

RACIAL AUTHENTICITY PROCESSES: EVALUATIONS OF
AUTHENTIC BLACKNESS AND SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

Racial authenticity refers to the social evaluation of an individual's group membership based on their perceived racial similarities to or differences from their racial group. While the criteria for determining racial authenticity may be abstract and mutable, negative outcomes may still occur for individuals based on whether they are perceived as an authentic member of their racial group. Notably, perceptions of racial authenticity may be particularly salient among Black college students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) due to competing behavioral expectations from Black students as well as non-Black students and faculty. The present study contributes to prior research on this topic through a validation and test of a novel measure of racial authenticity defined by one's perceived racial similarities to their group (*racial prototypicality*) and their experiences of being mistreated by their racial group due to perceived racial differences (*racial othering*). Furthermore, the study elucidates racial authentication processes among Black students through an examination of how contextual factors contribute to evaluations of authentic Blackness and the extent to which racial authenticity relates to self-blame and self-esteem. Within the study, a sample of 136 Black PWI students ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.27$, $SD = 4.14$; 91.2% female) completed an online questionnaire. A path analysis revealed that Black students who held more negative views about their racial group (low *private regard*) and who had more friends of a different race experienced more stress from racial othering. Additionally, experiences of racial othering indirectly predicted self-esteem through self-blame coping. These findings have implications for understanding how perceptions of racial authenticity relate to well-being among Black PWI students.

DEDICATION

To Kehinde and Richard Olaniyan for nurturing my inquisitive mind.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When the word *authentic* is used to describe a person, it might evoke the image of someone who embodies specific qualities that exemplify a particular group. Thus, someone who is deemed authentically Black would be considered a prototypical member of the Black community. However, notions of authentic Blackness imply that Black people are monolithic, thereby inaccurately generalizing the experiences, values, and behaviors of individuals based solely on their race. In fact, early explorations of Black authenticity highlight how constraining notions of Blackness perpetuate racial stereotypes (Riggs, 1994). Nevertheless, consequences may still occur for individuals who fail to uphold social expectations of authentic Blackness. Notably, research has linked seemingly inauthentic behavior to negative social and psychological experiences. For example, perceived racial inauthenticity has been found to result in lower social status and exclusion from Black spaces (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Warikoo, 2007, 2011). These findings suggest that perceived racial authenticity has important implications for one's racial group membership and sense of belonging to their group.

Olaniyan and Taylor (2021) operationalize perceptions of racial authenticity through two constructs. The authors define the first construct as *racial prototypicality*, one's perceived similarities in behavior, attitudes, and values in relation to their racial group. The second construct is *racial othering*, which is the experience and significance of criticism and mistreatment by in-group members due to one's perceived differences from their racial group. Race is a socially constructed classification system and, as such,

the boundaries that define racial group membership are subjective and mutable. However, racial labels are ubiquitous within society and individuals may be bestowed racial labels that differ from their racial identity. Self-categorization theory (SCT) asserts that people are predisposed to grouping individuals into social categories based on their similarities to other group members (Turner et al., 1987). Similarly, there is the inclination to differentiate people who are not considered prototypical members of a particular group. As such, SCT would suggest that perceptions of racial authenticity stem from one's similarities to and differences from their racial group.

Although perceived inauthenticity has been linked to low social status and exclusion among Black students (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Warikoo, 2007, 2011), research has found that upholding standards of Black authenticity may also result in negative outcomes. Several scholars have found that perceived racial authenticity is associated with poor academic achievement and performance among Black youth (Bettie, 2000; Cokley, 2003; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Goss et al., 2017; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). In their study, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) evinced that Black students intentionally underperformed in school due to biased associations of academic achievement with White culture. Thus, this group of students utilized underachievement to differentiate themselves from White students, thereby protecting their social identities as loyal members of their racial group. While Fordham and Ogbu (1986) assert that Black students strived to strengthen their social identity, the authors also describe how students avoided behaviors and attitudes that conflicted with expectations of their race to emphasize their similarities to their racial group. This finding suggests that the desire to

be viewed as a prototypical member of one's racial group may play a role in influencing outcomes among Black students. Additionally, this finding may have implications for understanding *racial authentication*, the process by which individuals evaluate others' racial authenticity and subsequently group them based on racial norms as a means of influence (Bunyasi & Rigueur, 2015; Nguyen & Anthony, 2014; Peterson, 2005). Within the current study, racial authentication is conceptualized as a linear process: first, personal characteristics and contextual factors are viewed as signifiers of authentic Blackness; second, individuals are evaluated on their racial authenticity; and third, one's outcomes are influenced based on whether they are perceived as authentic.

Social Context and Black Authenticity

College serves an important contextual role in identity development for Black students. Entrance into college typically occurs during emerging adulthood (18-29 years; Arnett et al., 2014), the transition period between adolescence and adulthood. During this transition period, emerging adults are actively exploring and shaping their identities (Hughes et al., 2016; Schwartz et al., 2005). Although identity development begins in childhood and continues throughout adolescence, identity exploration is most active during emerging adulthood (Hughes et al., 2016). Notably, college-attending emerging adults are presented with unique opportunities for personal agency in which individuals can freely navigate their identities (Schwartz et al., 2005). Upon entrance into a new social environment such as college, individuals can establish their identities without the structure and guidance that may have been provided by their home environment. Moreover, college provides a unique social context in which individuals establish their

social identities based on their experiences with others (Arnett, 2000; Chavous et al., 2018; Perry, 1999; Syed & Azmitia, 2010). For example, Perry (1999) describes how emerging adults encounter people of diverse backgrounds within college, which exposes them to novel worldviews. This exposure may in turn encourage individuals to reconsider their own values and beliefs, and consequently engage in further identity exploration. While college may present novel opportunities for students to navigate their identities, this environment can pose disparate experiences for students who identify as racial minorities (Smedley et al., 1993). Notably, identity exploration may be a stressful process for Black students who are forming their racial identities while also receiving negative messages about their race through racial discrimination (Chavous et al., 2018) and prejudice (Syed & Azmitia, 2010). This narrative would suggest that college is an important social context for understanding how Black students navigate perceptions of their race.

While the social context of college may play an important role in racial authentication processes, research suggests that the racial composition of the institution may determine the behavioral expectations of authentic Blackness. Several researchers have documented how Black college students encounter various racial stressors within the context of predominantly White Institutions (PWIs; Cox, 2020; Greer & Chwalisz, 2007; Prillerman et al., 1989). Greer and Chwalisz (2007) found that African American students at PWIs, compared to students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), experienced higher levels of intragroup stress due to increased pressure from their racial group to conform to racialized expectations of their behavior. In relation to

racial authenticity, this finding has implications for understanding experiences of racial othering at PWIs. One interpretation of the finding is that Black PWI students experienced high levels of stress from othering due to their racial minority status on campus. Within their academic institutions, Black PWI students experienced significantly higher stress from managing relationships with both racial in-group and out-group members when compared to HBCU students (Greer & Chwalisz, 2007). This finding would suggest that social expectations of behavior differ for Black students at PWIs. Research by Cox (2020) may further support this assertion. In their study, Black PWI students were subjected to continual stress due to conflicting expectations of their self-presentation from both Black students as well as non-Black students and faculty. In contrast, Black HBCU students within their study reported infrequent experiences of authenticity questioning. According to Huckfeldt and Kohlfeld (1987), people rely on their environments to establish and reinforce normative behaviors. It may be the case that PWIs engender constraining expectations of authentic Blackness, which in turn foster high levels of stress. In exploring racial authenticity, it is important to consider whether Black students at PWIs experience increased stress from perceptions of racial authenticity within their environment.

Cox (2020) argues that the experiences related to racial authenticity among Black PWI students is two-fold. Black students may simultaneously experience intragroup pressure to exemplify authentic Blackness while also feeling external pressure from non-Black students to limit expressions of Blackness. For example, Black students have reported altering their body language and tone of voice to avoid being perceived as

aggressive by non-Black students (Cox, 2020). However, the same students also expressed feeling compelled by other Black students to uphold notions of authentic Blackness, such as affiliating with Black-student groups. According to Smith (2008), Black students who frequently experience behavioral constraints may be subject to racial battle fatigue, which is the resultant mental, physical, and behavioral deficits associated with race-related stress at PWIs. This finding would suggest that stress stemming from perceptions of racial authenticity may be particularly salient among Black college students.

Individual Differences in Black Authenticity

Several scholars posit that racial authenticity is evaluated based on a varying number of factors (Gee, 2001; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). From Gee's (2001) perspective, racial authenticity may be determined by one's personal characteristics, which are expected to exemplify a particular racial group. However, racial groups are not monolithic, and thus do not have clear, fixed boundaries that outline what it means to be a prototypical group member. Despite the relatively abstract nature of racial authenticity, individuals continue to rely on subjective criteria to inform the boundaries of authentic Blackness (Harkness, 2012). As racial authenticity may have important implications for one's sense of belonging to their racial group (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Sellers et al., 1998; Warikoo, 2007, 2011), it is important to identify which specific factors influence perceptions of racial authenticity. Therefore, one aim of the study is to examine four factors that are commonly reported as influential to perceptions of Black authenticity:

racial identity, family demographics, racial socialization, and the racial composition of one's friend group.

Racial Identity

In examining racial authentication processes, it is important to consider the role of individual differences in racial identity. An important distinction that should be noted is the juxtaposition between racial authenticity and *racial identity*, which is an individual's sense of self in relation to their race. Racial identity is distinct from racial authenticity in that individuals alone place meaning and significance on race when defining their identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley & Chavous, 1998). Although some individuals may consider how others view their racial group when forming their racial identity, the individual ultimately determines the importance of race to their self-concept. In contrast, racial authenticity is largely dependent on social perceptions. Individuals are often categorized into racial groups by others without consideration of one's personal racial identity (Sellers et al., 1998). Therefore, racial identity and authenticity are disparate in that racial identity is autonomous and developed through unique experiences associated with a given racial group; whereas authenticity is dependent on racial validation from others. Thus, variability in Black students' racial identities may contribute to differential responses to perceived inauthenticity. In fact, racial authenticity has been conceptualized as an extension of racial identity (Handler, 2015). Research suggests that perceptions of Black authenticity may be determined by the qualitative feelings an individual holds in relation to their racial group (Chun, 2011). Within Sellers et al.'s (1997) Multidimensional Model of Black Identity, two dimensions of racial identity (centrality

and private regard) may inform our understanding of perceptions of racial authenticity. For example, the experienced stress from challenges to authenticity may vary depending on the strength of one's *racial centrality*, which is the importance of race to the self-concept. Similarly, the extent to which an individual experiences stress from racial othering may vary as a function of their *private regard*, which is how positively or negatively an individual feels about their race and their group membership.

As Sellers et al. (1998) note, certain racial identities may confer more adaptive responses to race-related stress. For individuals who feel that race is an important aspect of their identity (i.e., high centrality), challenges to their racial authenticity can be particularly stressful (Winkler, 2012). Notably, it is not apparent as to whether high centrality confers perceived authenticity. Research demonstrates that one's racial centrality can be incongruent with their perceived authenticity (Chun, 2011; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Herman, 2010). In contrast, it may be that experiences of othering are less stressful for those who value their racial group less (low centrality). For example, some Black students are more easily able to cut off contact with members of their racial group to avoid the negative feelings associated with perceived inauthenticity (Harris & Khanna, 2010). This finding might suggest that in-group attachment is less important to their identities. In a similar manner, private regard may also relate to racial authenticity. The extent to which an individual feels positively about their racial group has been theorized to influence their relationships with in-group members and their sense of belonging to the group (Sellers et al., 1998). Thus, a low private regard may be detrimental to one's group membership and perceived racial authenticity. Additional research is needed to clarify

this potential association as no prior studies have examined whether private regard relates to perceptions of racial authenticity.

Family Demographics

Another potential indicator of racial authenticity may be an individual's demographic characteristics, such as their class and race. Black authenticity has often been linked to social class (Bettie, 2000; Chun, 2011; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004; Rollock et al., 2011). Specifically, authentic Blackness has been conflated with low income and education (Bettie, 2000). For example, Bettie (2000) observed how references to the "lower class" were used as substitutes for discussing Black people. Words such as "low class" and "Black" were used interchangeably, which resulted in individuals perceiving low income as a signifier of authentic Blackness. While one's class may influence whether they are perceived as authentic, it is important to note that the association between race and social class reinforces harmful stereotypes by suggesting that higher income equates inauthentic Blackness. As research demonstrates, exclusion and rejection can result from imposed ideals of social class among Black students (Bettie, 2000; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). In one study, Harris and Khanna (2010) found that middle-class Black Americans reported feeling rejected and marginalized by other Black people solely on the basis of their social class. Additionally, Lei and Bodenhausen (2017) demonstrated the effect of economic prejudice in individuals' association of poverty with Blackness. In their study, participants used racial classifications to identify blurry composite images of individuals who were described as either poor, middle-income, or rich. When shown

composites of “a poor person,” participants most frequently classified the composite image as Black despite having the option to choose from a selection of five racial groups. Taken together, these studies are beneficial in understanding the intersection of class and race in perceptions of racial authenticity. Social class may in fact be racialized (Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017), and therefore may influence perceptions of authenticity among Black students.

In addition to social class, an individual’s racial identification may influence how authentic that person is perceived to be. Biracial and multiracial individuals have reported experiencing frequent challenges to their racial authenticity, which fosters feelings of detachment from their racial group (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013; Renn, 2008). While there are few studies that explore multiracial students’ experiences of racial authenticity, extant studies suggest that multiracial students are faced with unique race-related challenges compared to monoracial students. Compared to monoracial students who identify as members of only one racial group, multiracial students often encounter questions about their self-identification as members of two or more racial groups (Harris, 2017). This finding may be explained by Turner et al.’s (1987) self-categorization theory (SCT), which theorizes that people are predisposed to categorizing individuals into discrete social groups based on similarities to or differences from other group members. According to SCT, multiracial students would be categorized into only one racial group, regardless of whether they identify as more than one race. For example, someone who identifies as biracial-Black may be pressured to identify only as Black or be miscategorized as monoracial despite their mixed-race heritage. Thus,

multiracial individuals are likely to experience frequent challenges to their racial authenticity if they identify with more than one racial group. In order to avoid having their racial authenticity questioned, multiracial students may be denied their multiple racial identities and reduced to a single monoracial identity (Harris, 2017).

Another reason multiracial students might experience challenges to their racial authenticity may be due to their phenotypic expression. For example, Harris (2017) delineates how a person's skin tone, hair texture, and other physical features may be evaluated to determine their racial authenticity. In one study, mixed-race college students expressed how confusion surrounding their physical appearance led to alienation by other students, which in turn contributed to increased stress (Cabinte, 2013). It may be the case that multiracial individuals experience challenges to their authenticity due to the ambiguity surrounding their physical features, which may be a less common occurrence among monoracial students. Although this line of research suggests that multiracial Black students experience more challenges to their racial authenticity compared to monoracial students, there is a dearth of research comparing experiences between the two groups.

Racial Socialization

Prior to entering college, Black students begin forming their racial identities within the context of their homes (Goss et al., 2017; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Herman, 2010). In García Coll et al.'s (1996) framework for the study of minority youth, the authors identified one likely predictor of developmental competencies as ethnic-racial socialization, the parental practice of teaching children about their ethnic-racial background. In their framework, García Coll et al. (1996) note that parents teach their

children to value their group membership and prepare them to face racial bias due to their awareness of the negative social perceptions about their race. In relation to racial authenticity, it may be the case that parents' own experiences with social expectations about their race inform the messages that they impart on their children. As such, racial socialization may be an important predictor of racial authenticity throughout development. As children begin developing their racial identities, parents are instrumental in shaping children's views on race (Nguyen & Anthony, 2014). In fact, much of what children learn about race is through their parents' racial socialization practices (Hughes et al., 2016). Accordingly, Black youth may internalize racial socialization messages in constructing their own racial attitudes. For example, Black parents may teach their children about their racial group's culture and history (*cultural pride teaching*) to positively promote feelings of pride in being Black and foster a strong, ingroup attachment (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006; Nguyen & Anthony, 2014). Taken together, Black students who enter college with positive feelings about their race may seek out close friendships with other Black students or express a greater interest in their culture, and thus be viewed as more authentically Black.

In addition to promoting cultural pride, parents are instrumental in *preparation for bias*, which is the act of preparing Black youth to experience racism (Hughes, 2003). In relation to racial authenticity, preparation for bias has also been utilized by parents to teach Black youth how to respond to experiences of racial othering (Rollock et al., 2011) and in-group rejection (Harris & Khanna, 2010). For instance, Rollock et al. (2011) found that Black parents who were othered because of their perceived racial differences taught

their children how to signal their authenticity to other Black people as a means of gaining social acceptance. Historically, Black parents have used preparation for bias strategies to buffer the effects of racial discrimination and prejudice (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Peters, 1985). However, there remains a dearth of research examining whether parents prepare Black youth to cope with different types of bias such as challenges to racial authenticity and experiences of racial exclusion (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). Therefore, there is a need for further examination of parents' racial socialization practices as to how it relates to one's perceived racial authenticity.

Peer Group Racial Composition

Lastly, the racial make-up of one's friend group may contribute to evaluations of racial authenticity. Ethier and Deaux (1994) as well as Goss et al. (2017) argue that an individual's social ties serve as an indication of their attachment to their racial group. It may be the case that Black students who affiliate more within their racial group are perceived as more authentic. In contrast, Black students who have more friends outside of their racial group may be deemed as inauthentic. Research by Maragh (2017) may support this assertion. In their study, Black students experienced frequent challenges to their authenticity if they did not befriend other Black people. Additionally, Black students at PWIs have expressed that forming friendships with non-Black students is perceived as an act of betrayal (Cox, 2020). As a racial minority group on campus, Black PWI students may be expected to bond even if they do not share similarities with other in-group members. The link between the racial composition of one's friend group and their perceived racial authenticity may be explained by Ashmore et al.'s (2004) social

embeddedness theory. Their theory asserts that having a high number of social relationships with in-group members reinforces one's commitment and loyalty to the group. In fact, some Black students have expressed a desire to be accepted by other in-group members despite feeling uncomfortable in these interactions (Cox, 2020). It may be that befriending other Black students demonstrates attachment to the group, which in turn increases perceived authentic Blackness. Taken together, these findings suggest that the racial composition of an individual's friend group may play a role in their perceived racial authenticity by signaling one's connection and commitment to their racial group. Therefore, an individual may be perceived as more authentic if they form more friendships with people who are of the same race.

The Desire for Black Authenticity

Research demonstrates that social expectations of authentic Blackness can have detrimental effects on psychological well-being. For example, individuals who have their authenticity questioned may experience increased feelings of emotional exhaustion (Cox, 2020), inadequacy and distress (Nadal et al., 2013), shame and failure (Ashlee & Quaye, 2021), rejection and marginalization (Harris & Khanna, 2010), as well as alienation and isolation from other Black people (Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). By having their racial differences emphasized, individuals may feel a diminished sense of belonging to their racial group. In fact, peer rejection and social exclusion are common outcomes of perceived inauthentic Blackness (Cox, 2020; Tatum, 2003). Despite this fact, social desirability from perceived racial authenticity may be important to strive for in specific contexts. PWIs can be racially isolating spaces for Black students due to the small

percentage of same race peers and faculty (Cox, 2020). As a result, Black students may seek the comfort and familiarity of their racial group. For example, research suggests that Black PWI students serve as instrumental sources of support for each other by providing safe spaces to process experiences of race-related stress (Macdonald, 2000). Thus, removal of this form of social support may cause additional distress. This narrative would suggest that perceptions of racial authenticity play an important role in managing stress and well-being among Black college students.

As Tatum (2003) notes, Black students who are in predominantly White environments and experience in-group rejection may attempt to alter their public image to be perceived as more authentically Black. Identity work, the act of performing behaviors that are perceived to be emblematic of one's racial group, is a common practice among individuals who are labeled as inauthentic (Goss et al., 2017; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Peterson, 2005; Vasquez & Wetzel, 2009). Through identity work, individuals adopt socially favorable traits and behaviors in an effort to be perceived as authentically Black. It is important to note that identity work may require an individual to engage in stereotypical representations of their group. However, the potential benefit of positive evaluations might outweigh the negative aspects of identity work. Within the literature on racial identity work (Goss et al., 2017; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Maragh, 2017; Peterson, 2005; Vasquez & Wetzel, 2009), it remains relatively unclear whether individuals can bolster their perceived authenticity through increased identity performance. While Vasquez and Wetzel (2009) found that some minority youth received in-group social benefits from identity work, Maragh (2017) found that identity performances merely

limited seemingly inauthentic behavior in social interactions without reaffirming an individual's racial authenticity. Despite the uncertain outcome associated with identity work, it is important to understand why individuals may choose to engage in this practice. Social desirability may potentially motivate individuals to alter their behavior to obtain in-group acceptance. For example, Harris and Khanna (2010) found that Black individuals experienced severe distress from not being perceived as authentically Black enough. The authors discuss how Black students employed various forms of identity work to conform to expectations of Black authenticity. As such, Black students may continue to evaluate themselves using narrow constructions of Blackness as a means of gaining social acceptance.

Black Authenticity and the Self-Concept

Self-esteem, an individuals' evaluation of their self-worth, has been documented as an important predictor of psychological well-being. In their empirical review of the literature on self-esteem, Swann et al. (2007) outlined prior research in which self-esteem and one's self-concept were linked to important outcomes such as school and work achievement, healthy social relationships, and mental health outcomes. In relation to racial authenticity, research posits that evaluations of racial group membership may play an influential role in the formation of the self-concept (Cross, 1991). For example, racial prototypicality to one's in-group has been positively linked to self-esteem (Obst et al., 2011). In their study, Obst et al. (2011) found that individuals who perceived themselves as prototypical members of their group tended to feel more positively about themselves. However, it is important to note that the authors examined students' perceptions of their

prototypicality to the broader university, and not specifically to their individual racial groups. The interpretation of this finding may be limited, however, the positive association between prototypicality and self-esteem warrants further exploration. The positive association between self-evaluations and in-group prototypicality may also be present within racial groups. Given this suggested link and the limited research on racial authenticity and self-esteem, it is important to further examine whether social perceptions of authentic Blackness relate to an individual's self-worth.

In addition to prototypicality, prior research has linked experienced stress from racial othering to self-esteem among Black students (Cross, 1991; Franco et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2002; Nadal et al., 2013). For example, Franco et al. (2016) found that 33% of biracial Black participants in their study reported feeling upset or hurt by accusations of not acting Black enough, which diminished their overall self-esteem. In a later study, Franco and O'Brien (2017) found that self-esteem was indirectly predicted by racial invalidation, which are individuals' experiences of being mistreated or judged due to perceived behavioral and phenotypic deviations from racial norms. While racial invalidation is conceptually similar to experiences of racial othering, the results of these studies are limited in application to the current study since they are centered on the experiences of biracial and multiracial Black college students. Additional research is needed to better understand the extent to which racial othering indirectly relates to self-esteem among monoracial Black students as well.

Research suggests that negative responses to racial authenticity questioning may indirectly lead to diminished self-esteem. For example, Nadal et al. (2013) found that

individuals who had their authenticity frequently questioned felt excluded and judged within their group. The authors concluded that authenticity questioning may lead to internalized feelings of disapproval, which may negatively impact one's self-esteem and well-being. Research by Jones et al. (2002) also suggests that differential treatment due to one's perceived racial differences may be detrimental to racial minority students' self-esteem. It may be the case that the link between racial othering and self-esteem is explained, in part, by self-blame. Classic theorists have posited that challenges to racial authenticity may predispose an individual to internalize negative perceptions about themselves (Allport, 1954; Fanon, 1968; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951; Pettigrew, 1964), which may have implications on self-esteem (Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951). For example, Winkler (2012) found that individuals who were accused of inauthentic Blackness attributed their perceived racial differences to personal flaws.

As an individual's perceived authenticity may be partially informed by their chosen appearance and behavior, inability to demonstrate authentic Blackness may be viewed as a personal failing. In fact, Spergel (2007) warns of the danger associated with perceptions of racial authenticity. The author argues that individuals may engage in self-blame resulting from an inability to achieve racial authenticity. Experiencing challenges to authenticity due to personal characteristics may lead to feelings of self-doubt and low self-worth. Graham (1997) posits that people are predisposed to attributing negative outcomes to their own abilities and effort. Specifically, individuals may blame themselves and their personal failings for their experiences of racial othering. However, Graham (1997) notes the dearth of research on this topic and no studies to date have

examined how self-blaming tendencies operate in racial authentication processes. The current study fills this gap in the research by examining self-blame coping as a mediator of the relation between racial authenticity and self-esteem among Black college students. In doing so, this study may elucidate racial authentication processes by establishing self-blame as a maladaptive coping mechanism in response to negative evaluations of racial authenticity.

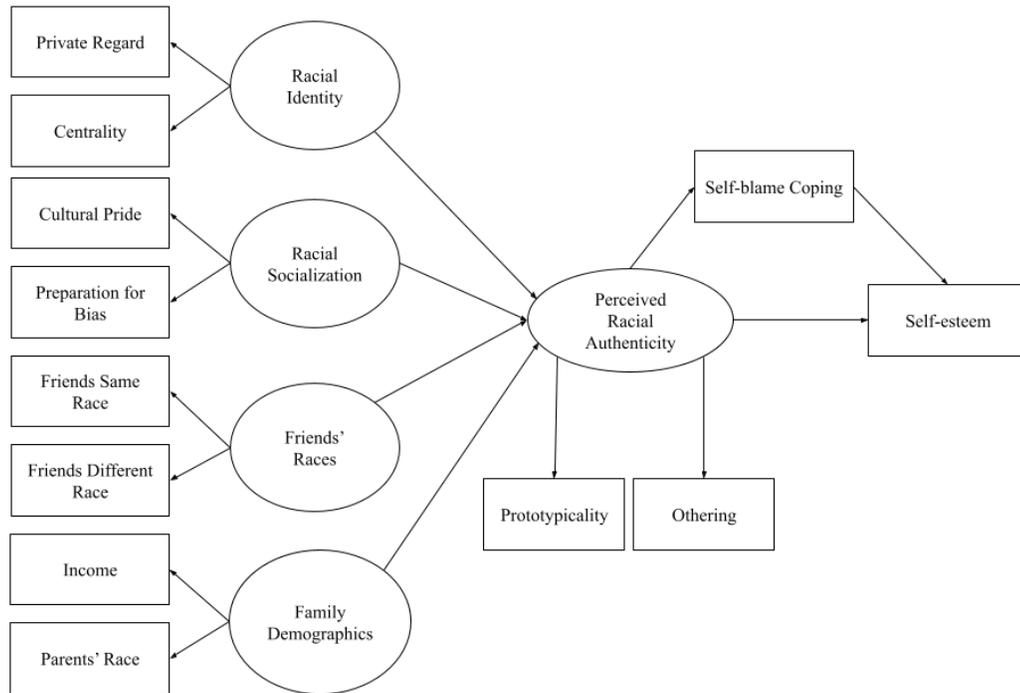
Present Study

In an effort to disentangle the complexity of racial authentication processes, the current study builds on prior work by constructing a framework of Black authenticity. College presents novel difficulties for all students, yet the stressors of college may be amplified for Black students who must also navigate unique, race-related challenges (Cox, 2020; Nguyen & Anthony, 2014; Smith, 2008). While the boundaries of racial authenticity may be abstract (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Gee, 2001; Warikoo, 2007, 2011), the practice of challenging others' racial authenticity persists within racial groups. In the current study, the primary aim is to examine whether perceptions of racial authenticity are linked to well-being among Black PWI students. Consistent with prior research (Cross, 1991; Obst et al., 2011; Winkler, 2012), perceived racial authenticity may predict self-esteem through self-blame coping. However, prior investigations have employed qualitative approaches to inform how perceptions of racial authenticity relate to outcomes among Black students. Quantitative research has yet to examine racial authentication processes among Black PWI students. Therefore, this study presents a novel, quantitative measure of racial authenticity to better understand the degree to which

Black students' perceptions of their racial authenticity relate to their self-concept. An additional aim of the current study is to identify which contextual factors are most attributed to perceptions of racial authenticity. Within the current framework, four factors are identified as predictors of racial authenticity: racial identity, racial socialization, family demographics, and the racial composition of one's friend group. Each of the four factors is operationalized by two distinct indicators, which are the observed variables used to indirectly measure the factors (Kline, 2016). Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of the four variables indicating perceptions of racial authenticity, which in turn is predicted to relate to self-blame coping and self-esteem.

Figure 1

Hypothesized Structural Equation Model of Racial Authenticity with Self-Blame Coping and Self-Esteem



Note. Circles indicate unobserved variables and squares represent observed variables. Self-blame coping is predicted to mediate the relation between perceptions of racial authenticity and self-esteem.

Research Aims

Aim 1

The current study is designed to be a quantitative assessment of racial authenticity among Black college students at a PWI. Prior qualitative research has documented links between racial authenticity and psychological health outcomes (e.g., Cabinte, 2013; Goss et al., 2017; Harkness, 2012; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Maragh, 2017; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013). Thus, the current investigation builds on prior research by constructing and testing a quantitative measure of racial authenticity.

Hypothesis 1. Based on the results of the pilot study (Olaniyan & Taylor, 2021), it is predicted that racial authenticity will consist of two dimensions: perceived racial prototypicality and experienced stress from racial othering.

Aim 2

While perceptions of racial authenticity persist among Black students, the boundaries that define authentic Blackness remain abstract (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Gee, 2001; Warikoo, 2007, 2011). Several scholars have theorized that an individual's perceived racial authenticity is influenced by several interconnected factors (Gee, 2001; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). Individual differences in racial identity, parents' racial socialization practices, demographic factors, and the racial composition of one's friend group may relate to perceived racial authenticity.

Hypothesis 2a. It is expected that racial identity will positively predict perceptions of racial authenticity. Racial identity was represented by two indicators: centrality and private regard. For individuals who view race as central

to their identity, racial centrality is likely to relate to more perceived racial authenticity (Winkler, 2012). Similarly, a high private regard has been found to foster a greater sense of belonging to one's racial group (Sellers et al., 1998), which may result in more perceived racial authenticity.

Hypothesis 2b. Parents' racial socialization practices are predicted to positively relate to perceptions of racial authenticity. For racial socialization, the factor consisted of cultural pride teaching and preparation for bias. This hypothesis is in line with research by Brown and Lesane-Brown (2006), in which the authors posit that individuals who perceive more racial socialization may internalize these race-related messages. Thus, individuals who received more racial socialization from their caregivers may engage more with their culture, which should relate to more perceived authenticity.

Hypothesis 2c. Family characteristics are hypothesized to negatively predict perceptions of racial authenticity. Specifically, family income and parents' race (monoracial and biracial/multiracial) were used as indicators of family characteristics. Research has found that perceived Black authenticity may be signified by low income (Bettie, 2000; Chun, 2011; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004) and monoracial ancestry (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013; Renn, 2008).

Hypothesis 2d. Lastly, the racial composition of an individual's friend group is hypothesized to positively predict perceptions of racial authenticity. The racial composition of one's friend group was operationalized by their number of friends

who belong to the same racial group and their number of interracial friendships. In prior research, Black students who demonstrated strong in-group social ties were evaluated as more authentically Black (Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Goss et al., 2017), whereas Black students who affiliated with people outside of their racial group were perceived as racially inauthentic (Cox, 2020; Maragh, 2017).

Aim 3

Black students attending PWIs are at risk of increased stress stemming from negative perceptions of racial authenticity (Smith, 2008). Challenges to racial authenticity have been linked to low self-esteem (Cross, 1991; Obst et al., 2011) and diminished overall well-being (Museus et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to examine how perceptions of racial authenticity relate to psychological health among Black students.

Hypothesis 3. It is hypothesized that perceptions of racial authenticity will positively predict self-esteem among Black students. Specifically, individuals who perceive themselves as prototypically Black and experience less racial othering will have higher self-esteem compared to Black students who are deemed as less prototypical group members and experience more challenges to their authenticity. Research has found that individuals who perceived themselves as prototypical members of their group also felt more positively about themselves (Obst et al., 2011). For individuals who experience challenges to their racial authenticity, their feelings of exclusion and judgement may foster low self-esteem (Nadal et al., 2013).

Aim 4

Research demonstrates that individuals may respond differently when their racial authenticity is challenged (Cox, 2020; Harris & Khanna, 2010). One aim of the current study is to determine whether the link between perceptions of racial authenticity and self-esteem can be explained by coping. As one potential response, self-blame coping is examined as a mediator in the hypothesized relation between perceptions of racial authenticity and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 4. Prior research suggests that the relation between racial authenticity and self-esteem can be explained by self-blame coping. Winkler (2012) found that individuals blamed themselves for perceived inauthenticity due to their inability to demonstrate authentic behaviors. Additionally, Spergel (2007) posited that racial authenticity may be linked to lower self-worth among individuals who blame themselves for their perceived inauthenticity. It is anticipated that individuals who are perceived as having low racial authenticity will engage in more self-blame as a response. Individuals who blame themselves for their perceived inauthenticity may in turn have a diminished self-worth. Therefore, it is hypothesized that racial authenticity will be indirectly related to self-esteem through self-blame.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Participants

Due to the emphasis on race in the current study, participants were required to self-identify as Black, African American, or Black biracial/multiracial to qualify for participation in the current study. Based on this inclusion criteria, the final sample consisted of 136 Black college students whose average age was 20.27 years ($SD = 4.14$; range = 18-29). Within the sample, participants identified their gender as female ($n = 124$; 91.2%), male ($n = 11$, 8.1%), or non-binary ($n = 1$; 0.7%). The majority of the sample was born in the United States ($n = 126$), while the remaining participants were born in one of the following countries: Botswana ($n = 1$), Côte d'Ivoire ($n = 1$), Ghana ($n = 1$), Haiti ($n = 1$), Italy ($n = 1$), Kenya ($n = 1$), Liberia ($n = 2$), and Nigeria ($n = 2$). All non-native participants reported that they had moved to the U.S. as a child (range = 1 – 11 years) and have lived in the country for an average of 13.2 years (range = 7 - 20 years). Among participants who were born in the U.S., they represented various regions of the country including the Northeast ($n = 110$), Midwest ($n = 7$), Southeast ($n = 7$), and Southwest ($n = 1$). The median family income for the sample was \$70,000 - \$79,999. Table 1 includes additional demographic characteristics for participants' families.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics for the Sample*

	<i>n</i>	%
Family Income		
< \$10K	4	2.9
\$10-19,999K	7	5.1
\$20-29,999K	6	4.4
\$30-39,999K	8	5.9
\$40-49,999K	12	8.8
\$50-59,999K	17	12.5
\$60-69,999K	10	7.4
\$70-79,999K	15	11.0
\$80-89,999K	13	9.6
\$90-99,999K	7	5.1
\$100-149,999K	27	19.9
> \$150K	8	5.9
Unknown	2	1.5
Parents' Race		
Black/African American	102	75
Middle Eastern/North African	2	1.47
Biracial ^a	30	22.06
Multiracial ^b	2	1.47

Note. *N* = 136.

^a One parent was reported as Black/African American or Middle Eastern/North African.

^b Both parents were reported as mixed-race.

Measures

Demographics

All participants reported their age, gender, and place of birth within the questionnaire. Participants were also asked about their total family income. Appendix E contains a full list of the demographic questions contained within the questionnaire.

Parents' race. Participants were asked to report the race of their biological mother and father. For each parent, participants selected one of the following responses: biracial or multiracial, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, Middle Eastern or North African, or unknown. Parents' race was coded as a discrete variable with two levels (monoracial and biracial/multiracial). Participants were categorized as biracial/multiracial if they indicated that their parents were different races. Monoracial was used as the code for anyone who selected one race for both parents (see Table 1).

Racial Composition of Friend Group

Same race and different race friendships. The questionnaire included two questions about the racial composition of participants' friend groups. Participants were asked to indicate the how many of their friends belonged to the same racial group as themselves. Additionally, participants quantified their number of friends whose racial backgrounds differed from their own. For both questions, participants selected from four response options: 1 (*none*), 2 (*some*), 3 (*most*), and 4 (*all*).

Racial Authenticity

Prior to the current study, a pilot study was conducted to test the psychometric properties of the racial authenticity dimensions among a sample of 76 Black/African American participants (Olaniyan & Taylor, 2021). The pilot measure included 34 items (see Appendix A) informed by prior qualitative research (Gee, 2001; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). For the perceptions of racial authenticity measure, seven dimensions were initially proposed: aesthetic preferences, speech, prototypicality, skin tone, socioeconomic status, political ideology, and racial group embeddedness. The resulting measure of racial authenticity had a two-factor structure with subscales including racial prototypicality and racial othering.

Racial prototypicality. The 6-item racial prototypicality subscale was used to assess whether participants perceived themselves as typical members of their racial group. Sample items ($\alpha = .82$) include statements such as, “I feel that I am a typical member of my group”. Scores on this measure were calculated using the mean of the items, while scores ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). In the initial validation of the measure (Olaniyan & Taylor, 2021), the subscale demonstrated high internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .83. Concurrent validity was estimated using the centrality measure of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (Sellers et al., 1997). Racial prototypicality was positively associated with items on the centrality scale assessing the importance of being Black to one’s self-image ($r = .27$) as well as one’s sense of belonging to their racial group ($r = .34$).

Racial othering. The racial othering subscale from the measure of racial authenticity assesses participants’ experiences of being othered by members of their

racial group. The subscale contains 6 items ($\alpha = .71$) consisting of statements such as, “I have been judged for not fitting in with other members of my group”. Participants were instructed to indicate their reactions to experiences they may have had with other members of their racial group. Possible scores on the measure range from 0 to 4: 0 (*This has never happened to me*), 1 (*This event happened, but did not bother me*), 2 (*This event happened & I was slightly upset*), 3 (*This event happened & I was upset*), and 4 (*This event happened & I was extremely upset*). Item responses were summed such that higher scores indicate more experienced stress from being othered. In the pilot study (Olaniyan & Taylor, 2021), items within this subscale demonstrated internal consistency ($\alpha = .82$). In the current study, racial othering was positively correlated with subscales in Utsey’s (1999) Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief.

Self-Esteem

Global self-esteem. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965). This measure is designed to assess participants’ self-worth and evaluate how they see themselves on a typical day. Participants responded to 10 items ($\alpha = .86$) such as, “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.” Item responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Scores across the items were averaged such that higher scores corresponded to higher, more positive self-esteem. In prior research, the RSE demonstrated test-retest reliability (Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .88 to .90) and was found to have convergent validity with the Single-Item Self-Esteem Scale (Robins et al., 2001). In Rosenberg’s (1965) initial validation of the scale,

the author found discriminant validity between the RSE scale and measures of anxiety ($r = -.65$), depression ($r = -.54$), and anomie ($r = -.43$).

Racial Socialization

Cultural pride teaching and preparation for bias. Hughes' (2003) Racial Socialization scale was utilized to measure participants' perceptions of their caregivers' race-related teachings and cultural practices. The measure contains three factors: cultural pride teaching, preparation for bias, and promotion of mistrust. In the current study, only cultural pride and preparation for bias were examined based on prior research linking the two socialization messages to self-esteem (Davis et al., 2017; Davis & Stevenson, 2006; Mohanty et al., 2007; Rivas-Drake et al., 2009). Cultural pride reinforcement is the extent to which parents educate their children about their family's racial and ethnic heritage while promoting pride in their racial group. This dimension also captures the degree to which parents teach their children about other ethnic groups' cultures and achievements. The scale includes 7 items ($\alpha = .85$) such as, "My family has talked to me about important people or events in my own racial groups' history". Preparation for bias assesses the degree to which parents prepare their children to face racism and equip them with coping skills to combat these experiences. The scale contains 5 items ($\alpha = .77$) such as, "My family has talked to me about how others may try to limit me because of my race". Items for the two scales were coded on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly agree*) then averaged to obtain scores for each subscale. Higher scores indicate more perceived racial socialization practices from participants' caregivers.

In the initial validation of the measure, Hughes (2003) reported internal consistency for both cultural pride teaching ($\alpha = .87$) and preparation for bias ($\alpha = .74$).

Racial Identity

Centrality and private regard. The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997) assesses participants' identification with their racial group through four dimensions: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology. The model is specifically designed to measure racial identity in African Americans and has been found to have stable test-retest reliability within each separate dimension (Scottham et al., 2008). In the current study, only two of the subscales were included: centrality and private regard. Centrality is defined as the importance of race to an individual's self-concept, while private regard is how positively or negatively an individual perceives other members of their race as well as how they feel about being a member of their racial group. The centrality subscale consists of 8 items ($\alpha = .78$) and includes statements such as, "I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people". For private regard, 6 items ($\alpha = .92$) construct the measure and contain statements such as, "I am happy that I am Black". The racial identity measure is coded on a 7-point Likert scale 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*) and each item is averaged within its respective subscale. Higher scores on the centrality subscale suggest that the participant identifies more with their race and higher scores for the private regard subscale indicates more positive feelings towards being Black.

Coping

Self-blame coping. The Brief COPE inventory (Carver, 1997) was included in the study to assess the extent to which participants utilize distinct coping strategies. While the measure is comprised of multiple scales, self-blame coping is the primary coping method of interest in the current study. This dimension contains two items ($\alpha = .82$) including, “I’ve been criticizing myself” and “I’ve been blaming myself for things that have happened”. Items were coded as the following: 1 (*I haven’t been doing this at all*), 2 (*I’ve been doing this a little bit*), 3 (*I’ve been doing this a medium amount*), and 4 (*I’ve been doing this a lot*). Scores are summed for each subscale with higher scores suggesting more use of that specific coping style. Therefore, higher scores would suggest a greater use of self-blame coping. The self-blame scale of the COPE-B has previously been found to have adequate internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha of .64 (Clements et al., 2004).

Procedures

Participants were recruited from a large, urban public university in the United States with a predominately White student population (56.8% White, 11.9% African American/Black). In order to participate in the study, participants needed to first self-identify as Black, African American, or Black biracial/multiracial. An additional participation requirement specified that participants had to be 18 years or older to enroll in the study. Eligible participants joined the study via Sona, an online psychology research participation system, and received 0.5 research credits for their participation. Sona redirected participants to the study’s questionnaire located in Qualtrics, an online survey tool. In compliance with the university’s Institutional Review Board policies, all

participants provided an electronic signature on a consent form prior to completing the questionnaire. In the consent form, participants were notified that they had the right to skip questions and withdraw from the study at any time. Thus, there were no forced response questions throughout the questionnaire. The average time to complete the questionnaire was 25.32 minutes ($SD = 16.03$). As a means of controlling for any priming effects due to the measurement order, demographic questions were displayed first followed by the two racial authenticity measures to encourage participants to think about their racial group while completing the survey. Following these two sections of the questionnaire, the remaining measures were displayed in the order in which they appear in Appendices D through K.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

In order to test the first hypothesis of the study, analyses were conducted in SPSS version 26 (IBM Corp, 2019) and consisted of an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to determine the factor structure of the racial authenticity measure. For the EFA, Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was used since it is a parsimonious method of factor extraction and yields the simplest factor structure necessary to produce adequate variance. A direct oblimin rotation, which assumes correlations among the factors, was used to obtain the factor loadings for each item. In the pilot study (Olaniyan & Taylor, 2021), twenty-two of the items were removed from the measure on the basis of low factor loadings or redundancy. An eigenvalue cut-off of 1.0 was used to retain two factors with 6 items each (see Appendix B). The remaining twelve items accounted for 56.05% of the cumulative variance in the measure. Sampling adequacy was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, which indicated sufficient adequacy at .84. Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(66) = 353.61, p < .001$, indicated that there were significant patterns among the items in the racial authenticity subscales. The first factor included items which indicated experienced stress from racial othering, whereas the second factor retained items related to one's perceived prototypicality to their racial group. Overall, the two dimensions demonstrated adequate internal reliability with Cronbach's alphas equal to .82 and .83 for racial othering and prototypicality, respectively.

In the present study, an additional EFA was conducted to validate the measure of racial authenticity by evaluating how well the two factors fit the hypothesized model (see Appendix B). For the measure of racial othering, the KMO test yielded sufficient adequacy at .72; and Bartlett's test suggested significant patterns in the data, $\chi^2 (15) = 162.80, p < .001$. One factor was extracted with items accounting for 42.38% of the variance in the measure. Factor loadings for the items were acceptable ranging from .46 to .73. An examination of the racial prototypicality measure was also conducted. The EFA suggested an adequate model, $KMO = .83, \chi^2 (15) = 265.39, p < .001$. Items loaded highly onto one factor, which accounted for 53.24% of the variance in the measure.

In addition to an EFA, a Confirmatory Factory Analysis (CFA) was performed to test the study's first hypothesis. For the CFA, robust maximum likelihood estimation was used to obtain model fit to adjust for a slight skew in the data. Conventionally, the overall fit of the model is determined using three tests (Stein et al., 2012): a chi-square test, a Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Model fit is considered acceptable when the chi-square test is non-significant, the CFI is above .90, and the RMSEA value is less than or equal to .06 (Stein et al., 2012). The analysis of the racial othering measure resulted in a good fit of the data, $\chi^2 (8) = 11.79, p = .16; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .06, 90\% CI [.00, .11]$. For the measure of racial prototypicality, the test resulted in a modest fit of the data, $\chi^2 (8) = 24.31, p = .002; CFI = 0.94; RMSEA = .12, 90\% CI [.07, .18]$. Although the CFI was acceptable, the significant chi-square test and high RMSEA suggest that the data has a poor fit in the current study.

In terms of data management, data were cleaned and checked for missing values for the variables of interest in the current study. Two participants were omitted from the study since they only completed the demographics section of the questionnaire. Five more participants were listwise deleted from the dataset due to high Mahalanobis scores ($p < .001$) on the two racial authenticity measures, which indicates that they were severe multivariate outliers. After the outliers were removed, 136 participants remained in the study. Within the sample, variables were examined for missing values. Six variables were missing less than 5% of datapoints. The variables with missing data were racial prototypicality, racial othering, private regard, centrality, preparation for bias, and self-esteem. The linear trend at point method of estimation was used to replace missing values with their predicted values (IBM Corp, 2019).

Tests of the multivariate assumptions were conducted, which included tests of normality, linearity, homogeneity, and homoscedasticity. The assumptions were met for all but one of the study variables. The average was low across scores on the measure of racial othering ($M = 6.03$; range = 1 to 16) and relatively high values tended to be outliers. Therefore, the racial othering measure was slightly skewed. However, the skew in the data was accounted for in subsequent analyses using robust maximum likelihood estimation. Table 2 illustrates the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables of interest in the current study. It is important to note that perceptions of racial prototypicality did not significantly correlate with self-blame coping ($r = .03, p = .77$) or self-esteem ($r = .09, p = .33$). However, racial othering did significantly correlate with both self-blame coping ($r = .21, p = .01$) and self-esteem ($r = -.24, p = .005$).

Table 2*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Racial prototypicality	2.96	.57	-											
2. Racial othering	6.04	3.19	-.04	-										
3. Family income	7.46	3.11	.06	.06	-									
4. Parents' race ^a	1.24	.43	-.16	-.06	-.18*	-								
5. Centrality	5.07	1.04	.25**	-.05	.04	-.22*	-							
6. Private regard	6.34	1.01	.18*	-.20*	.04	-.07	.52***	-						
7. Cultural pride teaching	2.98	.62	.16	-.05	.04	-.03	.36***	.37***	-					
8. Preparation for bias	3.16	.62	.10	-.03	.11	-.18*	.37***	.44***	.72***	-				
9. Same race friends	2.79	.90	.20*	-.01	-.04	-.32**	.33***	-.01	-.04	.02	-			
10. Different race friends	2.12	.80	-.16	.12	.08	.20*	-.30***	.001	.03	-.06	-.06	-.86***	-	
11. Self-blame coping	4.58	2.04	.03	.21*	-.06	-.07	-.06	.007	-.07	.00	-.10	.09	-	
12. Self-esteem	2.82	.59	.09	-.24**	.09	-.12	.18*	.21*	.15	.15	.13	-.11	-.47***	-

Note. *N* = 136.^a0 = monoracial, 1 = biracial/multiracial.**p* < .05 ***p* < .01 ****p* < .001.

Racial othering was also significantly correlated with private regard ($r = -.19, p = .02$), but not with any of the other hypothesized indicators of racial authenticity including family income ($r = .06, p = .49$), parents' race ($r = -.06, p = .48$), centrality ($r = -.51, p = .56$), cultural pride ($r = -.05, p = .57$), preparation for bias ($r = -.03, p = .70$), the number of same race friends ($r = -.13, p = .88$), and the number of friends of a different race ($r = .12, p = .17$). Moreover, an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether participants of mixed-race parentage ($n = 32$) had differential experiences of othering compared to participants with same race parents ($n = 104$). However, there was no significant difference between groups, $t(134) = .71, p = .48, d = .15$.

In terms of the relation between the hypothesized mediator and outcome variable, self-blame and self-esteem were significantly correlated ($r = -.47, p < .001$). Interestingly, self-blame coping did not significantly correlate with any of the hypothesized indicators of racial authenticity including family income ($r = -.06, p = .52$), parents' race ($r = -.06, p = .45$), centrality ($r = -.06, p = .46$), private regard ($r = .007, p = .94$), cultural pride ($r = -.07, p = .45$), preparation for bias ($r = .00, p = .99$), the number of same race friends ($r = -.10, p = .24$), and the number of friends of a different race ($r = .09, p = .32$). Moreover, self-esteem did not significantly correlate with family income ($r = .09, p = .30$), parents' race ($r = -.12, p = .17$), cultural pride ($r = .15, p = .08$), preparation for bias ($r = .15, p = .08$), the number of same race friends ($r = .13, p = .14$), and the number of friends of a different race ($r = -.11, p = .20$). Only centrality ($r = .18, p = .04$) and private regard ($r = .21, p = .02$) positively correlated with self-esteem. Davis et al. (2017) similarly found that self-esteem was significantly correlated with private regard ($r = .42, p < .001$) among

Black participants. Also consistent with their findings, there was not a significant association between self-esteem and cultural pride teaching ($r = .09, p > .05$) or preparation for bias ($r = -.15, p > .05$).

Primary Analyses

Prior to testing the second aim of the study, two competing models were compared in R Studio (R Core Team, 2017) to determine which had a better fit. The first model included eight hypothesized indicators of racial authenticity nested within four latent factors, which are variables that are not directly measured. The four latent factors included family demographics (income and parents' race), racial identity (centrality and private regard), racial socialization (cultural pride and preparation for bias), and the racial composition of participants' friend groups (same race and different race). The second model was tested using path analysis, a method of multiple regression, in which the eight indicators directly predicted racial othering. Table 3 displays the goodness-of-fit statistics for the two models. Overall, the latent model resulted in a poor fit, which suggests an inadequate representation of the hypothesized associations. In contrast, the path model yielded a good fit of the data. However, a chi-square difference test was computed to determine if there was a significant difference in fit between the latent and path models. The path model was found to have an overall better fit, and thus was probed for further interpretation. It is important to note that in retaining the path model, racial prototypicality did not demonstrate significant associations with the hypothesized mediator or outcome variable. Therefore, racial prototypicality was omitted from the path analysis since inclusion of this measure would result in a poor model fit.

Table 3*Fit Statistics for the Model with and without Latent Specification*

Model	Chi-square Test			CFI	RMSEA [90% CI]
	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>		
Latent Model	60.17	34	0.004	0.94	0.08 [0.04, 0.11]
Path Model	18.26	16	0.31	0.95	0.03 [0.00, 0.09]

Note. $N = 136$. CFI = comparative fit index. RMSEA = root mean square error of

approximation.

The results of the path analysis are presented in Table 4. For the second aim of the study, eight variables were included in the path model as direct predictors of racial othering. Notably, racial othering was negatively predicted by private regard ($b = -.83, p = .009$) and positively predicted by the number of friends of different races ($b = 1.55, p = .02$). Racial othering was not significantly predicted by centrality ($b = .18, p = .58$), cultural socialization ($b = -.11, p = .87$), preparation for bias ($b = .39, p = .56$), income ($b = .04, p = .64$), parents' race ($b = -.10, p = .89$), or same race friendships ($b = 1.10, p = .06$). Next, to examine the third hypothesis in which racial authenticity was predicted to self-esteem, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was conducted. In the OLS regression, experiences of racial othering did in fact predict lower self-esteem ($b = -.04, p = .005$).

Table 4*Path Analysis and Mediation Model*

Path	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)
<i>Direct Effects</i>	
Centrality → Othering	0.18 (0.33)
Private Regard → Othering	-0.83 (0.32)**
Cultural Pride → Othering	-0.11 (0.64)
Preparation for Bias → Othering	0.39 (0.66)
Income → Othering	0.04 (0.09)
Parents' Race ^a → Othering	-0.10 (0.67)
Same Race Friends → Othering	1.10 (0.59)
Different Race Friends → Othering	1.55 (0.64)*
Othering → Self-blame coping	0.14 (0.06)*
Othering → Self-esteem	-0.03 (0.02)
Self-blame → Self-esteem	-0.13 (0.02)***
<i>Indirect effect</i>	
Othering → Self-blame coping → Self-esteem	-0.02 (0.01)*
<i>Total effect</i>	
Othering → Self-blame coping → Self-esteem	-0.04 (0.02)**
<i>R</i> ²	
Othering	0.10
Self-blame	0.05
Self-esteem	0.24

Note. *N* = 136. *b* = unstandardized parameter estimate, *SE* = standard error.

^a0 = monoracial, 1 = biracial/multiracial.

p* < .05 *p* < .01 ****p* < .001.

In order to test the fourth hypothesis, self-blame coping was examined as a mediator of the association between racial othering and self-esteem. First, racial othering was examined as a predictor of self-blame coping. An individual's experienced stress from racial othering was significantly predictive of self-blame tendencies ($b = .14, p = .01$). Second, the direct effect of self-blame coping on self-esteem was tested. The analysis revealed that self-blame coping negatively predicted self-esteem ($b = -.13, p <$

.001). Given the significant direct effects, a test of the indirect effect was employed to assess the relation between racial othering and self-esteem through self-blame coping. The results revealed a significant indirect effect ($b = -.02, p = .02$), such that higher experienced stress from racial othering related to higher self-blame and, in turn, low self-esteem. Lastly, the total effect of racial othering on self-esteem through self-blame coping was also significant ($b = -.04, p = .008$), which accounted for 24% of the variability in self-esteem among the sample of Black college students. Taken together, these findings indicate a significant mediation effect of self-blaming coping on the relation between racial othering and self-esteem. The final path model depicting these associations is included in Appendix C.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This dissertation study served as an examination of racial authentication processes among Black college students within the context of a predominantly White 4-year university. Overall, the study's findings provide a novel framework for understanding racial authenticity through the validation of a quantitative measure of the construct. Moreover, the study demonstrated that experiences of racial othering were predicted only by lower private regard and a higher number of interracial friendships. In addition, racial othering predicted lower levels of self-esteem through higher self-blame. Implications for future research and interventions for Black PWI students are further discussed.

Constructing Black Authenticity

One of the important contributions of this study is the application of quantitative methods to conceptualize racial authenticity as defined by two measures: racial prototypicality and racial othering. This study supported findings from prior qualitative research (e.g., Cabinte, 2013; Goss et al., 2017; Harkness, 2012; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Maragh, 2017; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013) which observed that racial similarities and differences define what it means to be an authentic member of a racial group. Therefore, this study is one of the first of its kind to quantitatively assess the extent to which Black students perceive themselves as racially authentic. For the first hypothesis, it was predicted that racial authenticity would consist of two distinct variables: prototypicality and othering. This hypothesis was supported in that the two measures had good internal reliability and an overall adequate model fit. However, as

only the measure of racial othering was associated with the other variables of interest in the study, prototypicality was omitted from further analyses.

In omitting racial prototypicality from the study's analyses, the resultant path model yielded a good fit with implications for understanding experiences of racial othering among Black college students. However, removing racial prototypicality from the final model should not diminish its potential importance to conceptualizing racial authenticity. In the current study, racial prototypicality was not significantly correlated with self-blame coping or self-esteem. This finding would suggest a lack of association between prototypicality and the hypothesized mediator and outcome variable among the study's sample. Given the importance of correlations in SEM and path analysis (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010), including racial prototypicality in the model would have resulted in a specification error, in which the theoretical model does not fit the data. As such, the model was modified to produce an acceptable theoretical model of racial othering. Future research should further examine racial prototypicality and attempt to validate the model by replicating the study. Given that research has linked perceptions of prototypicality to self-esteem (Obst et al., 2011) and general psychological well-being (Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004; Smith, 2008), it is important to consider the degree to which perceived racial prototypicality relates to psychological health outcomes among Black college students beyond self-esteem. For instance, it would be interesting to examine whether racial prototypicality is associated with other indicators of poor well-being such as in-group isolation (Cabinte, 2013; Callaway, 2010; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013) and psychological distress (Smith, 2008).

Individual Differences in Racial Othering

In the second hypothesis, four indicators of racial authenticity were predicted to perceptions of racial authenticity: racial identity (centrality and private regard), racial socialization (cultural pride and preparation for bias), family demographics (income and parents' race), and the racial composition of one's friend group (predominantly the same race or a different race). In the initial latent model, this hypothesis was tested and resulted in a poor fit. As such, an alternate path model was tested with each of the eight variables directly predicting racial othering. Overall, the results of the path model only partially support the second hypothesis. Racial othering was predicted by only two of the hypothesized indicators; specifically, private regard and the number of friends of a different race. For private regard, there was a significant negative association with experiences of racial othering. Black college students who viewed their racial group more negatively experienced more stress from differential treatment by other Black people. This finding aligns with Sellers et al.'s (1997) conceptualization of private regard, which they suggest may impact one's in-group relationships, thereby diminishing their sense of belonging to their racial group.

Interestingly, the current study did not link centrality to perceptions of racial authenticity. It was predicted that racial identity would be defined by both private regard and centrality in relation to perceptions of racial authenticity. While the link to private regard was supported, a relation between centrality and racial othering was not found. This finding is not altogether surprising as research on this association has been limited to defining racial authenticity in terms of an individual's prototypicality to their racial group

(Chun, 2011; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Herman, 2010), rather than examining individuals' experiences of racial othering. In fact, there was a significant correlation between centrality and prototypicality within the current study, which may support this theory. Ultimately, it remains unclear whether centrality relates to racial othering. Additional research is needed to determine whether racial centrality has implications for this specific dimension of racial authenticity.

In a similar manner to centrality, the hypothesized dimensions of racial socialization did not significantly relate to perceptions of racial authenticity within the current study. Racial socialization, measured by cultural pride teaching and preparation for bias, was expected to positively predict perceptions of racial authenticity. However, there was no evidence of associations among the two racial socialization messages and the dimensions of racial authenticity. Overall, racial socialization messages were not strong predictors of racial authenticity within the current study. One possible explanation for this finding is that racial socialization messages received in early stages of development are not necessarily acted upon in emerging adulthood. Entrance into college may trigger a reevaluation of one's beliefs (Perry, 1999) and further exploration of one's racial identity (Schwartz et al., 2005), which may have a greater influence on race-related experiences. While Black college students within the current study reported receiving high levels of racial socialization from their caregivers, the study did not examine whether participants believed in the value of these messages or whether they utilized these messages to inform their social interactions. Thus, the racial socialization messages

that are learned in one's youth may have little to no impact on their experiences of racial othering while in college.

In terms of family demographics, no relation to racial othering was found for income or parents' race. It was expected that both factors would negatively relate to experienced stress from racial othering. This hypothesis was informed by qualitative research on social class (Bettie, 2000; Chun, 2011; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004) and multiracial outcomes (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013; Renn, 2008) in relation to perceptions of racial authenticity. First, Black students' family income was used as index of their social class given the documented conflation of race and wealth (Bettie, 2000; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). Specifically, authentic Blackness has been associated with lower income status. Within the current sample, the median household income was \$70-80k with about 2-3 people dependent on this income. When compared to the federal poverty level for a family of 3 at approximately \$22k (2020 Poverty Guidelines), the study's sample had a much higher family income. While the boundaries of social class are arbitrary, the study's sample is not likely to be considered low-income based on federal guidelines. It was expected that participants within the study's sample would experience more stress from racial othering due to their family's high income. However, no significant association was found.

For the second demographic factor, the race of one's parents was examined to determine whether multiracial individuals experienced differential perceptions of racial authenticity compared to monoracial students. The literature on multiracial identity

development highlights how mixed-race Black students may experience frequent challenges to their authenticity (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Museus et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2013; Renn, 2008). Even if a multiracial individual only identifies as Black, they may still experience authenticity questioning if others do not perceive them as Black. However, based on the test of differences between monoracial and multiracial students, it cannot be concluded that multiracial students experienced higher racial othering compared to monoracial students in the current study.

For the last hypothesis, it was predicted that the racial composition of Black students' friend groups would predict perceptions of authentic Blackness. Affiliations with other ingroup members have been documented as an important indicator of racial group embeddedness (Maragh, 2017). As such, individuals who have more Black friends and fewer friends outside of their race may be perceived as more authentic. However, the findings from the current study only partially supported this hypothesis. Interestingly, having a higher number of friends of a different race related to more racial othering. In contrast, having more of friends of the same race was not linked to racial othering. This finding may suggest that Black students who are perceived as having a low affinity for their racial group due to their interracial friendships may experience more stress from racial othering than individuals who are viewed as more embedded within their racial group.

Racial Othering, Self-Blame, and Self-Esteem

One of the primary aims of the current study was to improve our understanding of racial authenticity in relation to psychological well-being among Black college students.

To this end, the association between racial othering and self-esteem was tested within the current study such that experienced stress from racial othering was hypothesized to negatively predict self-esteem. Qualitative research demonstrates that Black students are inundated with a host of challenging race-related experiences throughout college (Cox, 2020), such as stigmatization (Cokley, 2003) and constrained identity construction (Nguyen & Anthony, 2014). These challenges may be particularly salient within the context of a PWI, in which Black students are faced with competing racialized expectations of their behavior from other Black students as well non-Black students and faculty (Cox, 2020; Smith, 2008). Thus, it remains an important task for research to examine the degree to which perceptions of authentic Blackness relate to psychological well-being.

Another contribution of the current study was the inclusion of an explanatory variable in the hypothesized relation between racial othering and self-esteem. Racial othering was found to relate to self-esteem through mediation by self-blame coping. Specifically, Black students who blamed themselves for challenges to their authenticity experienced lower self-esteem. This finding is supported by prior research which posits that individuals may blame themselves for their perceived inauthenticity (Spergel, 2007; Winkler, 2012), which in turn may result in low self-worth (Spergel, 2007). The study's finding is also in line with Graham's (1997) observation that individuals may be inclined to blame themselves for negative experiences related to their personal abilities and characteristics. It may be the case that Black students attributed incidents of racial othering to their perceived inability to demonstrate racially authentic characteristics.

However, it is important to note that this hypothesis was only partially supported since self-blame coping was not examined in relation to racial prototypicality. Despite this fact, the significant mediating effect of self-blame in the relation between racial othering and self-esteem has important implications for understanding perceptions of racial authenticity. Black PWI students within the study may have been particularly prone to blaming themselves for their experiences of racial othering, which in turn may have influenced their self-esteem.

Limitations of the Present Study

Limitation of the Model Specification

While interpreting the findings from the current study, it is important to acknowledge its limitations and areas for future research. Given that the latent model had a poor fit of the data, path analysis was used to test the study's hypotheses. While the path model had a better fit of the data compared to the latent model, the change in model specification influenced the interpretation of hypotheses and subsequent findings. Specifically, the hypothesized associations among the four latent factors and racial authenticity were respecified. Instead of estimating four paths from latent constructs to racial authenticity, the eight observed variables were directly estimated to racial othering. Despite the change in the model specification, it is important to note that the hypotheses remained grounded in theory on racial authenticity.

Regarding the poor fit of the latent model, it is important to consider what may have necessitated the change in the model specification. One possibility is due to a small sample size ($N = 136$). Kline (2016) recommends using a ratio of 20 observations for

each estimated parameter ($N:q$) in the model. This ratio would require 680 participants for the latent model ($q = 34$) and 320 participants for the simplified path model ($q = 16$). However, other researchers suggest that the ratio could be as low as 10 to 1 (Schreiber et al., 2006) or 5 to 1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987), which would only require a minimum of 160 or 80 participants for the path model, respectively. Despite the variability in the minimum recommended sample size, the literature suggests that the latent model within the current study was underpowered. However, the path model may have had sufficient power. In addition to the small sample size, it is also suspected that the latent model had a poor fit due to the use of only two observed variables. Research suggests that at least three indicators per latent variable are recommended for SEM to avoid having an underidentified model (Byrne, 2013; Kline, 2016). Therefore, the use of two observed variables for each latent factor may have posed constraints on the model. This explanation may be supported due to the fact that the simplified path model was found to have a better fit of the data. One major benefit of SEM is that hypotheses can be adjusted for models that have a poor fit (Hox & Bechger, 1999; Stein et al., 2012). Ultimately, the path model was retained and each hypothesis was interpreted for the eight indicators of racial othering.

Conceptual Limitations

In examining perceptions of racial authenticity, it is important to note that only one dimension of the measure was included in the final model. Racial prototypicality was omitted from the model since it did not significantly relate to self-esteem or self-blame coping. As such, a limited conceptual understanding of racial authenticity remains. In the

pilot study, the measure of racial authenticity was conceptualized as the perceived racial differences (othering) as well as the perceived similarities (prototypicality) of Black college students in relation to their racial group. In the current study, the discussion is primarily focused on racial othering. As such, this study presents a limited conceptual understanding perceptions of racial authenticity.

Throughout this discussion, racial othering is conceptualized as participants' experienced stress from mistreatment due to their perceived differences from their racial group. Notably, this measure does not assess the frequency of each negative experience, which may be beneficial in understanding the salience of each incident. Based on the findings from the current study, it is apparent that experiences of othering can be stressful among Black college students. However, it remains unclear as to whether certain experiences are more prevalent and appraised as more stressful than others among Black PWI students. By examining the frequency of each incident, future research can better understand whether individuals have differential responses to specific challenges to racial authenticity.

The selected measure of self-blame coping may also warrant further examination. The Brief COPE Inventory was ideal for the current study since each scale can be used separately (Carver, 1997). Notably, the scale for self-blame coping is useful in assessing the extent to which participants feel an internal sense of responsibility for their negative experiences. Additionally, this scale was selected based on prior research linking perceptions of racial authenticity to internalized self-blame (Allport, 1954; Fanon, 1968; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951; Pettigrew, 1964; Winkler, 2012). However, it is unclear as to

whether other coping styles relate to self-esteem among Black college students. Coping mechanisms such as behavioral disengagement may be important to examine since research has found that Black students may distance themselves from their racial group in response to racial othering (Harris & Khanna, 2010). While Carver (1997) notes that the inventory's scales should not be grouped into maladaptive coping styles, it may also be beneficial to examine whether other adverse coping mechanisms mediate the relation between racial othering and self-esteem.

Methodological Limitations

In addition to conceptual limitations, methodological issues to consider include the use of a convenience sample within the study. Participants were recruited online through a university's password-protected Psychology Research Participation System. As such, self-selection bias may have occurred. For instance, a majority of participants within the sample identified as female. Therefore, the results of the current study may not be generalizable to the experiences of all Black college students. In future work, it is important to include additional male participants. Furthermore, the study utilizes a cross-sectional research design, which prevents inference of the directional effects of each path estimate included in the model. Although private regard and the number of friends of a difference race were found to significantly predict racial othering, the inverse effect is also plausible. Future research may wish to employ a longitudinal design to examine racial authentication processes. In terms of data collection, it is also important to note that participants self-reported their experiences of racial othering. On average, participants reported low levels of othering while also reporting moderate levels of prototypicality.

Due to the likely inverse nature of prototypicality and othering, one might expect reports of othering to be higher than what was found in the study. One suspected reason for this finding is the order in which measures were presented within the questionnaire. As the measure of othering followed prototypicality, some participants may have been primed to underreport their experiences of othering to avoid presenting themselves as inauthentic.

Implications for Future Research

Despite the limitations, the present study has important implications for understanding racial authentication processes among Black college students. The study contributes novel findings linking experienced stress from racial othering to self-esteem. This link was mediated by self-blame coping, which further provides insight into racial authentication processes. In line with prior research (Allport, 1954; Fanon, 1968; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951; Pettigrew, 1964), racial authenticity may impact self-esteem through internalized beliefs of negative racial evaluations. The results of the current study illustrate how internalized self-blame may result as a coping mechanism in response to experiences of othering, which in turn may relate to low self-esteem. This finding depicts a troubling association between racial authenticity and psychological well-being among Black college students within the sample. When more experiences of racial othering occur, not only might some Black students develop a low self-worth, but they may also blame themselves for the negative treatment by their racial group. Future studies can build on these findings by identifying whether perceptions of racial authenticity relate to other psychological health outcomes among Black PWI students.

Additionally, the results of this investigation provide a meaningful insight into which factors Black college students attribute to their perceived racial differences. Attitudes and behaviors that were perceived as uncharacteristically Black were better indicators of racial othering than factors which emphasized racial similarities. Specifically, Black students who held more negative views of their racial group or who affiliated more with people outside of their race experienced more stress from racial othering. The results would thus suggest that Black students in the sample were keenly aware of how their differences influenced how they were treated by other Black people. Given that perceived racial inauthenticity has been shown to result in exclusion from Black spaces (Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Goss et al., 2017; Macdonald, 2000; Warikoo, 2007, 2011), it is important to identify which individuals may be most perceived as racially inauthentic and differently treated by their racial group. In evaluating racial authenticity, individuals often employ narrow definitions of Blackness (Harkness, 2012; Bulmer & Solomos, 1998; Warikoo, 2007, 2011). Unfortunately, the arbitrary boundaries of racial authenticity are ingrained within society and may pressure Black students to feign positive views about their race and avoid befriending people from other racial groups or risk exclusion from their racial group. However, maintaining a constant public image can be a significant source of stress for Black college students (Tatum, 2003). College is an important period of individual identity exploration (Cox, 2020), such that pressure to conform to social expectations can be detrimental to the process of identity development. PWIs may be able to use this insight into the experiences of Black college students to cultivate more inclusive campuses and promote diversity among students. As

Black college students are not monolithic, universities should aim to highlight the heterogeneity within this population, which may reduce the practice of racial othering. In doing so, PWIs may help foster a sense of belonging and promote positive psychological well-being among Black students by emphasizing the diversity of this group.

An important next step in understanding racial authentication processes is to further examine the contextual role of academic institutions in self-esteem development among Black students. As the study's sample was recruited at only one PWI, future investigations of racial authenticity may benefit from recruiting students from various academic institutions. For example, research by Cox (2020) demonstrates that social context can influence perceptions of racial authenticity. Within PWIs, the role of the social context is salient among Black students who may experience pressure to conform to perceptions of authentic Blackness from both Black and non-Black students. Given the salience of racial authenticity at PWIs, academic administrators in these spaces might consider providing students with resources that promote adaptive coping.

One point of interest that was not fully addressed in the current study is in relation to the source of racial othering among Black college students. For example, it would be beneficial to know whether peers, teachers, family members, or others initiated challenges to authenticity. In relation to context, it is important to determine whether racial othering is equally salient when received from Black vs non-Black people. Within one's racial group, there is the risk of social exclusion and isolation for being perceived as inauthentic (Cabinte, 2013; Callaway, 2010; Harris, 2017; Harris & Khanna, 2010). However, non-Black people can also assert their influence on a Black student's racial

authenticity. White teachers are notable authority figures in shaping Black students' views of authentic Blackness. For example, Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004) as well as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) found that White teachers engaged in othering by expressing disbelief when Black students had high academic performance. This research suggests that Black students may be aware of when they are not perceived as authentically Black by their White teachers, which demonstrates that non-Black people can delegitimize Black authenticity. Racial othering may not be an exclusive act perpetrated within groups, but rather individuals may receive challenges to their authenticity from people outside of their racial group. Additional research is necessary to better understand the roles of racial in-group and out-group members in influencing one's perceived racial authenticity.

Conclusion

The current study fills the gap in research on racial authentication processes by elucidating the role of racial othering in psychological well-being among Black PWI students. Challenges to racial authenticity may be a harmful practice that reinforces negative stereotypes about Black people. Authenticity questioning may also influence how Black students come to view themselves, which can be particularly detrimental during identity development. This study also supplements the current understanding of which factors may be most attributed to experiences of racial authenticity. Negative feelings about being Black and having more non-Black friends may be linked to more experienced stress from racial othering. Furthermore, the current study provides a novel

quantitative examination of racial authenticity, thereby facilitating research on a construct that has largely been studied using qualitative methods.

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Appendix A

PILOT RACIAL AUTHENTICITY MEASURE

The following statements involve how you see yourself and the racial/ethnic group to which you identify the most. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I dress similarly to others within my group.	1	2	3	4
2. I share similar tastes in cultural food as my group.	1	2	3	4
3. I participate in cultural festivals celebrating my group.	1	2	3	4
4. I listen to the same music as others within my group.	1	2	3	4
5. I receive compliments from other members of my group about my appearance.	1	2	3	4
6. I act a certain way around members of my group to fit in.	1	2	3	4
7. My hobbies and interests are similar to that of my group.	1	2	3	4
8. I use slang that is commonly spoken by my group.	1	2	3	4
9. I have been told that I speak differently from other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
10. I speak similarly to other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
11. Other people misidentify my race.	1	2	3	4
12. I am easily identified as a member of my group.	1	2	3	4

13.	I am treated differently by my group because of the color of my skin.	1	2	3	4
14.	People tell me that my skin tone looks different compared to others in my group.	1	2	3	4
15.	My family's financial situation is similar to most others in my group.	1	2	3	4
16.	I feel that I am treated differently by my group because of my family's financial situation.	1	2	3	4
17.	I have been criticized by other members of my group because of where I was raised.	1	2	3	4
18.	I feel judged by others because of my family's financial situation.	1	2	3	4
19.	I support a political party that is favored by my group.	1	2	3	4
20.	I feel that I am treated differently by my group because of my political views.	1	2	3	4
21.	My political views are different from that of my group.	1	2	3	4
22.	I favor political candidates who are popular among my group.	1	2	3	4
23.	I get along well with other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
24.	I feel judged for not fitting in with other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
25.	I feel like I fit in with other members of my group.	1	2	3	4

26.	Other members of my group avoid hanging out with me.	1	2	3	4
27.	I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own racial/ethnic group.	1	2	3	4
28.	I prefer dating people who are the same race/ethnicity as me.	1	2	3	4
29.	I feel a connection to other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
30.	I have more things in common with people inside of my group rather than people outside of my group.	1	2	3	4
31.	People comment on how different I am from other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
32.	I feel that I am a typical member of my group.	1	2	3	4
33.	My experiences in life are similar to people who are the same race/ethnicity as me.	1	2	3	4
34.	I feel like I do not represent my group.	1	2	3	4

Appendix B

EFA FOR THE RACIAL AUTHENTICITY SCALE

	Pilot Study (<i>N</i> = 76)		Current Study (<i>N</i> = 136)	
	1 Racial Othering	2 Racial Prototypicality	1 Racial Othering	2 Racial Prototypicality
1. I am treated differently by my group because of the color of my skin.	.64		.53	
2. I have been criticized by other members of my group because of where I was raised.	.68		.60	
3. I feel judged by others because of my family's financial situation.	.64		.48	
4. I feel that I am treated differently by my group because of my political views.	.70		.46	
5. I feel judged for not fitting in with other members of my group.	.54		.73	
6. People comment on how different I am from other members of my group.	.66		.52	
7. I dress similarly to others within my group.		-.74		.62
8. I listen to the same music as others within my group.		-.68		.64
9. I use slang that is commonly spoken by my group.		-.72		.58
10. I speak similarly to other members of my group.		-.58		.74
11. I have more things in common with people inside of my group rather than people outside of my group.		-.69		.68
12. I feel that I am a typical member of my group.	.46	-.43		.73

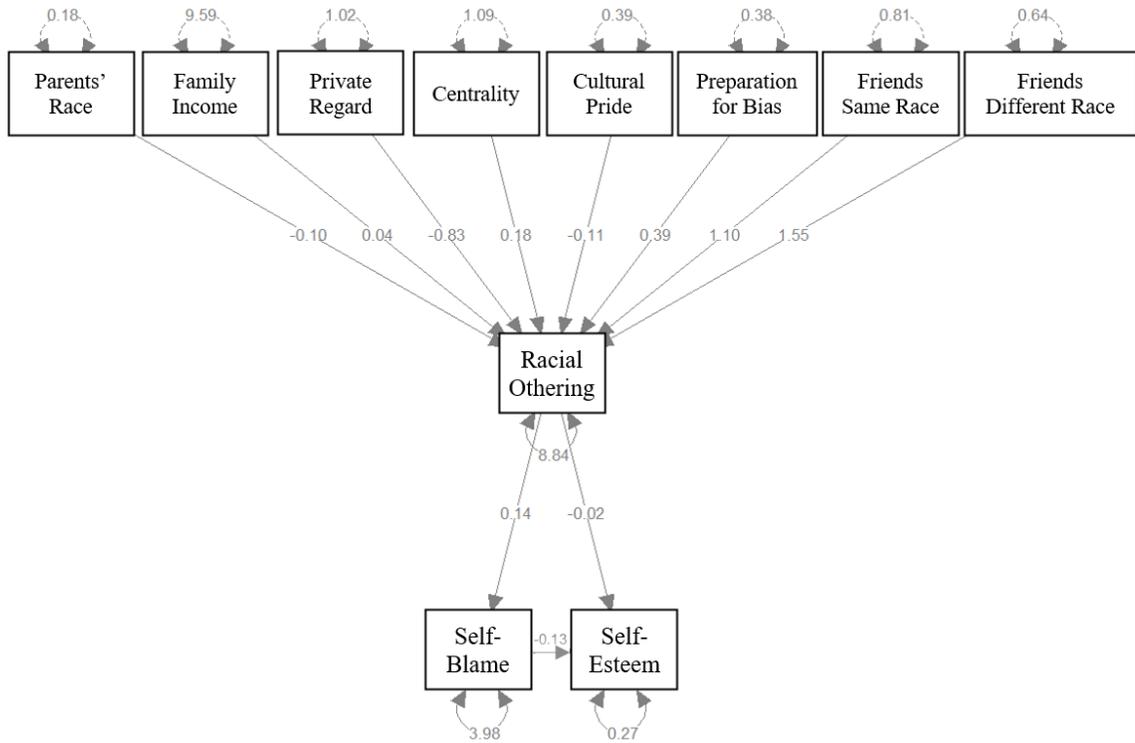
Note. Factor loadings below .30 were suppressed from the table. The extraction method

selected was principal axis factoring with an oblique (direct oblimin) rotation.

Appendix C

FINAL PATH MODEL

Path Model for Othering, Self-Blame Coping, and Self-Esteem among Black College Students



Note. Path analysis for self-blame coping mediating the relation between othering and self-esteem. Dotted double-headed arrows represent the residuals for the eight indicators of othering. Solid double-headed arrows illustrate the error terms for othering, self-blame coping, and self-esteem. Straight single-headed arrows indicate the unstandardized path estimates. For covariances of the exogenous variables, covariances were included in the model, but omitted from the path diagram for simplicity.

Appendix D

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Ronald D. Taylor, Ph.D., Psychology Department, Temple University, rdtaylor@temple.edu

Student Investigator: Motunrayo Olaniyan, Psychology Department, Temple University, molaniyan@temple.edu

The purpose of this study is to understand the kinds of racial stressors that Black college students may experience while on a college campus, the kind of support systems they may have both at college and at home, and how they cope with daily stressors. Your participation in this study will provide valuable information about how young adults navigate changing racial climates while attending college. The study consists of an online questionnaire containing demographic questions about yourself and your parents, guardians, or caregivers. You will be asked about your experiences related to your racial group and how you feel about being a member of your racial group. We expect that taking part in this research study will take approximately 30 minutes.

The data that you provide will be recorded anonymously. Anything you note on your survey will be held in the strictest of confidence. Also, while we will keep your answers private, you are not required to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. Your participation in the study is on a voluntary basis, and you may refuse to participate at any time without consequences or prejudice. That is, you can agree to participate in the questionnaire and later change your decision at any point. Your decision will not be held against you.

Although the study team has placed safeguards to maintain the confidentiality of your personal information, there is always a potential risk of an unpermitted disclosure. To that degree, all documents and information pertaining to this research study will be kept confidential, unless required by applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations to be disclosed. By agreeing to participate, you understand the following conditions: the records and data generated by the study may be reviewed by Temple University and its agents, the study sponsor or the sponsor's agents (if applicable), and/or governmental agencies to assure proper conduct of the study and compliance with regulations. Also,

the results of this study may be published. If any data is published, you will not be identified by name.

The risks associated with the study procedures may include psychological discomfort when completing this online questionnaire. As a benefit, **students will receive 0.5 SONA credits for participation in this study**. Your participation can help researchers better understand students' perceptions about race and whether these perceptions relate to one's racial identity.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think this research has hurt you or made you sick, talk to the research team at the emails listed above.

This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board ("IRB"). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies. You may talk to them at (215) 707-3390 or irb@temple.edu if:

- You have questions, concerns, or complaints that are not being answered by the research team.
- You are not getting answers from the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone else about the research.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.

By selecting the first box below, you are indicating that you are **18 years or older, identify as Black or African American**, have read and understood the contents of this Consent Form, and that you agree to take part in this study.

- By selecting this box, I **agree** to participate in this study.
- By selecting this box, I **decline** to participate in this study.

Appendix E

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Date of birth: mm/dd/yyyy

2. What is your class year?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- 5th year or higher

3. Were you born in the United States?

- Yes

3a. Which region of the United States do you consider home?

- Northeast
- Midwest
- Southeast
- Southwest
- West

- No

3b. In which country were you born?

3c. At what age did you arrive in the United States?

3d. How long have you lived in the United States?

4. What is your current living situation?

- Dorm/on-campus housing
- Living with significant other off campus
- Living alone off campus
- Living with family at home
- Living with roommates off campus

5. Do you speak any language(s) other than English at home? If so, please list them.

- No
- Yes (Please specify in the space below)

6. Please select the race/ethnicity of your biological mother.

- Biracial or Multiracial
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Middle Eastern or North African
- I don't know

7. Please select the race/ethnicity of your biological father.

- Biracial or Multiracial
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Middle Eastern or North African
- I don't know

8. What is your gender identity?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- I prefer to describe myself as... (Please specify in the space below)

9. What is your marital status?

- Single, never married
- Domestic partnership
- Engaged
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

10. Were you adopted?

- Yes
 - 10a. Is your adoptive family the same race as you?
 - Yes
 - No
- No

11. Who raised you?

- Grandparents
- Aunts/Uncles
- Both parents
- Mother only
- Father only
- Foster parents/homes
- Other

12. What is your male caregiver's (father, grandfather, uncle, etc.) highest level of education?

- Less than High School
- High School or GED
- Some college
- Associate Degree (2 years)
- Bachelor's Degree (4 years)
- Some Graduate School
- Graduate or Professional Degree (MA, MD, Ph.D.)
- I don't know
- I don't have a male caregiver

13. What is your female caregiver's (mother, grandmother, aunt, etc.) highest level of education?

- Less than High School
- High School or GED
- Some college
- Associate Degree (2 years)
- Bachelor's Degree (4 years)
- Some Graduate School
- Graduate or Professional Degree (MA, MD, Ph.D.)
- I don't know
- I don't have a female caregiver

14. What is your family's total household income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$19,999
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

15. How many people (including children) are financially dependent on this income?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- More than 6

16. How many of your closest friends are the **same race** as you?

- None
- Some
- Most
- All

17. How many of your closest friends are a **different race** from you?

- None
- Some
- Most
- All

Appendix F

RACIAL AUTHENTICITY SCALES

Racial Prototypicality

The following statements involve how you see yourself and your racial group. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I dress similarly to others within my group.	1	2	3	4
2. I listen to the same music as others within my group.	1	2	3	4
3. I use slang that is commonly spoken by my group.	1	2	3	4
4. I speak similarly to other members of my group.	1	2	3	4
5. I have more things in common with people inside of my group rather than people outside of my group.	1	2	3	4
6. I feel that I am a typical member of my group.	1	2	3	4

Appendix G

RACIAL AUTHENTICITY SCALES PART 2

Racial Othering

Below is a list of experiences you may have had with other members of your racial group. For each experience, please indicate the reaction you had to the event at the time it happened.

	This has never happened to me	This event happened, but did not bother me	This event happened & I was slightly upset	This event happened & I was upset	This event happened & I was extremely upset
1. I was treated differently by my group because of the color of my skin.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I have been criticized by other members of my group because of where I was raised.	0	1	2	3	4
3. I have been judged by others because of my family's financial situation.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I have been treated differently by my group because of my political views.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I have been judged for not fitting in with other members of my group.	0	1	2	3	4
6. People comment on how different I am from other members of my group.	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix H

SELF-ESTEEM MEASURE

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.	1	2	3	4
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4
7. At times I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4
9. I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4
10. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4

Appendix I

RACIAL SOCIALIZATION MEASURE

Here are questions about the people who raised you. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My family has talked to me about important people or events in the history of different ethnic groups other than my own.	1	2	3	4
2. My family has encouraged me to read books about other ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4
3. My family has talked to me about important people or events in my own racial groups' history.	1	2	3	4
4. My family has talked to me about discrimination against people of different races other than my own.	1	2	3	4
5. My family has explained something on television that showed discrimination against my racial group.	1	2	3	4
6. My family has talked to me about discrimination against people of my race.	1	2	3	4
7. My family has done or said things to show that all people are equal regardless of race.	1	2	3	4
8. My family has talked to me about how others may try to limit me because of my race.	1	2	3	4
9. My family tells me that I must be better than other people in order to get the same rewards because of my race.	1	2	3	4
10. My family has told me that race/ethnicity is an important part of self.	1	2	3	4
11. I have overheard my family talk about discrimination with someone else.	1	2	3	4
12. My family has talked to me about unfair treatment due to race.	1	2	3	4

Appendix J

RACIAL IDENTITY MEASURE

For the following questions, think about your own race or ethnicity and indicate to what degree you agree/disagree with the following statements about your race.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I have a strong attachment to other Black people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I feel good about Black people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I am happy that I am Black.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. I often regret that I am Black.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I am proud to be Black.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix K

BRIEF COPE INVENTORY

People have unique ways of dealing with stress in their life. Below are a number of statements that describe how some people react when dealing with stressful situations. Please indicate to the extent to which you engage in these behaviors when something is stressing you out. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others.

	I haven't been doing this at all	I've been doing this a little bit	I've been doing this a medium amount	I've been doing this a lot
1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.	1	2	3	4
2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.	1	2	3	4
3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real."	1	2	3	4
4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.	1	2	3	4
5. I've been getting emotional support from others.	1	2	3	4
6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it.	1	2	3	4
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.	1	2	3	4
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.	1	2	3	4
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.	1	2	3	4
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people.	1	2	3	4
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.	1	2	3	4
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	1	2	3	4
13. I've been criticizing myself.	1	2	3	4
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.	1	2	3	4
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.	1	2	3	4

16.	I've been giving up the attempt to cope.	1	2	3	4
17.	I've been looking for something good in what is happening.	1	2	3	4
18.	I've been making jokes about it.	1	2	3	4
19.	I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.	1	2	3	4
20.	I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.	1	2	3	4
21.	I've been expressing my negative feelings.	1	2	3	4
22.	I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.	1	2	3	4
23.	I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.	1	2	3	4
24.	I've been learning to live with it.	1	2	3	4
25.	I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.	1	2	3	4
26.	I've been blaming myself for things that happened.	1	2	3	4
27.	I've been praying or meditating.	1	2	3	4
28.	I've been making fun of the situation.	1	2	3	4