for African Americans based on school environment is consistent with research that states racial concentration has little impact on academic attainment (Bormal et. al, 2001; Bankston & Caldas, 2002) and contradicts research that suggests predominantly African American environments are detrimental to academic achievement when compared to more integrated environments (Mickelson, 2003; Bankston et. al, 1996).

Research has indicated that compared to other ethnic groups (Eccles, 2006; Tillman, 2009; Rury & Hill, 2012), African Americans tend to perceive education as a tool for advancing in society. The value of education for all African Americans in this study, regardless of school environment or graduation year, may have been the basis for similar levels of academic attainment.

Although African Americans are in the minority at HWHS-PW environments, African American students can persevere academically and socially, even when the school climate may be racially tense or uncomfortable. Research has shown that African American students maintain high levels of academic achievement even when they do not view their environments as supportive (Allen, 1992; Tillman, 2004). This can be illustrated by the following statement from a HWHS-PW graduate:



“I was among the early trailblazers at [my HWHS-PW]. During my tenure there, we had to prove ourselves. I was the first African American elected to student office...cheerleader. My intelligence and native ability were tested and refuted, but the proof was in the pudding. Eventually ‘we’ could not be denied and academic, athletic and other honors and positions were acknowledged and accepted. I/we had to win over teachers in the early days, but once we proved that we could perform on paper and better than White students and that we weren’t going anywhere, tensions eased and the [HWHS-PW] was more equitable. [Principal and Assistant Principal] did a great job in navigating troubled waters and some difficult days racially at [the HWHS-PW] with the advice and counsel of African American staff members and the former principals of Black schools that had been closed...Those days were uncharted territory for us all. It laid important foundations in my life: how to forgive, how to persevere, how to set and reach goals in spite of obstacles and other valuable life lessons.”

The above quote from the HWHS-PW graduate also emphasizes the importance of principal leadership in establishing the school climate which may be influenced by the racial and cultural mismatch of students and educators. Principals and leaders may interact differently with students and parents from different races and cultures than their own. The racial and cultural mismatch between students/families and leaders/teachers can lead to educational barriers. These educational barriers may influence the school experience and academic attainment of students (Tillman, 2004). However research has indicated that successful principals of all races working with minority and low-income

students are determined in their mission to achieve school-wide academic success. They hold similar beliefs which include: (1) not blaming students for academic failure, (2) attempting to understand the culture and background of their students and families, (3) promoting a democratic culture that empowers teachers to choose the most effective instructional strategies for helping their students become academically successful and (4) using standardized and informal assessments to monitor student progress and adjust curriculum instruction. (Tillman, 2004).

**High School Type and School Experience Variables.** Significant relationships between a teacher, counselor, or another adult in the school environment has proven important in students' perceptions of their school experience (Clark, 2003; Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Hurley & Lustbader, 1997). Although levels of academic attainment were not significantly different based on school environment, HBHS graduates had more positive perceptions of their predominantly African American high school experience compared to that of HWHS-PW graduates. These findings are consistent with prior research on the importance of the match of school and home culture on student perceptions of school experience (Chavous et. al, 2004). When the school culture and home culture do not match, students may experience lower levels of belonging, feel isolated and unsupported (Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Boykin, 2000; Tillman, 2004). This point is illustrated in a HBHS graduate's reflection of their educational experience prior to attending a predominantly African American environment:

“Throughout my grade school and middle school, I attended county schools and was always the minority. In addition to my classmates being White, most of my

teachers and administrators were White. This was not a problem for me because I thought this was the normal way of life. However, for a young African American child you can often feel lost and find yourself having to assimilate and accept a White culture just to fit in. In middle school, we did have programs...that were catered to minorities, but that was the only time where I actually felt as I could really be myself. My high school experience gave me the opportunity to be the majority...for once it was okay to be Black and it was okay to speak openly about black issues without fear of hurting someone's feelings. It felt as if I was home."

The study findings reiterate research on the significance and value of Historically Black High Schools within the African American community (Siddle Walker, 2000) as well as the importance of African American principals and leaders creating a climate of academic excellence and community within these schools (Tillman, 2004). Although outsiders may have viewed HBHS environments as inferior and lacking resources, the principals, leaders, and educators of these schools found ways to do more with less and "reflected the collective ethos of Black communities that believed education was the key to enhancing the life chances of their children" (Tillman, 2004, p. 105; Siddle Walker, 2000). This view may be reflected in this quote from a HBHS graduate:

"I enjoyed my time at [HBHS] and reunions over the past 25 years. My teacher adequately prepared me for college and life. I especially enjoyed a diverse group of friends by being a member of the marching and symphonic bands, AP/advanced class and others I met through classes...the HBHS was predominantly [black]...actually with the exception of the three Caucasian

children who were sisters and whose mother taught at the school. Thus, I experienced a bit of culture shock upon arriving at my [predominantly White university]. However, academically I found that I was more or as prepared as other students—which was surprising. I only note this to show how African-Americans receive subtle message of inferiority from community and media. In addition, it still amazes me that I felt like I might sink instead of swim at my University because I believed that whites were superior to blacks.”

Research has shown that outside of the importance of principal leadership, teachers and parents, the extra-curricular experience of students also influences the school experience of students (Siddle Walker, 2000). Extra-curricular activities allow students to develop their interests and talents outside of the typical structure of the classroom, provides a space for continued interaction with peers and allows students to interact with teachers and educators in a different capacity. In reviewing the responses of HWHS-PW and HBHS graduates, extra-curricular involvement was a factor in motivating the students to achieve academically. For example, a HWHS-PW stated, “I enjoyed my high school years. Not necessarily because I enjoyed school work, even though I excelled academically. My fondest memories are of the extracurricular activities I participated in.” Another HBHS graduate stated, “Overall, I enjoyed my high school experience. I was able to participate in a variety of clubs and organization and met some lifelong friends.” However in analyzing the HWHS-PW and HBHS graduates’ quotes, there were differences in the type of comments related to extra-curricular experiences

with HWHS-PW graduates reporting negative experiences of extra-curricular activities based on their race. For example, one HWHS-PW graduate stated:

“My high school experience was basically a good one... There was one incident where my yearbook teacher/advisor made a comment to me in front of the whole class... When I decided that I was not going to be on the yearbook staff the following year, she said to me in front of the whole class, ‘Well, that’s going to leave us with no Black editors on the staff.’”.

Another HWHS-PW graduate stated:

“Overall I had a good experience in high school, there was one instance when the rebel flag was hung on the football field and that caused a big mess. My most important thing is that the Black female athletes were not looked at like the Black basketball players or football players. I myself ran track, broke records and it seemed to go unnoticed. I feel if I had gone to a city school, I would have at least been talked to about my future in track.”

Although the overall school experience variables reported by HBHS graduates appeared more positive than HWHS-PW graduates, the qualitative responses of HWHS-PW graduates hinted at the theme of being more prepared for social interactions with other races. For example a HWHS-PW graduate stated, “My relationship skills are great because of my past encounters with different races throughout my primary and secondary school years.” Another HWHS-PW graduate said, “My experience in high school was great... After graduation I felt better prepared for society. Today, I’m prepared to deal with all races.” The study findings suggest that although the pride and school climate

perceptions of African American HBHS graduates were more positive, the majority of HWHS-PW and HBHS graduate experiences were positive with each school environment having value and contributing to student outcomes later in life.

**Role of Racial Identity on Outcome Variables.** Racial identity variables have been reported as significant indicators of life outcome variables for African Americans (Chavous et. al, 2003; Chavous, 2004; Eccles, 2006; Neville & Lilly, 2000) with higher racial identity perceptions being related to better outcomes. The results of the correlational analyses were consistent with racial identity literature and indicated significant relationships between racial identity variables of centrality, private regard, and public regard. Consistent with earlier racial identity research, levels of centrality were positively related to academic attainment, whereas levels of public regard were negatively related to academic attainment (Chavous et. al, 2003). High levels of centrality and private regard with lower levels of public regard is known as the buffering/defensive type. Additional research on racial identity has indicated that individuals in the buffering/defensive type are active within the African American community and tend to think critically about race and its impact on everyday activities (Neville & Lilly, 2000). Their involvement within the African American community and continual reflective process on the role that race places on their daily experience, may give buffering/defensive individuals a more realistic perspective of how African Americans are viewed in society when compared to other African Americans that have higher levels of public regard.

Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with research (Yap et. al, 2011)

that states that racial identity beliefs are related to life outcomes. However possibly due to the small sample size, no significant moderating effects were found for racial identity variables and outcome measures of civic engagement and academic attainment. However, in the regression model for civic engagement, HS GPA was a significant predictor of civic engagement, which is consistent with prior research (Neville & Lilly, 2000). Based on findings of this study, African Americans who perceive their race as being an important factor in their individual identity tend to be more civically engaged. Additionally, HS GPA explained a significant amount of the variance in academic attainment, with SES approaching level of significance.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results of the current study. The first limitation is the method of sample selection. The results of this study are based on a self-selected sample with participants being those who were willing to describe their high school experience. A review of the participant demographics indicated that a majority of the participants were from middle-class to upper-class families, had HS GPAs of 3.0 or higher, and had attained on average a college degree. Therefore, the generalizability of their responses and experiences may be limited with respect to the total population of African American HWHS-PW and HBHS graduates. If a randomized method had been utilized to select participants, the sample demographics may have been more representative of the two school environments in terms of HS SES and HS GPA. With randomized procedures, there may have been a higher probability of obtaining responses from African American graduates who were

less connected with their high school experience and therefore may have had more varied responses in terms of school experience, personal racial identity and outcome variables. Given that participants for both school environments were recruited via alumni websites and events, the participants already had a level of connection to their high school experience, which may have made them more similar as a group compared to African American high school graduates who were not actively involved in alumni events or websites. The overall similarity of the sample population may have limited the likelihood of finding statistically significant differences on variables of interest in this study.

The sample selection method is related to the second major limitation of unequal and small sample sizes across groups. Low response rates from the HWHS graduates may have limited the ability to find statistically significant differences on study variables within groups and between groups. The lower response rate of African American graduates from HWHS graduates was a limiting factor in conducting the analysis of the data. The low response rates of HWHS graduates may be seen as indirect support for the research hypothesis that African American graduates of HWHSs feel less connected to their high school experience when compared to HBHS graduates. With a larger sample size for the HWHS-PW, the chance of finding statistical differences and generalizability of study findings may have been increased.

The third limitation in this study is the measurement tool. Overall, the survey took most individuals between 20-40 minutes to complete, but sometimes longer for some respondents. The length of the survey appeared to result in high attrition rates with many people starting the survey, but not finishing it. The length of the survey may have



discouraged some individuals from participating, particularly if they had less connection to their high school experience or less interest in the research topic. Furthermore for the variables of HS GPA, HS SES, academic attainment, and school climate perceptions, 1-4 questions were utilized in measuring each construct. In measuring the racial identity construct, recent research has suggested that there are other factors that contribute to the formation of this construct such as family structure and cultural experiences. However, these variables were not measured in this survey. Lastly, the format of the survey required respondents to report retrospectively on their high school experience. This method may have resulted in inaccurate information being reported limiting the generalizability and validity of study findings.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

Future directions to extend this research would include exploring methods to recruit participants prior to entering high school in a randomized manner. Randomization and increased sample sizes should increase the possibility of finding statistically significant differences for all three school types: HBHS, HWHS-PW, and HWHS-PW. Additionally, sampling participants in longitudinal manner may help to address the issues of retrospective responding, attrition rates, and control for extraneous variables. Baselines for all variables of interest could be identified prior to students entering high school, with comparative data being collected at time of high school graduation, and post 10-year high school graduation.

The study provides evidence for the important role of HBHSs as a significant support system in the education of African American students. The study found no

significant differences in the reported HS GPA and postsecondary attainment for African Americans who attended HBHSs compared to African Americans who attended HWHS-PW. In fact, this study reinforces previous research that states African American students achieve academically at high rates, even when they do not perceive their school experience as highly favorable. The study also suggests that HBHSs offer African Americans a school environment in which they can achieve academically and feel a sense of belonging, pride, and support from other individuals who share similar cultural backgrounds.

Study results indicated that African Americans who view their racial identity as a significant part of who they are, as well as, those with strong academic performance are those who show civic engagement. Developing school climates that foster positive group and racial identity may help school communities develop civically minded graduates, particularly amongst their high achieving students. Academic curricula that integrate and provide continuous reinforcement of the historical, educational and entrepreneurial accomplishments of Africans and African Americans may help to enhance the racial identity perceptions of all African Americans. This may be particularly important in HBHS's in which students may expect to learn about the accomplishments of other African Americans being educated in a predominantly African American environment.

Research has indicated that high school graduates with high academic achievement have more access to college scholarships, jobs, and educational opportunities that can lead to self-sufficiency for them and the communities in which they reside. In developing individual and community resources after the recession, this study

has identified some factors related to self-sufficiency within the African American community, but additional research is needed to further understand how school environments and programs can promote civic leaders within African American communities.

Academically, this study suggests that African Americans with high postsecondary academic achievement are those that view being African American as a central part of their individual identity. The study results contradict the “Acting White” theory originally stated by John Ogbu (1986) which proposed that African Americans do not aspire academically because they equate high academic success with acting White (Ogbu, 2004). More recent research by Ogbu (2004) supports the study results in which African Americans make accommodations in White environments by learning and following established White institutional practices in order to be successful, but they do not give up their Black identity or culture. Furthermore, African Americans who accommodate White Institutions without giving up their Black culture may become more civically engaged in their communities. For them, civic engagement services may be a way to give back and demonstrate their connection with, and understanding of, the African American struggle in American society (Ogbu, 2004). However further research should continue to explore African American’s perceptions of acting White within Historically Black Institutions in which the examples of academic success are other African Americans.

In conclusion, the study results support the significant role that alumni and individual teachers, counselors, and administrators play in maintaining school climates

across the years. Although there have been many changes in the educational environments in terms of leadership and governmental policies across the 30 year time span that participants attended these high schools; the graduates' perceptions of these schools have remained relatively stable. This may imply that what occurs at the school and even at one-on-one levels with student-teacher interactions is much more important in determining academic and civic outcomes of graduates than academic and institutional policies.

## **Appendix A: African American Long-term Outcomes Scale**

### **High School Alumni Survey**

#### **Nominee Participant Consent Form**

The purpose of this research study is to learn more about what African American high school graduates think about their academic experience while in high school. We are particularly interested in how you view your high school academic experience, namely peer relationships, teacher-student relationships, and overall climate of the school. Additionally, we are interested African Americans long-term outcomes in terms of academic attainment, life satisfaction, and civic engagement since graduating from high school. The project is being conducted in conjunction with the graduate program in school psychology at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). Your participation is voluntary. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to respond to and rate a series of questions. Please respond as honestly as possible. There is no right or wrong answer to any question or statement to which you will respond. There may be no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, outside of contributing to the knowledge of your community. Should you agree to participate and complete the survey, you may be entered into a drawing based on chance in which each subject has equal odds of receiving \$50.

All information you provide in the survey will be kept confidential and will only be available to the Principal Investigator (PI) or her Faculty Advisor (FA). Your identity will be kept confidential. Moreover, you have the right to skip any question or discontinue participation for any reason at any time

If you have any questions about the study you may contact the PI, Kristen Bell Hughes, at 919-724-3975 or the FA, Dr. Rune Simeonsson, at 919-962-2512. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a human subject in this study, you may contact the UNC-CH Office of Human Research Ethics, anonymously if you wish, at 919-966-3113 or [irb\\_questions@unc.edu](mailto:irb_questions@unc.edu).

#### **Permission to Participate in Study**

- ☐ Yes, I have read the above purpose and procedures of this study, and agree to voluntarily participate in the study.
- ☐ No, I do not want to participate in the study

Please indicate the year in which you graduated from the range below:

- ☐ Between 1970-1979
- ☐ Between 1980-1989
- ☐ Between 1990-1999

Years attended the high school

Principal(s) during the time you attended the high school

Which best describes your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What best describes your ethnicity?

- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino-American
- ☐ Asian-American
- ☐ Caucasian-American
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other

During high school, did your family receive any form of government assistance (daycare assistance, food stamps, health care assistance, etc.)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Some
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

During high school, how would you best describe your family?

- ☐ Lower-class, not working
- ☐ Lower-class, working
- ☐ Middle-class, not working
- ☐ Middle-class, working
- ☐ Upper-class, not working
- ☐ Upper-class, working

Which of the following best describes your educational background?

	Some high school	High school graduate	Some Community College	Community College graduate/Associates Degree or Certificate	Some College	College Graduate	Some Post-Graduate hours	Master's Degree/Physicians Assistant	Professional Degree (PhD, MD, JD)	More than one Professional Degree
Please select a choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

During high school, what best describes your overall grade point average?

- ☐ Mostly A's
- ☐ Mostly A's & B's
- ☐ Mostly B's
- ☐ Mostly B's & C's
- ☐ Mostly C's
- ☐ Mostly D's
- ☐ Mostly F's

Since high school graduation, please indicate the job(s) that best describe(s) your occupation. If you have had several jobs, please write the top 3 jobs that you have held the longest and/or identify with the most (e.g. educator, electrical engineer, retail manager, small business owner, etc.)

Primary Job

Job 2

Job 3

In the primary job selected, what population do/did you mostly serve?

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino-American
- ☐ Asian-American
- ☐ Caucasian-American
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other

Please select any leadership position that you have held in your community

- ☐ None
- ☐ Community Advocate, Church Leader, etc.
- ☐ School Board, County Commissioner, or City Council Member
- ☐ Head Government or Religious Official
- ☐ State or National Government Official

Directions: From the responses below, please indicate the degree to which you feel the following statements are FALSE or TRUE for YOU and YOUR high school experience.

	Completely False	Mostly False	Unsure	Mostly True	Completely True
Most of the time I wanted to go to school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was very happy when I was in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I liked high school very much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Directions:

Please select the answer that tells best what YOU think about your high school experience.

	far below average	below average	average	above average	far above average
How would you rate the ability of most of your high school teachers compared to teachers in other high schools during your time in school? My teachers were...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## SCHOOL PRIDE SCALE

Directions: Please select the degree to which you agree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am proud of my high school experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend my friend or family to attend my high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy attending athletic events, reunions, performances, and ceremonies at high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of the history of my high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If money were no option, I would donate money to my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of the education I received at my high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I stay informed of issues concerning my high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of the accomplishments of people that attended my high school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am able, I enjoy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

volunteering at my high school.					
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## RACIAL IDENTITY

Directions: Please select the choice that BEST describes your level of AGREEMENT or DISAGREEMENT to the statements below

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a strong attachment to other Black people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel good about Black people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am happy that I am Black.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often regret that I am Black.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to be Black.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, others respect Black people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people consider Blacks, on the average, to be more ineffective than other racial groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blacks are not respected by the broader society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Society views Black people as	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

an asset.							
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When doing civic activities (e.g. volunteering, community work, etc.), what would best describe the race(s) of the population(s) you serve?

- ☐ Not Applicable/ I do not do civic work
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino-American
- ☐ Asian-American
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other

The following is a list of activities in which some people engage. Please indicate the extent to which you have participated in each activity within the past 5 years AND within the past 1 year using the scale below. For the purpose of this survey, MINORITY refers to any racial group other than Caucasian

	WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS			
	Never	Once in a while	Occasionally	Frequently
Involved in a program, project group, and/or organization geared towards helping or uplifting the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Worked together with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you volunteered or done any voluntary community service for no pay?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended a meeting where the discussions were on issues concerning minority people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participated in a demonstration/rally for a minority cause.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you volunteered for a political organization or candidate running for office?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Registered voters for an African American politician.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>Contacted public officials to address an issue that you felt was pertinent to a minority community.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Have you given money to a candidate, political party, or organization that supported African American candidates?</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Raised money/advocated for an African American cause.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Published an article or newsletter on issues that you felt was pertinent to a minority group.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Participated in an African American social, civic, or professional organization.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Helped to support the community within your city by volunteering (at shelters, Habitat for Humanity, community-support services, Red Cross, etc.)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



#### OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Now you may comment in your own words about your high school experience. If applicable, explain how your high school experience has impacted your life after graduation (e.g. education, job status, community involvement, social relationships, etc:

Some graduates say: "Overall, I liked high school because...."

Others say: "Overall, I hated high school..."

How do you feel your high school experience and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thanks for taking the time to complete the survey. If you would like to be entered into the Raffle for \$50, please complete the information below. Thanks Again!!!**

**Name**

**Email Address**

**Phone # if no email available**

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