

Going Solo as a Black Representative

by

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Abstract

Black/African American individuals often find themselves in social situations where they are the only person of their race present, also known as solo status. This study investigated whether African Americans/Black individuals felt an obligation to represent their race when placed in solo status situations. In addition, participants' racial identity was measured to determine if it would influence obligation to represent race and felt state anxiety after the analogue experimental exposure to a vignette featuring different numbers of Black individuals in the room. Participants were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 vignettes that either stated that they were the only Black individual in a room of a White people (solo status situation), 1 of 2 Black people in a room of White people, or in a room with an evenly distributed proportion of Black and White individuals. Pictures were provided illustrating the number of Black and White individuals in the room to accompany the written vignettes; however, participants were not asked to imagine that they were one of the people pictured in the room. Results showed that racial identity did not have a significant relationship with obligation to represent or state anxiety. Exposure to the solo status vignette did not produce higher state anxiety compared to the other two vignettes nor did it illustrate a significant relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent one's race. Furthermore having a stronger familial connection did not result in a stronger obligation to represent. However, a partial correlation did show that participants with higher trait anxiety, in general, felt more obligated to represent their race. Implications for future research are discussed.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

From the time of the Civil Rights Movement and the era of Jim Crow laws, African Americans have struggled for equal rights within society (Urofsky, 2015). As movement toward equality has seen much progress, there is still some progress to be made (Dutton, De Pinto, Salvanto, & Backus, 2014). However, one must wonder how these bouts for civil liberties have affected the African American community (Dutton, et. al., 2014). African Americans have been the topic of many psychological studies surrounding intellect (Franklin, 2007), performance within the academic and work environment (Kanter, 1977; Niemann, & Dovidio, 1998), and even collectivistic thinking (Nilsson, Paul, Lupini, & Tatem, 1999). The writer views each of these studies as having placed, whether intentionally or not, Black individuals in the position of representing their race for scientific purposes. However, limited research exists on African Americans and their experiences with feeling obligated to represent their ethnicity outside of academia and business settings. More specifically there is a lack of research on the desire or obligation to represent one's ethnicity among the African American population or one's racial group among the Black community in social settings. Although the term Black refers to racial identity and the term African American refers to ethnic identity, I will use both racial and ethnic identity interchangeably because there are shared experiences among the two groups and they are often used interchangeably in the literature (Douglas, Wang, & Yip, 2016; Phinney, 1990).

This dissertation explored two questions: (1) Do African Americans feel obligated to represent their race in everyday life? and (2) Does emotional distress result from the felt obligation of some African Americans to represent their racial group in everyday life? Whether it is a positive or negative representation based on societal standards, the fact that people may feel

a responsibility to represent their racially-identified group is the primary focus of this dissertation. This chapter covers a general overview of the literature, the purpose of this project, the writers' hypothesis with an operational definition, and finally an explanation of the topic's relationship to counseling psychology. To begin, I first provide a general overview into the research on stereotype threat and the influence it has on racial minorities' psychological well-being. Further into the dissertation, I discuss areas related to the research question such as solo status, tokenism, family literature, collective thinking, and racial identity. These areas have been deemed important because they all surround the topic of representation of race, such that they may help provide a context to understand why the desire, or sometimes real or perceived obligation, to racially represent may exist and how it can affect the African American community.

The interest in this topic emerged when the writer was as a doctoral practicum student working with a client who was developing her cultural identity at a primarily White institution. Sessions with this individual struck a chord when my client was exploring her own cultural identity development. My client's self-exploration into her racial identity revived personal memories of when I too was going through the process of exploring my racial and cultural identity in a predominately White school and in social settings. Personal and professional experiences have led the focus of this dissertation to be on African-American experiences when they are the only member of their race within a social situation or context and the psychological impact that this status has on their social interactions with others in relation to their racial identity. There are several areas within the literature that focus on multiple aspects surrounding this concept, among which include stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), tokenism (Rose & Firmin, 2013), solo status (Sekaquaptewa, Waldman, & Thompson, 2007), family literature

(Pollock, Kazman, & Deuster, 2015), group literature (Waldman, 2004), and racial identity (Tatum, 2004).

In 1995, a series of studies were conducted by Steele and Aronson on the theory of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Steel and Aronson investigated the effects that stereotype threat, or the fear of confirming the negative stereotype associated with one's race, had on African-American individuals in relation to test performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). There were four separate studies looking at the relationship of stereotype threat and performance among White and African American participants on an intellectual test (it should be noted that although there is a mix of identities, the writer of this dissertation is doing so intentionally to be consistent with the terms used by the original authors of this study; Steele & Aronson, 1995). It was hypothesized that African Americans would perform worse on intellectual tasks compared to their White counterparts due to the experience of anxiety of confirming negative stereotypes associated with their racial group and intelligence (Steele & Aronson, 1995). More specifically, a popular negative stereotype is that African Americans are unintelligent (Harmon, 2013), and as a result, the target of that negative label may internalize the message and ultimately perform worse on a scholastic test (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Steele and Aronson (1995) ultimately concluded that stereotype threat affects African Americans, yet did not affect White participants (Steele & Aronson, 1995). They found that making African Americans aware of negative stereotypes, by focusing on stereotypes surrounding the racial group's intellectual ability, had the effect of decreasing Black participants' performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Black participants in the study expecting to take a difficult test that served as a diagnostic of their ability showed greater concern about their ability. They had a greater tendency to make excuses concerning their performance prior to the test, and

showed greater reluctance to having their racial identity linked to their performance as well (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Finally, their study showed that priming racial identity by having participants indicate their race even when the test was not diagnostic of their intellectual ability impaired Black participants' performance on their verbal tests (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Since this study, several other researchers have conducted studies on stereotype threat among other populations (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014; Dee, 2014; Franceschini, Galli, Chiesi, & Primi, 2014) and have also shown the effects of stereotype boost.

Conditions designed to alleviate stereotype threat improved the performance of African American participants in Steel and Aaronson's (1995) study. This alleviation of the threat is known as stereotype boost (Johns, Inzlicht, & Schmader, 2008). Stereotype boost is defined as the improved performance of an individual due to the exposure to positive stereotypes about their social group (Gaither, Remedios, Schultz, & Sommers, 2015). This can be confused with stereotype lift, which is the improvement in performance as a result from exposure to negative stereotypes about another group (Walton & Cohen, 2003). If stereotype threat is not alleviated, cognitive functioning and memory can be impaired. An individual's cognitive functioning and memory can also be affected if they are the only person of their social group present in the room which does not necessarily require that person to be targeted by a performance relevant stereotype (Steel & Aronson, 1995).

Another area of research that focuses on being a representative of one's social group is tokenism. In 1977, the term tokenism was introduced in a field study that examined women who worked in an organization where they comprised only 10% of the total work force (Kanter, 1977). Kanter defined tokenism as a situation in which members of a social group constitute less than 15% of the individuals present in a group setting. Tokenism can also be referred to as

symbolic action commonly shown in the recruitment of a small group of people from marginalized groups to give the appearance of equality (Tokenism, n.d). An example of this phenomenon is workplace settings where a racial minority is hired in order to meet a company quota to prevent social criticism about inequitable treatment of marginalized groups.

The study of tokenism revealed that women in a men-dominated workplace setting tend to feel highly visible, stereotyped, encapsulated as well as feel like they are viewed as representatives of other women and/or contrasted with other members of their work environment (Kanter, 1977). Although Kanter's work was on gender in the workplace setting, tokenism was found to generalize to racial minorities (Kelly, 2007). The writer assumes that Kanter's work could also generalize to racial minorities in other settings as well, such as social settings. An example of this concept in a social setting is an African American who is invited to rush in a predominately White sorority or fraternity and recognizes that he or she is the sole member of his or her group. Soon the pressure to preform or alter one's actions to fit within the setting are enhanced because of an individual's saliency and knowledge that he or she may have been invited only as a representative for his or her marginalized group (Johnson, Thoits, & Taylor, 1995). The study of tokenism has extensive research mostly in the areas of business and school environments (Johnson, et al., 1995; Kelly, 2007), where racial and gender minorities report experiencing behavior-altering situations that cause psychological distress (Johnson, et al., 1995).

Similar to tokenism, another area of study known as solo status concerns racial minorities who may exhibit self-altering behaviors and psychological distress when placed in settings where they are the only members of their race. Thus, the concept of solo status is defined as a situation that occurs when a member of a certain social category, such as gender or race, is the only

member of that minority group within a group setting (Lord & Saenz, 1985). The difference between solo status and tokenism is that solo status involves being the only member of one's social group in a group setting, whereas tokenism involves the choice from an organization to include an individual from an underrepresented group into their party as a symbol of equality (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998). However, it has been noted that someone who is in a solo status situation can be viewed as having the token status (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998).

Studies show that racial minorities are more likely to experience solo status situations and are more likely to experience increased scrutiny during the situation (Johnson & Richeson, 2009). Key findings also include that solo status may often cause African Americans to report “higher levels of racial awareness, accountability to help members of their own group to succeed, and responsibility to represent their race” (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). The awareness of their solo status can prove burdensome as demands of self-presentation may increase (Johnson & Richeson, 2009). Solo status may also disrupt cognitive functioning resulting in learning and performance deficiencies (Johnson & Richeson, 2009; Sekaquaptewa, et al., 2007). Although much of the research has focused on the psychological and learning repercussions of solo status, there are some reports on individuals altering their behavior, like the vocabulary usage in their speech or articles of clothing, when they are the only member of their race in a social setting (Johnson, Gamst, Meyers, Arellano-Morales, & Shorter-Gooden, 2016). Findings have shown that African American women in particular tend to report more experiences with shifting or self-altering strategies. Examples of self-altering strategies would include changing the tone of their voice or altering their hair style, in order to fit in with the perceived demands of their social situation (Johnson et al., 2016). Although, solo status research has not focused primarily on African American women, it is included in the dissertation discussion because the research on

shifting relates closely with the study of solo status and behaviors experienced by African Americans due to solo status situations.

In a study on shifting, or “self-altering strategies,” researchers discovered that African American women tend to alter their demeanor, clothing, and speech to adapt to the perceived expectations of their social environment (Johnson et al., 2016). Reports revealed that the women who showed higher levels of acculturation also exhibited greater levels of shifting. Although limited, findings indicated that there is research showing that some African Americans feel a pressure to present themselves in a way where they are either representing their entire ethnic group or attempting to adapt to their surroundings in order to deflect racist or sexist attitudes (Johnson et al., 2016). For instance, if there is one Black individual in a group of White individuals, such as at a party, that person may feel a pressure to make sure that her dress, speech, or demeanor is presented in a way that she considered appropriate in representing her racial group. Alternatively, that individual may also feel the desire to represent her identified racial group because she believes the dominant racial group has that expectation. In the hopes of meeting the standards set before them by individuals perceived as important social figures, expectations can cause people to alter their behavior and experience psychological distress (Johnson et al., 2016).

Another area of literature that focuses on how expectations from important social figures alter human behavior comes from the field of family systems. The family system is documented as the most significant socialization agent for adolescents who are developing their identity (Townsend & Lanphier, 2007). Strong family relationships are often cited as being a cornerstone element within the African American culture (Brooks, 2015). Due to the emphasis on strong family ties, numerous studies show that members within the family system heavily influence

how familial members are expected to behave within the family system and outside of it as well (Brooks, 2015). A common message found throughout the family systems literature is that family members are expected to represent their family, race, gender, religion and more (Harmon, 2013). Chapter 2 provides additional information about the family systems literature that provides support for the notion that family experiences and expectations can influence African Americans and how it ties into representing one's race.

To improve understanding of the influences on behavioral changes among African Americans within social situations, one must look at cultural literature that focuses on collectivistic cultures and how individuals within those cultures relate to one another. Throughout the literature there are many studies that document how individuals interact, understand, and perceive themselves (Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995; McCombs, 1985; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). People around the world tend to govern their lives and interactions with others based on their belief system which is often heavily influenced by societal ideals (Komarraju & Cokley, 2008). These societal ideals generally abide by either an individualistic or collectivistic worldview where importance is either placed on being independent or being part of a larger group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is known as the study of individualism-collectivism (Komarraju & Cokley, 2008). Individualism-collectivism is characterized as a fundamental difference in a cultural group's beliefs, norms, roles, and values, along with how individuals understand their interpersonal relationships (Komarraju & Cokley, 2008). An example of a more collectivistic culture is Japan whereas the United States has a more individualistic culture (Takano & Osaka, 2018). Although individualism-collectivism is often generalized to entire countries, it is also important to understand that social identities vary among

different social groups within countries such as the United States where African Americans report greater collectivistic values than White individuals (Hunter, 2008).

The collectivistic values largely shared within the African American community may help explain why some African Americans may have a desire to represent their race. Studies show that when race becomes more central to an African American individual's self-identity it can create an increased collective self-construal, which can also make an individual feel accountable for their group (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007). When an individual feels responsibility for their social group they may have a desire to represent their social group in a light they deem appropriate and favorable (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). A person with an individualistic orientation, for example, would view her actions as a representation of herself compared to an individual with collectivistic orientation who would think of her behaviors as a representation of members within her community (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The final piece in understanding why the sense of obligation to represent one's race may exist lies in the understanding of racial identity. Since race can be central to a person's self-identity, it becomes vital for that person to understand the concept of racial identity and how that identity can affect his or her behaviors and interactions with others (Douglas, Mirpuri, & Yip, 2016). Racial identity is defined as a sense of belonging to a group or having a collective identity based on an individual's perception that she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1990). The term ethnic identity refers to the degree to which an individual is affiliated with his/her ethnic group through the process of exploration and commitment to that identity (Brown et al., 2014).

According to Cross' model there are five stages, which were later condensed to four after combining stages four and five in 1991, of racial developmental that can occur within the Black

community (Cross, 1991). These five stages are identified as pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Cross, 1991), all of which are theorized to influence individual's beliefs and actions (Helms, 1990; Tatum, 2004). It is theorized that an African American idealize White culture and disapprove of Black culture in the first stage until the individual moves on to the second stage where they experience some form of rejection by the dominant culture (Cross, 1991). The third stage generally involves a change in the actions and beliefs of an African American/Black individual derived from the way that a person thinks an "authentically" Black person is supposed to behave, dress, or speak (Cross, 1991). Finally, the fourth stage is an emergence from the third stage where a forming of relationships across racial divides occurs and the individual can see flaws and positives in both cultures (Cross, 1991). Forming a racial identity is a personal process that develops across time (Ritchey, 2014), and it is not known or expected to be a linear process (Cross, 1991). During the racial identity developmental process, it can be argued that when Blacks experience a desire to grow closer to their racial identity they may also experience a stronger desire to represent their race as well.

Rationale

The purpose of this research is to expand on the literature mentioned above pertaining to concepts such as racial identity, solo status, token situations, and stereotype threat. This dissertation topic closely aligns with the study of solo status, and although much of the research conducted on solo status situations occurs in academic and work place settings, this writer hopes to expand the focus to general social settings. Some examples of the social setting focus could include a Black individual as the only member of her racial group in a wedding, an honor society, graduation class, party, sorority, and even with a group of friends at dinner. For the sake

of this dissertation one social setting was focused on, namely a party at a friend's house. The writer also assumed that people have a desire to represent their identified social group whether it is a positive or a negative representation according to societal standards. The following questions were also researched: Does being the only African American in a social context increase the feeling of obligation to represent? Would Black/African American people feel less obligated to represent their race if there are more Black individuals in the same social context? Is the obligation to represent race moderated by racial identity or anxiety?

Hypotheses

1. In solo status situations (social situations in which they are the only African American/Black individual present) African-American/Black individuals with a stronger racial identity will feel a greater obligation to represent their race than will individuals with a weaker racial identity.
2. The solo status condition will create more psychological effects than the 50-50 condition in the form of increased state anxiety.
 - a. African American/Black individuals exposed to solo status via a vignette will have higher levels of state anxiety than will individuals exposed to vignettes in which there are 2 African American/Black individuals present or in which the vignette shows an even split of African American/Black and White people present.
 - b. The effect of exposure to the solo status vignette on level of state anxiety will be significant after controlling for trait anxiety.

3. Among African American/Black participants exposed to the solo status vignette, the relationship between racial identity and state anxiety will be mediated by obligation to represent.
 - a. Racial identity will predict state anxiety for this subgroup (solo status condition) such that stronger racial identity will correlate with higher levels of state anxiety.
 - b. The relationship between racial identity and state anxiety will be accounted for by the extent to which participants feel the obligation to represent.
4. African American/Black participants with higher levels of trait anxiety will feel a greater obligation to represent their race.
5. It is expected that the effect of trait anxiety on obligation to represent will be moderated by solo status.
 - a. The relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent will be stronger for individuals exposed to the solo status vignette than those exposed to the vignette with two African American/Black individuals.
 - b. The relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent will be stronger for individuals exposed to the solo status vignette than those exposed to the vignette where half of the individuals present identify as African American/Black.
6. It is expected that African Americans with a strong sense of familial connection will have a stronger desire to represent their race.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore areas of research that would help answer questions about whether African Americans feel the obligation to represent their race within social context when they are the only member of their race present. The literature is limited in an existing operational definition for the phenomenon that I am referring to as obligation to represent one's race; however, the closest research to this topic lies in the literature based on stereotype threat and solo status. The phrase to best describe this research is "Black/African American obligation to represent race," which can be defined as a tendency for Black/African American individuals to feel a responsibility or compulsion to represent their race when placed in social situations where they are the only member of their racial group present. As discussed in Chapter 1, African Americans' desire to represent their race relates to multiple areas of research. These areas of research include the empirical examination of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), tokenism (Rose & Firmin, 2013), solo status (Sekaquaptewa, et al., 2007), family systems (Pollock, et al., 2015), group processes (Waldman, 2004), and racial identity (Tatum, 2004).

Before discussing the aforementioned topics related to African American representation of race, it is important to understand the concept of why people categorize one another and how it relates to representation. According to social categorization theory, beginning in the early stages of infancy people have a tendency to categorize individuals (e.g., men, teachers, African Americans) as a means of understanding and organizing their world (Rhodes, 2013). Studies on category learning show that there are main category representations such as exemplars and

prototypes (Wang & Xie, 2016). Exemplars occur when individuals make judgements by comparing new stimuli with examples already stored in their memory, whereas prototypes occur when people categorize the world through an aggregation of typical features we might observe in multiple instances (Wang & Xie, 2016). According to exemplars, an individual creates the flower category, for example, from a collection of information maintained in one's memory of all of the flowers that person has experienced (e.g. daisy, rose, lily, etc.), whereas prototypes may have certain members of one category stand out. For example, when an individual is asked to think about the category of trees an apple tree may be more cited for most people compared to a redwood tree.

Social categorization theory explains why people categorize each other, prototypes and exemplars depict how the categorization process occurs (Vanpaemel, 2016). In addition to helping people organize and make sense of their world, categorizing and stereotyping can be beneficial and used as a positive coping skill to help reduce information overload in the ever-changing environment (Lech, Güntürkün, & Suchan, 2016). Stereotyping, or drawing conclusions without experiences and oversimplifying an idea of a person or thing, can also be beneficial for survival (Lech, Güntürkün, & Suchan, 2016). For example, large animals that make a lot of noise are dangerous, which helps prevent humans from getting too close to lions or bears. However, categorizing people may become problematic as it can easily result into stereotyping others (Rodríguez-Bailón, Moya, & Yzerbyt, 2000).

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are not inherently bad. They are natural and serve a cognitive function that help people make sense of the world. It is also important to acknowledge that stereotypes do not just apply to people but they can apply to objects or places as well (Lech, Güntürkün, & Suchan,

2016). Stereotypes are different from prejudices, yet stereotypes are known to form perceptions about people which can lead to prejudiced attitudes (Capezza & Arriaga, 2008). Stereotypes often reflect beliefs and expectations concerning characteristics of other groups and members of one's own group as well (Johnson et al., 2015). Prejudice is defined as a feeling about someone based on their affiliation with a group (Bergh, Akrami, Sidanius, & Sibley, 2016)

Stereotypes are cognitive assumptions people generate based on personal characteristics, past experiences, or from things people have learned from societal stereotypes such the thought that boys are better at math and science than girls (Kizzie Rouland, Johnson Rowley, & Kurtz-Costes, 2013). They can reveal how certain social groups think, behave, or feel, which often causes bias toward both group members and non-group members alike (Johnson et al., 2015). Stereotypes can guide an individual's belief about another person, which can result in unjust attitudes, judgements or behaviors towards others (Kizzie Rouland, et al., 2013). Because stereotypes can be positive, negative, or neutral (not all stereotypes slander a group of people or object but still generalize them) people's attitudes and behaviors about the stereotypes may vary (Kizzie Rouland, et al., 2013). For instance, if the stereotype is meant to be a positive attribute of a social group then a member of that social group may attempt to prove that they manifest a quality such as bravery, kindness, or intellect. However, the opposite action can be taken by members who belong to a group with multiple negative stereotypes (Kizzie Rouland, et al., 2013). Members of those social groups may intend to disavow the stereotypes by not confirming them with their actions in the hope of creating a more realistic portrayal of themselves or for the purpose of positively representing their social group (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

A number of stereotypes are applied to African Americans from internal and external sources (Pollak & Neimann, 1998). Some examples of negative stereotypes would include that

African Americans are dangerous, unintelligent, and angry (Sekaquaptewa, et al., 2007). With these stereotypes aimed toward their race, researchers have focused on the many obstacles that African Americans have to overcome in the academic and business world (Pollak & Neimann, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Stereotype Threat

It has been theorized throughout the literature that racial minorities perform poorly on tasks when they are aware of their racial saliency and fear confirming the negative stereotype associated with their social group through their actions on a certain task (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Jackson et al., 1995; Kanter, 1997). This situation is known as stereotype threat. According to Inzlicht and Schmader (2012) stereotype threat is a “situational predicament in which individuals are at risk, by dint of their actions or behaviors, of confirming negative stereotypes about their group” (p.5). In other words, individuals from all ethnicities and races could fear engaging in a behavior or speaking their mind in class out of fear that a negative stereotype, which already exists, will be confirmed by their behavior. Stereotype threat is primarily attributed to academic performance amongst racial minority and women students. For example, Steele and Aronson (1995) theorized that African Americans who are well aware of the negative stereotype concerning their race’s intellectual ability will perform poorly on a standardized test out of fear of confirming the typecast (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Another example includes a woman performing poorly on a math test due to her awareness of the negative stereotype that women are less capable in mathematics (Sekaquaptewa, et. al., 2007). Even though a marginalized individual may produce a mediocre or low average performance, the performance result may not be representative of their actual skill level due to the effects of stereotype threat.

The first study to examine how negative stereotypes toward race can affect test performance among individuals was conducted by Steele and Aronson (1995). The study of stereotype threat included both Black and White participants from the undergraduate population at Stanford University. The researchers hypothesized that stereotype threat, or the fear of confirming a negative stereotype associated with one's social identity, would cause African Americans to perform worse on intellectual tasks compared to their White counterparts, whereas there would be no differences in performance between Black and White individuals when that fear was not present. The researchers thought that because of the negative stereotype about African Americans and intellect, the African American subjects would attempt to avoid confirming any stereotypes, which would ultimately cause them to perform poorly on academic tasks that they would otherwise (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Steele and Aronson's (1995) study demonstrated that stereotype threat caused stereotype-related self-doubts in the African American subjects' thinking, which led them to try to avoid conforming to stereotypic images of African Americans. It was also shown that making race salient allowed for the stereotype to be salient to participants, even when the test was not diagnostic of ability, African Americans' test scores were impaired by almost half (Steele & Aronson, 1995). To make a stereotype salient, the researchers required participants to indicate their race (Steele & Aronson, 1995), which shows that a strong reminder of a negative stereotype does not have to be brought to the attention of the participant for an individual to experience stereotype threat. Results also indicated that an increase in performance was found among African American college students only when a verbal task was administered under the description of it being a laboratory task compared to when African American college students were exposed to the same task under the deception of it being a test of intelligence (Steele &

Aronson, 1995). In other words, African Americans performed better when they did not feel as if their intelligence was being examined.

Steele and Aronson ultimately concluded that stereotype threat affects African Americans, yet it did not affect White participants who were included in the experimental groups along with Black participants (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The researchers did not try to induce a stereotype for White participants that could constitute stereotype threat. They only noted that the same triggers of stereotype threat in African Americans did not affect White individuals. Although stereotypes about African American's failed to produce any effects among White individuals in Steele and Aronson's study, the literature has shown stereotype threat to have an effect on White participants in areas of sports, for example (Stone, Sjomeling, Lynch, & Darley, 1999).

It is clear that some researchers have attempted to study the effects of stereotype threat on performance (Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001; Sekaquaptewa, et al., 2007; Steele & Aronson, 1995). However, research on psychological processes that produce poor performance is relatively sparse. Researchers have found that targets of stereotype threat attempt to regulate their emotion while experiencing a pressure not to confirm negative stereotypes (Johns, Inzlicht, & Schmader, 2008). Performance is reduced in people who experience stereotype threat because it diminishes those executive functioning resources (conscious cognitive control of thought, emotion, and behavior) available for the desired task (Johns et al., 2008). One study revealed that targets of stereotype threat attempt to regulate their emotions, yet in an attempt to regulate their emotions they unfortunately drain their executive functioning resources, which causes poor performance (Johns et. al., 2008). When individuals targeted by negative stereotypes use their

energy to control their anxiety or other emotions, they are utilizing resources needed to perform well on cognitive tasks, ultimately harming their ability to perform well.

The finding that stereotype threat affects executive functioning offers an explanation into poor performance among racial minorities. This researcher proposes that the same processes may occur in social situations when a Black individual is in a solo status situation. That is, when Black individuals are reminded of stereotypes in social situations, they may expend energy trying to avoid the stereotypes by altering their behaviors within solo status situations. This change in behavior may or may not be a conscious effort, but this researcher believes that individuals who identify as Black may feel an obligation to represent their race when they are the only Black individual in a setting of White individuals. Unfortunately, research applying the construct of stereotype threat to Black individuals who feel an obligation to represent their race when placed in solo status situations is lacking. However, relevant research on social settings provides some support for this idea. In a relationship between arousal and performance, a study conducted by Yerkes and Dodson (1908) showed that there was an optimal level of arousal for good performance (Etsuro, Miki, Satoshi, Manabu, Yutaka, & Lukowiak, 2015). According to the Yerkes-Dodson law, once arousal levels become too high, performance levels decrease (Etsuro, Miki, Satoshi, Manabu, Yutaka, & Lukowiak, 2015). This level of arousal may help to explain how African Americans feel when placed in high arousal settings such as in a crowd or group of people where they are the only member of their race present and they begin to feel a desire to represent their race.

The desire to represent one's racial/ethnic group may arise from the same fear that drives stereotype threat. With reference to stereotype threat, negative stigmas perceived in a social situation may cause social performance to be affected when an African American is the only

member of their race present. Any perceived negative stereotypes could cause an African American who is in a social situation where he or she is the only member of his or her race to want to represent their race by altering his or her behaviors to fit what is socially accepted. Examples of behaviors one might adopt to represent the Black community could include being cooperative, remaining quiet, or wearing socially acceptable clothing based on the dominant group's standards. Although mostly studied in contexts related to academia and work, this fear of confirming negative stigmas can occur when racial minorities are in any environmental situation. How a racial minority acts in public, for instance, can be judged by others and others may attribute the behavior to the racial group of the individual. The fear of confirming any negative stereotypes associated with their social group may cause individuals to behave differently in attempts to combat the stigmas placed on them.

Marx and Stapel (2006) conducted a study on women and men emotional reactions to stereotype threats at various points in a math test. Anxiety related emotions (e.g., nervousness) were noted to occur before the test, whereas frustrated emotions (e.g., anger) were found to occur after taking the test, which were more frequently exhibited among women participants compared to their men counterparts. The authors speculated that frustration participants experienced after the test would be related to disappointment and anger that the event (i.e., the test) did not turn out as they had hoped.

In social situations, one may feel anxiety if they enter a room and realize that no one around looks like them (Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, Phillips, & Denney, 2012). Studies have shown that due to a lack of race consciousness compared to African Americans, White individuals may not feel a constant distinctiveness due to the high societal status White individuals maintain (Pollak & Neimann, 1998). It has been documented that because White

individuals have not experienced the societal stigmatization and oppression of minority groups, they may feel immune to feelings that they must be a representative or accountable for their racial group (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). For a racial minority, anxiety may build as the individual realizes that he/she must begin conversing with other people in the room. As anxiety builds the individual might simultaneously experience thoughts of wanting to present oneself in a positive light. Although the anxiety experienced as one realizes a need to engage and converse in a room of other individuals who are all of another race is something that may be experienced by an individual of any racial group, racial minorities may also feel a need to represent their race in a positive light. They may actively go out of their way to disaffirm negative stereotypes about their social group (Johnson et al., 2016) and may dread going into a room where they feel obligated to do this work of representing their race. After the conversation, that same racial minority may feel a series of emotions such as relief if the encounter went well or frustration if it did not go as planned (Johnson et al., 2016).

Could it be argued that some social groups strive to prove negative stigmas? This researcher posits that some members of a social group may aim to uphold what is deemed as a negative stereotype by the dominant culture yet viewed as a positive to their own culture (Rowley, 2012). For example, an African American man wearing a hoodie can be seen as a negative thing in the eyes of the dominant group and other groups as well, yet an African American man may decide to wear it as a representation of pride for his culture's clothing style (Rowley, 2012). Whereas stereotype threat focuses on positively representing one's social group out of fear of confirming negative stigmas (Steele & Aronson, 1995), the writer of this dissertation proposes that people may have a desire to represent their identified social group when they are the sole member of their racial group in a social situation.

Even with the limited research on Black experiences in representing their race, there have been studies that shed a light on the difficulty in overcoming stereotypes while trying to succeed in a world that judges a person on the way that they look (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Johnson et al., 2016). For the purpose of this dissertation, understanding the construct of stereotype threat is important because it conceptually relates to the notion that individuals may experience a desire to represent their race/ethnicity.

Tokenism

In order to understand the desire to represent one's race and the psychological effects the desire to represent race creates among Black individuals, it is important to know the literature of tokenism. Tokenism is a symbolic action commonly shown in the recruitment of a small group of people from marginalized groups in order to give the appearance of equality (Tokenism, n.d). Researchers have studied the concept of tokenism among the African American community for years within workplace and academic settings. However, limited research has surrounded the concept within general group settings such as being the only member of one's social group at a wedding, graduation party, dinner with friends, a baptism, etc.

Kanter (1977) introduced the concept of tokenism in her field study of women who worked in an organization where 10% of the total work force were women. Based on Kanter's definition of a token, tokenism occurs when there is less than 15% of a person's social group present in a group setting (Kanter, 1977). An example of this phenomenon can be depicted in a school fraternity where one or two racial minorities of the same social group have been accepted into the organization to meet an implicit quota. By definition, the two racial minorities in the example are still considered tokens if the group of which they are members makes up 15% or less of the fraternity members (Kanter, 1977). During her study, Kanter (1977) found that token

women felt highly visible, stereotyped, and encapsulated in roles. They also felt like they were representative of other women and they were often compared with fellow coworkers (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). For example, if one considers situations dealing with race, to be a token means to experience a heightened sense of one's identity when placed in a setting where race is salient. It can be easy to notice when one is the only member of his or her social group present. When a situation such as this occurs, it seems that there would also be a heightened desire in the token to make sure that he or she either blends in to disavow any negative stereotypes or behaves in a certain way in which she believes her social group should be represented (Kelly, 2007). As noted in the stereotype threat literature, psychological concerns have also been studied throughout the literature of tokenism (Steward et al., 2012; Wei, Ku, & Yu-Hsin Liao, 2011).

Anxiety is the most common psychological symptom that has been found when tokenism is present (Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001; Stewart, et al., 2012; Wei, et al., 2011). Anxiety is defined as a sense of temporary worrying or fear (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015), which can often be experienced when an individual is faced with being the only member of his or her race present in a room (Jackson, et al., 1995). One component of tokenism that causes heightened anxiety for individuals is the saliency aspect (Jackson et al., 1995). Saliency occurs when an individual of a minority group is made aware of their characteristics (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014). Heightened awareness of negative stereotypes associated with an individual's group can result in an individual becoming more aware about his or her racial group association, which can create a sense of anxiety because negative stereotypes associated with the group may also cause the individual to believe that the stereotypes are personally associated with he or she (Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, Phillips, & Denney, 2012).

Stress has been considered within the literature of tokenism (Jackson, et al., 1995). Individuals can experience stress in different ways and to different degrees; however, those stresses can be amplified for racial minorities (Wei, Ku, & Yu-Hsin Liao, 2011). Minority stress is different from regular stress or anxiety. Minority stress is defined as stress that results from being a minority (Wei, et. al., 2011), and is different from other types of stress or anxiety. This stress is most likely due to the social distress that minorities regularly face, which White individuals do not have to question or experience in everyday life (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). Some examples of minority stress not often faced by the racially dominant group include macroaggressions, blatant racism, negative stereotypes that prevent individuals from obtaining a job, or the stress to represent their entire race when they are underrepresented in an academic or work environment setting (Pollak & Niemann, 1998, Wei et al., 2001).

The majority of research shows the effects of tokenism in women and racial minorities. According to one study, women's performance scores on a math test were lower than scores of men when women made up less than 50% of the group. Yet, when the gender ratios did not favor the men, results showed that the performance of men was not affected even when they made up less than 20% of the group (Sackett, DuBois, & Noe, 1991). Some areas of research have shown that men working in women dominated job environments tend to thrive, yet women working in men dominated job environments may struggle with tokenism effects (Heikes, 1991). An example of this is shown in a study on nursing, where men seemed very comfortable within the nursing field, widely known as a women dominated field (Heikes, 1991). However, research presumes that due to the higher social status of White men in particular, their experience with tokenism may be different from that of gender and racial minorities because society does not view them as undesirable as their gender and racial counterparts (Pollak & Niemann, 1998).

In a qualitative study conducted in 2013, results indicated that half of the Black college student participants on a majority White college campus experienced “culture shock” when they felt as if they were made aware of their status as a racial minority (Rose & Firmin, 2013). Further results also showed that there was a sense of societal pressure to represent their ethnic group within a classroom setting. African American students reported feeling “singled out” for being the only minority or one of the few minorities of their group within the class. Most notably, these students reported that they felt expected to represent their ethnic group during class discussions when they were asked to give an opinion that represented their affiliated ethnic group instead of being asked to give their own opinion (Rose & Firmin, 2013).

Overall, the saliency of an individual’s minority status and the stress that the person feels when he or she represents less than 15% of the group can cause an individual to feel continuously judged (Kanter, 2007; Pollak & Neimann, 1998). It can also produce a desire to represent one’s social group and cause a person to feel accountable to help others within their social group to succeed (Sekaquaptewa, et al., 2007). Unfortunately, this situation can create anxiety and more specifically minority stress. Although tokenism is not found to exist often for men, particularly White men, research has suggested that tokenism is subject to social judgment (Kanter, 1977; Pollak, & Niemann, 1998). Ultimately, if society views one social group more favorably, members of that social group may not experience tokenism because they have a sense of security and confidence within the environment even when the gender or race ratio may not favor him or her.

Solo Status

Solo status is a term that is similar to tokenism, which studied the effects of what it is like to be the only member of one’s social group (Lord and Saenz, 1985). According to Niemann and

Dovidio (1998) solo status is associated with being the sole racial or cultural minority in a group and being viewed as having the token status. Tokenism can occur when there is 15% or fewer of a marginalized group in a setting of the dominant group, which can include more than one person. Also tokenism occurs when a group, or organization, is attempting to be perceived as inclusive (Kanter, 1977). This concept also incorporates whether tokens experienced more cognitive deficits compared to non-tokens (Lord & Saenz, 1985). Solo status is defined as a situation that occurs when a person who is a member of a certain social category such as race or gender is the only member of their group present within a group setting (Lord & Saenz, 1985). Most of the research on solo status has focused on the psychological effects on women and African Americans working on a task when faced with being “the only” (a term used interchangeably with solo throughout this paper; Waldman, 2004). However, this writer plans to focus on what psychological effects occur for participants in relation to experiencing solo status in a social group environment without a task being present. Although this writer’s research interests differ compared to past literature on solo status, it is still important to understand the concept of solo status in order to understand why an African American would have a desire to represent their race.

Tokenism can occur across many environments such as in the classroom, sports team, boardroom, etc. However, racial minorities may be seen by their racial counterparts as having the responsibility to represent their racial group, which may ultimately be internalized. Similar to tokenism, a common example of solo status often occurs within a classroom setting where either a teacher or fellow student asks the racial minority to speak for her race by asking a question such as “What would the Black community feel about this topic we are discussing in class?” This situation may create a sense of responsibility in an African American student to represent their

race by answering the question intelligently as it is a common stereotype that African Americans are less intelligent than other races (Harmon, 2013). It may also cause the student to feel encapsulated within the role as spokesperson for the Black community. A feeling of anxiety and a sense of annoyance is also to be expected, primarily if the request to speak for their race occurs frequently (Kelly, 2007).

In a study conducted by Wei, et al., (2011), they found that perceptions of a college campus atmosphere among Asian-Americans, African-Americans, and Latinos, mediated a relationship between minority stress and persistent attitudes toward remaining in school. A school's atmosphere can play a significant role in the maintenance of an individual's mental health. If the school is welcoming and inviting of other ethnicities and races, a minority student may find that they are able to transition easier than their racial minority counterparts who experience an unwelcoming and unfriendly environment. An example of this can be shown in reports of African American students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs). African Americans who attend PWIs often report feelings of alienation, inadequate social support, increased stress, and decreased academic performance; whereas African Americans in attendance at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) report experiencing more of a supportive and comforting environment that allow them to retain information for academic success easily (Rose & Firmin, 2013). African Americans attending PWIs may also feel like they are a representative for their group (Pollak & Neimann, 1998; Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007). In a welcoming environment, people are more likely to flourish academically as they are likely to be less worried about their status as a racial minority (Rose & Firmin, 2013).

Although, a feeling of obligation to represent one's race has mostly been cast in a negative light, for some the desire to represent one's group may not be viewed as distressing. In

a Huffington Post article, titled “No Pressure, You’re Just Representing Your Entire Race and Gender,” the author, Angela Gray, depicts her personal experiences of what it is like to feel as if she is a representation for her race and gender. Within the article, she identifies herself as “black, a woman, and a black woman” all of which are varying identifying characteristics about herself (Gray, 2012, para. 1). Focusing on her race, Angela offers a more uplifting view of feeling the obligation to represent her race, stating although representation is a tiring effort, it is something which she is happy to do because she has done it well so far (Gray, 2012). Although the literature has depicted representation of race in a negative light, Angela Gray seems to perceive it in a positive view. It can be argued that individuals such as Gray want to represent their race because they feel a responsibility to educate others on how their social group should be perceived. Although Gray reported feeling happy to represent her race, she may be an exception, since research typically shows that minorities are negatively affected by the experience, especially if they are not welcomed by the dominant social group (Pollak & Niemann, 1998; Rose and Firmin, 2013).

The literature of solo status has commonly focused on studying Black college students at PWIs (Kelly, 2007). Research shows that when in predominantly White contexts, racial minorities report feeling like race representatives who are held accountable and responsible for helping members of their race succeed (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). It appears that solo status creates a sense of collectivistic thinking among racial minorities because their distinctive characteristics become a more important aspect of their self-definition (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007). Collectivistic thinking can create cognitive processes that make racial minorities aware of how their performance may reflect upon their entire race (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007). Studies

show that within the United States, men and White individuals do not experience the collective self-construal as much compared to racial and gender minorities (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007).

Researchers continue to explore experiential differences between Black and White racial groups. According to a study conducted in 2007, findings showed that the feeling of race representativeness was greater for Black women compared to White women. Black women found race to be a more central component to their identity when experiencing solo status as compared to White women. Black women were also more likely to feel like race representatives, meaning that they felt their performance was going to reflect on their race, and they also showed greater performance apprehension during their task (a math test) in the experiment (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007). These results suggest that the increased collective self-construal among African Americans may be a result of race becoming salient and more central to their self-identity. Racial saliency occurs when an individual of a minority group is made aware of their race (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014). When an individual is aware of his/her skin color, a heightened sense of arousal such as anxiety may also occur, which can be the cause of poor task performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). This study indicates that making one feel as a representative of and accountable for his/her race may be detrimental to the performance of African Americans, especially for African American women (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002).

As previously mentioned, the effects of solo status have been found to cause racial minorities to feel responsible in helping same race members become successful in life (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007). In the African-American community, this obligation to help others within the racial group may be due to the negative stereotypes and negative treatment that have surrounded the racial group for centuries (Urofsky, 2015). There could be a desire to stop or

decrease these stereotypes by not only representing oneself in a way that is believed to be an acceptable representation of one's group, but also because helping other members within the social group adds to the strengthening of the collective group (Waldman, 2004). Studies show that solo status creates a collectivistic self-construal (Sekaquaptewa et. al., 2007), which may be a component to include when attempting to understand why African-Americans may feel a desire to represent themselves within social context when they experience solo status.

Family Literature

Experts note that the most significant socialization agent for adolescents who are developing their identity is the family system (Townsend & Lanphier, 2007), and therefore the family may play a role in some African American individuals' experiences who feel an obligation to represent their group when they are the only one in a social situation. Families may be supportive or unsupportive, they may cause stress, exacerbate what is already there, or protect against it (Pollock et al., 2015). Studies show that having a healthy social support network can help reduce the effects of everyday stressful events, whereas reduced stress is associated with having a close and flexible family relationship as well (Pollock, et. al., 2015). Messages are transmitted and received via family interactions (Pittman & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). For instance, messages from family members can include how the family system expects an individual to behave in public or what is expected of the person in school or at work (Pittman & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). A common message within the family system found throughout the literature is that family members are expected to represent their family, race, gender, religion, and more (Harmon, 2013). Some messages may remain at the forefront of an individual's mind throughout everyday actions which may provoke or exacerbate stress (Levine et al, 2015; Pollock, et. al., 2015). Such distress will interfere with daily life routines (Levine et al, 2015). Due to the

primary focus on African Americans and family pressure to behave a certain way in society, this section will emphasize how family experiences can influence African American's and how it may be relevant to the obligatory feeling to represent one's race.

Parents may place pressure on their children to succeed in order to lessen the income and unemployment gaps in the U.S (Chrisman, 2013). Statistics indicate that almost 25 percent of Black families live in poverty. The poverty rate for African Americans is 22% which is more than double the 9% poverty rate of White individuals living in the United States (Long, 2017). In a college setting, minority students continue to be underrepresented (Baber, 2012). If that student has parents who are looking to them to be the first member of the family to graduate from college or to even uphold the family tradition of graduating from college, added pressure can generate more problems for the student in school (Nilsson, et. al., 1999).

In the hopes of not seeing their children suffer through the same experiences, parents may place a high expectation on their African American children to perform at a higher level than expected by societal standards in order to succeed in life (Nilsson et al., 1999). For example, Shani Harmon (2013) writes that it was always expected for her to attend college, and her parents consistently expressed that their children should give 110%. They especially emphasized that their children give 110% in situations where they were the only Black child in the classroom setting. Harmon's parents enforced the idea that their children make a strong effort in the classroom, because based on their experiences the teachers would already expect them to be less intelligent than their White counterparts. With these teachings in mind, it was always explained to Harmon that she was representing the Black race in her actions and therefore she should attempt to avoid negative stereotypes and disprove them as well. While attending an Ivy League

school where she was the only Black student in her field of study, Harmon felt the need to speak up when class discussions had racial or elitist overtones because she knew no one else would.

Family pressures have also been known to interfere with college adjustment or integration into the higher education community (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Many young adults from minority backgrounds are first generation college students (Wei, et al., 2011), which adds to the stress and pressure to represent not only their racial group, but their family as well (Nilsson et al., 1999). In a comparative analysis study, Guiffrida (2005) studied the influence of familial relationships on the educational achievement of African American students attending PWIs. There were notable differences among low and high-achieving Black students, differences in their perceived relationship with their family, and the influence of those relationships on their academic performance (Guiffrida, 2005). Students who described their families as emotionally and financially supportive were among the high achieving students, but those who described their family as unsupportive were more likely to be in the low achieving student category (Guiffrida, 2005).

Family is highly valued in Black communities (Levine et al., 2015). The finding that African Americans experienced higher levels of parental expectation than European Americans may be a result of parental agents encouraging their children to thrive in a world that caters to the majority (Nilsson, et. al., 1999). However, some adolescents reject the opportunities provided to them out of loyalty to their race and perceived culture because family support and loyalty can be more important than pursuing their own ambitions (Willie, Rieker, Kramer, & Brown, 1995). This writer posits that the loyalty and strong sense of family connectedness may act as a motivating factor for Black individuals to feel as if they must represent not only their family but their race, especially when placed in solo status situations.

Collectivism

Throughout the years, researchers have studied how collectivistic and individualistic cultures have affected the way individuals understand and perceive themselves and others (Constantine, Gainor, Ahluwalia, & Berkel, 2003). Much of the research on collective cultures has focused on Asian international self-conceptions due to the high value that Asian cultures place on interdependent natures where a group is mutually dependent on one another (Constantine et al., 2003). Western civilizations, such as the United States, place more of an emphasis on independent self-construals which value uniqueness, whereas Eastern cultures, such as Japan, place a strong emphasis on viewing the self as part of the whole where the value of helping your fellow community member is a priority (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, an independent person would view his or her actions as a representation of himself/herself, compared to an interdependent person who would think of his or her actions as a representation of others within the community. It is commonly assumed that individualistic and collective cultures are dichotomous in nature; however, according to Triandis and his colleagues, a more complex model surrounding the differing types of individualism and collectivism exists (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998), which should be helpful in understanding the self-construals of individuals within these cultures.

According to Triandis and Gelfand (1998), individualism and collectivism can be characterized as vertical or horizontal. Horizontal individualism is characterized by its value placed on individual uniqueness with relatively little emphasis on social hierarchy, whereas vertical individualism emphasizes uniqueness among individuals as well as social status derived from competition (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Horizontal collectivism emphasizes interdependence and common goals while rejecting the notion of authority, but vertical

collectivism values the same sacrificial attitude for the sake of others with a willingness to submit to authority (Trandis & Gelfand, 1998). Based on these types of individualism and collectivism, studies show that African American culture adheres mostly to collectivism (Constantine, et al., 2003; Sekaquaptewa, 2007; Waldman, 2004).

In a research study focusing on the self-construals of African Americans, it was discovered that African Americans with an interdependent self-construal were more likely to anticipate the needs of others, which the researchers expected within a community that values the consideration of others when a member makes a decision (Constantine et. al., 2003). African Americans with an interdependent self-concept may experience the desire to represent their social group due to a constant attentiveness toward “others” within their social group. Researchers explained that African Americans may use this as a coping skill to adjust to competitive settings (Constantine et. al., 2003). Based on these findings, in addition to a history of societal stigmatization that have caused feelings of representativeness (Pollak & Neimann, 1998), it is understandable that African Americans with interdependent self-construals would likely have a desire to represent their social group within academic, business, and social settings.

People with independent self-construals may be motivated to actions that allow the expression of personal attributes they find important such as hardworking, caring, and self-governing, whereas people with interdependent self-construal’s should be motivated to actions that enhance connectedness or relatedness to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These actions can look very similar on the surface, such as an individual working hard to get into college. However, the source of the motivation can be extremely different.

Racial Identity

In the stage of adolescence and early adulthood, people learn more about themselves as they grow (Tatum, 2004). People become more curious as they grow and begin a developmental process that may include a search into their adult identity, gender identity, and racial identity to name a few. In the case of racial identity, racial minorities may ask themselves “Who am I?” “What does it mean to be a member of my racial group?” “Who can I grow to be?” (Tatum, 2004, p. 118). However, in order to understand the role that it plays, one must understand how racial identity is conceptualized. It is noted throughout the literature that racial identity influences multiple areas in academic and work settings (Rose & Firmin, 2013; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998), solo status (Pollak & Niemann, 1998), and stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Racial identity is defined as a sense of belonging to a group or having a collective identity based on an individual’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1990). Forming a racial identity is a personal process that develops across time and includes encounters with people of the same and varying races (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyễn, 2008). Many racial and ethnic identity development models have been documented throughout the literature (Cross, 1991; Phinney, 1992; Scottham, et al., 2008), with one that is specific to the Black community (Cross, 1991). Since its introduction in 1971 Cross’ Black Identity Development Model has been thoroughly tested within the literature and subsequently revised (Tatum, 2004).

According to Cross’ model there are five stages in the development process that people within the Black community can experience (Cross, 1991). These five stages are identified as pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment

(Cross, 1991). The pre-encounter stage includes the absence of a self-identity except the one defined and approved by White society where traditionally there is an idealization of the White culture and a disapproval of Black culture (Cross, 1991). The second stage, encounter, can be a long-lasting experience (Cross, 1991) that involves a first-hand experience of racism that ultimately brings the person to terms of what it is like to be a member of a group rejected for racially motivated reasons (Cross, 1991). Transitioning into the third stage of immersion/emersion can cause a person to experience anger toward White people due to the oppression felt by Blacks historically (Cross, 1991). It involves a change in actions and beliefs derived from the way that an individual thinks an “authentically” Black person is supposed to behave, dress, or speak (Cross, 1991). This would most likely be the stage where African Americans would begin to feel a desire to speak for or represent their race as the racial identification bond grows. However, there would be concern that the process of representing one’s race could create actions and thoughts that arise out of anger.

The Internalization stage is an emergence from the immersion/emersion stage as an African American begins to become more secure in her racial identity and can perceive the world more objectively (Cross, 1991). Within this fourth stage, forming relationships across racial divides begins to occur, which is also found in the fifth stage of Cross’s model (Cross, 1991). The thing that distinguishes the fourth and fifth stages is finding a way to translate a “personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment” to the concerns of the Black community (Cross, 1991, p. 220). Within this final stage an African American is assumed to be positioned in a secure sense of their racial identity (Cross, 1991). If a desire to represent one’s race was present in these final two stages, it would most likely result in a more productive representation drawn from a desire to better the Black community. This author is not assuming

that all African Americans experience this developmental process, especially not in the exact order of Cross's model; however, it is important to understand the dynamics of the developmental process in order to understand how racial identity can influence an African American's desire to represent one's race.

Although an individual may have a strong sense of racial identity, others may view one's identity through their own lens, such as the dominant culture's lens of how African Americans are identified. It can be argued that the racial identity of African-Americans continues to be interpreted largely by the racial prejudice stimulated by slavery and the legal racist statutes of the Jim Crow Laws (Urofsky, 2015). Although slavery was legally abolished in 1865 (History.com Staff, 2010) and the Jim Crow Laws were legally disbanded in the early 1950's (Urofsky, 2015) the way of thinking that occurred not long ago remains embedded within our societal minds (Dutton et al., 2014).

Research shows that the key to development is to determine a stable and positive identity (Willie, Rieker, Kramer, & Brown, 1995). Determining a stable and positive identity can serve as a motivator for some young adults to not fall into the stereotype of how society views their racial/cultural community. With the denial of opportunities to succeed, a positive identity can be difficult to achieve, and adolescents will begin to seek their identity elsewhere by engaging in activities that may lead to teen pregnancy, gang activity, or antisocial behavior, which have become stereotyped as "typical Black behavior" by some persons in society (Willie, et al., 1995, p. 162). With this stereotype widely known, many African-American youth who have the opportunities to succeed may not wish to squander it, by attempting to overcome what society expects of them (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, & Kotzin, 2014). The desire to represent may arise from the private knowledge of how society views their racial/cultural community. However, this

weight can be a very heavy burden to carry because pressure to achieve can be the cause of pressure by their family, community, and especially themselves.

According to a study on African American women's health concerns, having a strong racial identity affected experiences of anxiety and stereotype threat (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014). Findings showed that women who strongly identified as African American were more likely to experience higher forms of anxiety than those with a weaker racial identity (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014). Having a strong racial identity may also cause an individual to be much more aware of his or her race within social settings and it may explain why individuals with high racial identities feel more anxiety. Racial saliency occurs when an individual of a minority group is made aware of his or her race, generally through the exposure of a stereotype or when the individual is asked to write down his or her race on a sheet of paper (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014).

Researchers argue that primarily due to the historical oppression of African Americans, there is a race consciousness among the Black community that is not shared by their White counterparts (Pollak & Niemann, 1998). This shared race consciousness includes components of race identification. Black individuals may have "a sense of shared ideas, feelings, and interests with other members of one's race" (Pollak & Niemann, 1998, p. 957) as well as a tendency to act in a way that will improve the status of the Black race (DuBois, 1970). However, heightened awareness may also cause an individual to feel an obligation to represent their group. This awareness can create a certain sense of anxiety and keen perception of stereotypes that are associated with the represented group (Stewart, et al., 2012). Furthermore, the level of strength or the closeness an individual has with his/her racial identity may also result in an obligation for one to represent his/her racial group, primarily when placed in solo status situations.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Individuals who identify as African American/Black between the ages of 19-40 years old were recruited via Findparticipants.com and emails (shown in Appendix A) to Black student unions/organizations around the country from undergraduate large public, private, and HBCU colleges and universities. Participants were asked to share the study invitation with non-members who also met the inclusion criteria, which included identifying as Black or African American between the ages of 19-40 years old. The aim was to obtain a total of 400 participants of all genders; however, after completing a power analysis, 90 participants in the solo status group made it possible to find significant results for a median effect size. A total of 240 participants were obtained for this study and 99 participants were in the solo status condition. Because a minimum of 90 participants were needed for the solo status condition, I used Qualtrics to assign half of the participants to the solo status group. A minimum 54 participants was determined to be the minimum number required for the other two groups, based on the power analysis. Two hundred and fifteen total participants were determined to be enough for all of the analyses according to the power analysis.

Participants were asked questions about their demographics before the beginning of the study such as age, gender, ethnicity, region, and school (seen in appendix B). Any participant who did not identify as Black was removed from the data. A total of 240 participants participated in the study. Participants predominantly identified as women ($n = 198$) at 81% with only 37 identifying as men at 16.82%, 2 as transgender men, and three as “other,” which represented less than 2% in total for each. The average age of participants was 21 years old. Participants were

asked what region of the country they came from and the majority, with 42%, came from the South. Participants were asked to indicate their year in school and slightly over 41% of participants were graduate students. Finally, 175 participants attended public schools which consisted of the majority, while only 10 attended HBCUs and 52 went to private school. A manipulation check was included in the study (see Appendix C) and only 61% of the 240 participants correctly responded to that question. Despite their failure to correctly respond, they were included in all analyses.

Measures and Materials

Measure of ethnic identity. The strength of participant's racial identity was assessed via the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised* (MEIM-R). The MEIM was developed to meet the need to assess ethnic identity across groups instead of utilizing specific measures for each group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The measure consisted of 14 items that assessed the core components of ethnic identity shared across diverse ethnic cultures, such as a sense of attachment or belongingness, ethnic behaviors or practices, and, ethnic identity achievement (Phinney & Ong, 2007). However, after finding conflicting findings in their factor analysis of the MEIM, the authors conducted focus groups and interviews to assess for face validity and content validity concerns (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The MEIM-R was developed as a measurement in replacement of the original MEIM due to the criticism of the original measure's operational definition of racial/ethnic identity along with some researchers disagreeing with its structure (Chakawa, Butler, & Shapiro, 2015). The MEIM-R was developed to assess an individual's ethnic identity across diverse populations (Phinney & Ong, 2007) through a series of six closed ended questions that measure the exploration and commitment to one's ethnic identity preceded by an open ended question to

identify ethnic group membership (Brown et al., 2014). All responses are on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree* (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The MEIM-R also included different wording to increase face validity, and the authors removed two ethnic behavior items after they recognized that ethnic behaviors relate to one's specific ethnic identity and could not be assessed across all groups (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The MEIM-R has been shown to yield good reliability and internal consistency among college student samples with Cronbach alpha scores of .81 to .89 for the overall scale and .79 to .91 for the two subscales (Brown et al., 2014). Scores for the MEIM-R were calculated by averaging item values.

State and trait anxiety. Participants' state and trait levels of anxiety was assessed with the *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (STAI). The STAI is a 20 item self-report measure of state and trait anxiety. State anxiety is assessed in the measure by inquiring about how the participant is feeling in the moment (Grös, Antony, Simms, McCabe, 2007). Trait anxiety is measured by assessing how a person generally feels (Grös, et al., 2007). Participants rate themselves on a 4-point scale ranging from (1) *not at all* to (4) *very much so* for the STAI State and from (1) *almost never* to (4) *almost always* for the STAI Trait. Items are scored by adding the participant's responses to obtain a subtest score (Julian, 2011). Scores range from 20 to 80 with higher scores indicating higher levels of anxiety. The STAI has produced good internal consistency ($\alpha > .89$), high test-retest reliability (average $r = .88$), and has shown good evidence of convergent and discriminant validity (Grös et al., 2007) all amongst adolescent and adult community samples.

Familial connection. Participants were given the *Attitudinal Familism Scale*, also known as the Familism Scale, to test the final hypothesis that African Americans with a strong sense of familial connection will have a stronger desire to represent their race. *The Familism Scale* is a

measure of the extent to which individuals value their family and their belief in shared family goals and mutual support (Lugo-Steidel & Contreras, 2003). The scale was developed to assess the attitudinal familism of less acculturated Latinos families and items were edited to fit what the authors believed to be more applicable to the Latino culture (Lugo-Steidel & Contreras, 2003). The measure consists of 18 items rated on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly agree* to (10) *strongly disagree*. The researchers suggested creating a long range Likert-type scale because of the population's extreme response style (Lugo-Steidel & Contreras, 2003). All items were originally developed in English, translated into Spanish, and later back translated into English (Lugo-Steidel & Contreras, 2003). Previous research has produced evidence of good reliability among a Latinx sample (Cronbach alpha = .83). Although this scale was developed for Latino families originally, the African American culture also places a strong emphasis on family value, obligations, and bond (Harmon, 2013), which are factors the *Familism Scale* assesses. Studies have also shown the *Familism Scale* to apply to other ethnic groups including the African American ethnic group (Schwartz, 2007). A score for the overall scale is computed by averaging across items with higher score indicating higher endorsement of familism.

Awareness of shifting behavior in African American Women. Participants were given a modified version of the African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) in order to assess change in behavior, which was used as a measure of obligation to represent race. Examples of some of the items include "The image of the strong Black woman makes it difficult for others to see my pain and struggles" and "Others rarely see me as vulnerable or in need of support." The AAWSS is an 83 item scale that measures the extent to which African American women changed or altered themselves in demeanor, dress, or speech for example in order to pacify both mainstream society and their own racial group (Johnson et al., 2016). The

phenomenon of shifting was recognized by Jones and Shorter-Gooden in 2003 in their African American Women's Voices Project (Johnson et al., 2016). Within their qualitative study they found that some African American women altered their behavior without conscious awareness at times (Johnson et al., 2016). The authors also noted that the development of this instrument could prove useful in providing practitioners with a "means to explore issues with clients who have difficulty adjusting" to various settings like the home, work, or school environment (Johnson et al., 2016). Eventually the AAWSS was shortened to 13 items (Johnson et al., 2016). The AAWSS subscale yielded good internal consistency ($r = .80$) in a sample of African American adults. Items were measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (4) *strongly agree* (Johnson et al., 2016). Higher scores indicate higher levels of shifting (Johnson et al., 2016).

I altered the AAWSS to create the *Shifting Behavior Scale* which was used to determine the shifting behaviors in African American/Black individuals. Specifically, I removed items 1, 3, and 5 – 13 (Johnson et al., 2016) such that I retained items 2 and 4 from the AAWSS. Although these items were removed for various reasons, the decision reflected the underlying evaluation that these items ultimately did not relate well enough to the topic of this dissertation. Item 1 required participants to think about if they show weakness to their family, which was not the focus of this dissertation. Item 3 was directed to black women specifically and the focus of this dissertation included all genders, while item 5 asked participants to think about how they share success, which again did not relate to the topic of obligation to represent. Item 9 had participants think about if others perceive them as vulnerable, and the authors created item 11 ask participants to think about how often they deny their own emotions.

The *Shifting Behavior Scale* consists of 8 items. The new measure was created by adding the following six items to the measure (the two retained items were items 2 and 3 in the new measure): [“Sometimes I put my race before myself,” “I often feel like I have to represent my race rather than myself,” “If I don’t act a certain way, people might get the impression that Black people are all the same,” “When I am speaking to a non-Black person I sometimes make an effort to show them what Black people are really like,” and “I have to show everybody what Black people are really like.”] No other items were modified from the original version.

Social desirability. Participants were asked to complete Stöber's Social Desirability Scale (SDS–17) as a control measure to determine if respondents have answered truthfully or if they are misrepresenting themselves to be viewed in a positive light. The SDS-17 was developed in order to update the Marlowe-Crowne scale, which includes items that seem to reflect societal standards of the 1950’s. With the intent to update content, Stöber followed Marlowe and Crowne’s idea for item selection by asking students to write down behaviors they considered socially desirable but infrequent or socially undesirable yet frequent (Stöber, 2001). The SDS-17 contains 17 true/false items (Stöber, 1999). However, after further validation results found that item 4 on drug use consistently showed item-total correlations near zero ($r = .07$), so it was deleted from the final scale which now contains 16 items (Stöber, 2001). All scales showed satisfactory internal consistency and across all items a Cronbach alpha was .80. Each item endorsed in the socially desirable direction receives 1 point. Raw scores range 0 to 16, with higher scores indicating higher levels of social desirability (Stöber, 2001).

Vignettes and vignette pictures. I developed vignettes and pictures to accompany the vignettes were developed for the present study. Each of the three vignettes had one picture that appeared concurrent to the vignette.

Vignettes. Vignette 1: A good friend, who is White, invites you to a party at her house. Upon arrival at her house your friend greets you warmly and you see a house full of people having an enjoyable time socializing. After mingling for about 5 minutes you also notice that you are the only Black person and everyone else is White.

Vignette 2: A good friend, who is White, invites you to a party at her house. Upon arrival at her house your friend greets you warmly and you see a house full of people having an enjoyable time socializing. After mingling for about 5 minutes you also notice that you are only 1 of 2 Black individuals present at the party and everyone else is White.

Vignette 3: A good friend, who is White, invites you to a party at her house. Upon arrival at her house your friend greets you warmly and you see a house full of people having an enjoyable time socializing. After mingling for about 5 minutes you also notice that the racial representation of Black and White individuals present at the party is about 50% even. Vignettes with vignette pictures can be seen in Appendix D.

Vignette pictures. Students in the Auburn University Student Center were asked to volunteer to join in taking a picture for the purpose of this dissertation. Only Black and White students were asked to be in the picture. The writer explained that the dissertation was studying social interactions of African-American/Black individuals and that the picture would be shown in this study which would be placed online. Students were provided with an Information Letter prior to taking the picture, which can be seen in Appendix E. The pictures were taken in a conference room in the Auburn University Student Union with chairs and tables removed to provide enough space for people to socialize and to illustrate a house party which was written in the vignette. One Black person was in a room of 13 White individuals for the solo status vignette, two Black individuals were in the room with 13 White people for the second vignette

picture, and 13 Black and White individuals were in the room for the even split vignette. For the even split picture, people were placed in certain areas so that the picture did not look segregated, but more evenly spread out to show both races socializing with one another. The writer took pictures from a distance and slightly blurred the image, helping to control for recognition of faces of known acquaintances in the photos, facial expressions, and attractiveness.

Procedure

I sought Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct the study. Once the study was approved by the IRB, I emailed members of Black Student Union's/Organizations across the country (seen in Appendix F) and utilized FindParticipants.com to engage in data collection. When participants followed the link to the study, they received an information letter (shown in Appendix G) before being randomly separated into one of three conditions. Specifically, Qualtrics randomly assigned participants to one of 3 vignettes. Regardless of the assigned vignette, all participants completed a measure of ethnic identity, which was the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R)*. Next, participants were given a measure of trait anxiety. Afterward, participants received a vignette to read in which they were to imagine that they were invited to a party, and about 5 minutes upon arrival they begin to notice that they were either the only African American/Black individual present, one of two African Americans/Black individuals present, or that the racial representation of African Americans/Black individuals and Caucasian party-goers was split equally. In addition to the written vignette the participants received a picture of individuals in a party setting shown from a distance and slightly blurred with the appropriate ratio of African Americans/Black individuals to Caucasian individuals represented in accordance to the written vignette. Pictures were taken from a distance and the

image was slightly blurred to help control for recognition of faces of known acquaintances in the photos, facial expressions, and attractiveness.

After reading their assigned vignette and viewing the photo, participants responded to a manipulation check in which they were questioned about the number of Black individuals present in the vignette story and picture they were given. Next, they were provided a measure of state anxiety, which was used to assess the extent to which the vignette caused anxiety. Afterwards, the *Familism Scale* was provided to participants to assess the extent to which subjects value their family, shared family goals, and their belief in mutual support. Finally, the *Shifting Behavior Scale* was provided to participants, which was meant to determine if they had a desire to alter their behaviors during the conditions. Due to the possibility of social desirability influencing responses, or the process of individuals answering to represent themselves in a positive light (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016), *Stöber's Social Desirability Scale (SDS-17)* was administered to control for the effect of social desirability on participants' responses.

At the end of the study, a raffle was provided. I had previously offered participants the opportunity to win one of 4 \$25 Amazon gift cards as an incentive to join in the study. After participants completed the study, participants indicated whether they wished to enter the raffle. Winners were chosen through a random numbers generator on Qualtrics and winners received the eGift cards via email.

Analytic Strategy

A partial correlational analysis controlling for social desirability was conducted for Hypotheses 1 and 6. Hypothesis 1 stated that Black individuals with stronger racial identity who were also assigned to the solo status condition would feel more of an obligation to represent their race compared to those with a weaker racial identity. Hypothesis 6 stated that those with a strong

familial connection would also feel more of an obligation to represent their race. I used two ANCOVA's to evaluate Hypothesis 2, which stated that the solo status condition would create higher state anxiety for participants compared to the other two vignettes. The writer wanted to see if trait anxiety and social desirability had any effect on the results. I controlled for social desirability in the first ANCOVA, and I used the second ANCOVA to control for trait anxiety on state anxiety in the sub-hypothesis. Hypothesis 3 required a regression analysis. The third hypothesis stated that among those exposed to the solo status vignette, the relationship between racial identity and state anxiety would be mediated by obligation to represent. Specifically, this writer used Andrew Hayes' mediation macro. I used two hierarchical regression analyses to evaluate Hypothesis 5, which stated that the effect of trait anxiety on obligation to represent would be moderated by solo status. The hierarchical regression that I used for Hypothesis 5 was also used for Hypothesis 4, which stated that African American/Black participants with higher levels of trait anxiety would feel a greater obligation to represent their race.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

First, a manipulation check was performed to explore whether participants recognized the number of African American/Black individuals presented in the vignette for their assigned condition. This check was conducted with a single question that asked participants to type the number of African American/Black individuals who had been present in the picture they had just seen. The percentages of respondents correctly recognizing the number of African American/Black individuals presented in the vignette were calculated by dividing the number of participants who identified the correct number in the manipulation check by the total number of participants in that condition. In the solo status condition ($N = 99$), 79.8% of the participants indicated that there had been just one African American/Black individual present, whereas 7.1% indicated that there were no African American/Black individuals present and 4% indicated that there were two African American/Black individuals present. In the condition where there were two African American/Black individual present ($N = 67$), 61.2% of participants indicated as much; however, 25.4% of participants indicated that there was only one African American/Black individual present and 3% of participants indicated that there were no African American/Black individual present. In the even split condition ($N = 74$; where 13 individuals present identified as African American/Black), 42% of participants indicated that there were 10 or more African American/Black individuals present, and 2.7% indicated that there were one or two African American/Black individuals present. Another 21.6% of the participants in the even-split condition indicated that they did not know how many African American/Black individuals were depicted in the picture. It is important to note that all participants, regardless of their

performance on the manipulation check, were included in the analyses. The implications of this manipulation check are discussed further in the next chapter.

Simple correlations were run to examine the relationship between the measures of racial identity, obligation to represent, social desirability, family connectivity, state anxiety, trait anxiety, and age. The means and standard deviations and intercorrelations are presented in Table 1, while Table 2 shows the ranges and coefficient alphas. Tables 3 – 5 depicts the relationship between the measures separated by condition.

Table 1

Means, SD, and Intercorrelations for Study Variables

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 MEIM-R | 1.75 | 0.61 | | | | | |
| 2 Obligation to Represent | 2.71 | 0.67 | -.16* | | | | |
| 3 Social Desirability | 5.63 | 2.63 | -.05 | -.07 | | | |
| 4 Familism | 6.00 | 1.46 | -.10 | .08 | .13* | | |
| 5 State Anxiety | 46.81 | 6.56 | -.00 | .07 | -.15* | .01 | |
| 6 Trait Anxiety | 45.16 | 6.63 | .08 | .14* | -.13* | -.07 | .64** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2

Ranges and Coefficient Alphas for MEIM-R, Obligation to Represent, Social Desirability, Familism, State Anxiety, and Trait Anxiety scales

| Possible Range | Sample Range | α |
|----------------|--------------|----------|
| 1.00-5.00 | 1.00-4.00 | 0.83 |
| 1.00-4.00 | 1.00-3.89 | 0.85 |
| 0.00-16.00 | 0.00-15.00 | 0.90 |
| 1.00-10.00 | 1.78-9.33 | 0.70 |
| 20.00-80.00 | 20.00-69.00 | 0.73 |
| 20.00-80.00 | 26.00-67.00 | 0.65 |

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Condition 1 (Solo status at the Party)

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|--------|------|-------|
| 1 MEIM-R | 1.62 | 0.63 | | | | | |
| 2 Obligation to Represent | 2.74 | 0.63 | -.01 | | | | |
| 3 Social Desirability | 6.00 | 3.02 | -.06 | -.16 | | | |
| 4 Familism | 6.12 | 1.51 | -.20 | .09 | .08 | | |
| 5 State Anxiety | 45.90 | 7.90 | -.06 | .11 | -.33** | -.02 | |
| 6 Trait Anxiety | 44.45 | 8.08 | -.56 | .25* | -.29* | -.15 | .76** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Condition 2 (1 of 2 Black Individuals at the Party)

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1 MEIM-R | 1.79 | 0.57 | | | | | |
| 2 Obligation to Represent | 2.72 | 0.70 | -.21 | | | | |
| 3 Social Desirability | 5.25 | 2.20 | .00 | -.00 | | | |
| 4 Familism | 5.80 | 1.40 | .03 | .07 | .03 | | |
| 5 State Anxiety | 48.18 | 5.33 | .00 | -.11 | .23** | -.07 | |
| 6 Trait Anxiety | 45.70 | 6.07 | .06 | .06 | .06 | .01 | .50** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Condition 3 (Party with Evenly Split Racial Representation)

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| 1 MEIM-R | 1.88 | 0.60 | | | | | |
| 2 Obligation to Represent | 2.63 | 0.69 | -.18 | | | | |
| 3 Social Desirability | 5.49 | 2.38 | .00 | .00 | | | |
| 4 Familism | 5.98 | 1.43 | -.05 | .07 | .27* | | |
| 5 State Anxiety | 46.80 | 5.34 | .04 | .15 | .05 | .19 | |
| 6 Trait Anxiety | 45.62 | 4.67 | .01 | .05 | .16 | .08 | .34** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As many of the hypotheses were concerned with differences between the experimental conditions, or focused exclusively on the solo status condition, two tests were run to determine whether the three experimental conditions were comparable demographically. A one-way

ANOVA revealed no differences in participant age [$F(2,240) = 0.55, p = .579$] across the three conditions. A chi-squared test of independence revealed no differences in the frequencies of each gender represented across conditions [$\chi^2(2, N = 235) = 0.74, p = .691$]. Descriptive statistics for the gender demographic variables are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics of Gender Across Conditions

| Group | Vignettes | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Solo Status Group (n = 97) | 1 of 2 (n = 66) | Even-Split (n = 72) |
| Men | 13 (13.4%) | 12 (18.2%) | 12 (16.7%) |
| Women | 84 (86.6%) | 54 (81.8%) | 60 (83.3%) |

Note. Group 1 of 2 is the second condition where there were 1 of 2 Black people in the vignette. Even-Split is the third vignette where there was an even number of Black and White individuals in the vignette.

Furthermore, the writer wanted to determine if there were differences amongst people who attended HBCUs verses participants who did not. However, only 10 participants attended an HBCU, 52 were from private schools, and 175 attended public schools. There are too few participants in the HBCU category to condone conducting an ANOVA to determine if school affected how strongly a person felt in their obligation to represent their race.

Normality Assumptions

All variables were screened for violations of assumptions of normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Given that many of the hypotheses were focused on one condition or differences between conditions, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted separately for each of three conditions. The assumption of normality was statistically violated for several variables. For racial identity, the distribution was non-normal in all three conditions. For the social desirability scale, the

assumption was violated in both the solo status and even split conditions. For state anxiety, the assumption was violated in both the solo status condition and the condition where there were two African American/Black individuals present. For trait anxiety, the distribution was non-normal in the condition where there were two African American/Black individuals present. Notably, the focal dependent variable – obligation to represent – did not violate the assumption of normality in any condition.

A visual analysis of the data revealed no outliers on any of the scales. However, histograms indicated that, in each case, the distributions were often skewed, either to the left or the right, because of a higher representation of values close to the natural limit. For instance, on the measure of racial identity, many participants rated themselves near the bottom of the scale. Per Osborne (2010), a Box-Cox Power Transformation was performed on all variables demonstrating this sort of non-normal, skewed distribution. However, this transformation did not correct the normality violation for any variable. As an alternative, a log-10 transformation was also performed, but it too failed to normalize the distributions of these variables. It is important to note that, on scales such as these, slight skewness is to be expected in the general population and this skewness likely reflects meaningful psychological variability. Thus, the original non-transformed data were retained for all analyses. Given the relatively large sample sizes across conditions, the parametric tests conducted here should be robust to the slight deviations from normality described above.

Testing of Hypotheses

This study had several hypotheses' regarding different variables that could cause a Black individual to feel an obligation to represent his/her race within solo status situations. It was hypothesized, in Hypothesis 1, that African-American/Black individuals with a stronger racial

identity would feel a greater obligation to represent their race in the solo status situation (meaning they were the only African American/Black individual present) within a social context compared to those with a weaker racial identity. A partial correlation, controlling for social desirability bias, was conducted to explore this hypothesis. In this condition, there was no relationship between racial identity and obligation to represent ($r = -.11, p = .278$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that solo status would create more psychological effects in the form of increased state anxiety. More specifically it was hypothesized that African American/Black individuals exposed to the solo status via a vignette would have higher levels of state anxiety than individuals exposed to vignettes in which there was one other African American/Black individual present or in which half of the individuals present identified as African American/Black. An ANCOVA revealed no effect of treatment condition on state anxiety after controlling for social desirability [$F(2, 236) = 1.94, p = .146$]. In other words, after controlling for social desirability, exposure to the solo status condition did not produce higher state anxiety than exposure to vignettes in which there was one other African American/Black individual or in which half of the individuals present identified as African American/Black. Tables 3-5 show the means separated by each condition.

A sub-hypothesis stated that the effect of exposure to the solo status vignette on level of state anxiety would be significant after controlling for trait anxiety. There was a strong bivariate correlation between state anxiety and trait anxiety, across the entire sample ($r = .64, p < .001$). Therefore, an ANCOVA was conducted to determine whether trait anxiety accounted for the relationship between treatment condition and state anxiety. An ANCOVA revealed no effect of treatment condition on state anxiety [$F(2, 235) = 1.75, p = .177$] after controlling for the

variance of trait anxiety on state anxiety. In other words, trait anxiety did not account for an effect of the manipulation on state anxiety.

Hypothesis 3 stated that the relationship between racial identity and state anxiety would be mediated by felt obligation to represent among African American/Black participants exposed to the solo status vignette. Hayes' PROCESS v3.0 macro was used to explore this hypothesis. In the simple mediation model, the procedure provides inferential tests for estimates of direct and total *effects* of an independent variable on an outcome variable, as well as indirect effects of an independent variable on an outcome variable through a specified mediator (Hayes, 2013). Here, the direct effect of racial identity on state anxiety was explored first, followed by the indirect effect of racial identity on state anxiety through obligation to represent.

Among participants in the solo status condition, the direct effect of racial identity on state anxiety was not significant [$c' = -.56, t(97) = -0.44, p = .663$]. Thus, there was not a significant relationship between racial identity and state anxiety. The indirect effect of racial identity on state anxiety through the potential mediator, obligation to represent, was also not significant $ab = -.13, Z = -.59, p = .56, 95\% CI [-.89, .23]$. Based on the Bootstrap confidence intervals, 0 was included, meaning that there was no statistically significant difference between groups. Therefore, the relationship between racial identity and state anxiety was not accounted for by obligation to represent. Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated that African American/Black participants with higher levels of trait anxiety would feel a greater obligation to represent their race. Hypothesis 4 is answered in Step 1 of the analysis to evaluate Hypothesis 5. In Hypothesis 5, the researcher assumed that the effect of trait anxiety on obligation to represent would be moderated by solo status. More specifically, Hypothesis 5 stated that the relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent would

be stronger for individuals exposed to the solo status vignette than for individuals exposed to the vignette with two African American/Black individuals present. Another sub-hypothesis also stated that trait anxiety and obligation to represent would be stronger for those in the solo status condition compared for individuals exposed to the even-split vignette. To explore this, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with obligation to represent serving as the dependent variable. After centering trait anxiety, I entered trait anxiety on the first step of the model predicting obligation to represent (while controlling for social desirability). I used effects coding to represent the three conditions with the solo status condition always served as the reference group. These effects coded conditions were entered in Step 2. In Step 3, the interactions of centered trait anxiety and each of the two effect coded variables for the conditions were entered.

The overall model did not explain a significant portion of the variance in obligation to represent [$R^2 = .03, p = .295$], nor did any of the three steps explain a significant portion of the variance. On Step 1, there was a significant main effect of trait anxiety on obligation to represent [$\beta = .13, p = .043$]; thus Hypothesis 4 was supported. However, there was not a significant effect of condition on obligation to represent when added to the model predicting obligation to represent, nor was the effect of trait anxiety on obligation to represent moderated by solo status. Thus, the relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent was not stronger for individuals in the solo status condition than for individuals in either of the other two conditions. Hypothesis 5 was not supported. The regression analysis can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Trait Anxiety x Condition, Predicting Obligation to**Represent Controlling for Social Desirability*

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>SE_B</i> | β | <i>sr</i> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|
| Step 1 | | | | |
| Trait Anxiety | .01 | .01 | .13 | .13 |
| Social Desirability | -.01 | .02 | -.05 | -.05 |
| Step 2 | | | | |
| 1 of 2 | .01 | .06 | .02 | .01 |
| Even Split | -.07 | .06 | -.09 | -.07 |
| Step 3 | | | | |
| Trait Anxiety x 1 of 2 | -.00 | .01 | -.04 | -.02 |
| Trait Anxiety x Even Split | -.00 | .01 | -.03 | -.02 |

Note. The unstandardized coefficients, standardized coefficients, and semipartial correlation are shown in this table.

Hypothesis 6 stated that African Americans with a strong sense of familial connection would have a stronger obligation to represent their race. A partial correlation analysis, controlling for social desirability, revealed that the relationship between familial connection and obligation to represent race was not significant ($r = .09, p = .179$).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if African Americans/Black individuals feel an obligation to represent their race when placed in solo status situations. In addition to determining obligation to represent, the author also researched if having strong family ties, strong racial identity, and high trait anxiety increased one's obligation to represent their race in solo status situations. The research contributes to a better understanding of social interactions and the potential felt obligation to represent one's race by Black individuals when they are the only person of their race within a room of White individuals. Several studies and concepts within the literature influenced this writer's research.

Descriptive statistics were conducted to determine if age, gender or school would have any effect on the results. However, obligation to represent one's race did not differ as a function of age, gender, or type of school attended. One caveat in this comparison is due to the fact that the sample had very few participants from HBCUs. Specifically, the small sample size number of participants from HBCUs in comparison to the number of participants from other schools, violated statistical standards and created a situation where it was not possible for the analysis comparing school types to produce significant results.

I conducted a series of analysis to evaluate the study hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 stated that African American's/Black participants with a stronger racial identity would feel a greater obligation to represent their race in the solo status situation. A partial correlation, controlling for social desirability was conducted for Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 stated that solo status would create more psychological effects in the form of increased state anxiety. Two ANCOVA's were conducted, for Hypothesis 2, to determine if individuals in the even-split condition would

experience less state anxiety than those exposed to the solo status condition while controlling for trait anxiety and social desirability. Hypothesis 3 stated that the relationship between racial identity and state anxiety would be mediated by felt obligation to represent among Black participants who were exposed to the solo status condition. Hayes' mediation macro regression analysis was used to explore this. Hypothesis 4 stated that African American/Black participants with higher levels of trait anxiety would feel a greater obligation to represent their race. Hypothesis 4 was answered in Step 1 of the analysis for Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 5 stated that the relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent would be stronger for individuals exposed to the solo status vignette than for individuals exposed to the vignette with two African American/Black individuals present and for individuals exposed to the even-split vignette. A hierarchical regression analysis was run to test Hypotheses 4 and 5. Hypothesis 6 stated that participants with a strong sense of familial connection would have a stronger desire to represent their race. A partial correlation analysis was used to test Hypothesis 6.

Racial Identity and Obligation to Represent

This writer researched the connection between racial identity and obligation to represent in two different hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 stated that participants with a stronger racial identity would feel a stronger obligation to represent their race in solo status situations compared to those with a weaker racial identity, and Hypothesis 3 stated that individuals with a stronger racial identity would feel higher levels of state anxiety when placed in the solo status condition which was expected to be mediated by obligation to represent. Both hypotheses built on previous studies throughout the literature on race consciousness (Pollak, & Niemann, 1998), stereotype threat (Steel & Aronson, 1995), tokenism (Johnson, et al., 1995; Kelly, 2007), and solo status (Johnson et al., 2016), which have shown to cause psychological discomfort amongst African

Americans. A partial correlation was conducted to control for social desirability to determine if racial identity would have a relationship with obligation to represent. The partial correlation showed that there was no relationship between racial identity and obligation to represent within the solo status condition. In addition, Hayes' macro mediation showed that stronger racial identity did not result in higher levels of state anxiety in the solo status condition. This could be due to several reasons.

The author had to consider that her hypotheses were incorrect, and that stronger racial identity could produce something other than high levels of state anxiety and obligation to represent. One potential reason as to why both hypotheses were not found to be significant could be due to the possibility that a stronger racial identity could mean that there was higher self-confidence held in the participants, which may have been seen during the solo status condition instead of higher state anxiety as it was assumed. When placed in the solo status vignette, participants with higher racial identity may have felt confident in their racial identity and thus did not feel state anxiety or an obligation to represent their race. The researcher hoped to create racial saliency in the solo status vignette, which she assumed would create more state anxiety and cause participants to feel an obligation to represent their race when they took the survey. This assumption that racial saliency in a solo status situation would create a sense of state anxiety for Black participants was made because previous research has shown that race consciousness (Pollak, & Niemann, 1998), tokenism (Johnson, et al., 1995; Kelly, 2007), and solo status (Johnson et al., 2016) can be psychologically distressing to Black individuals. However, other studies have shown that stronger ethnic/racial identity can result in more positive psychological effects for people of color in general, along with higher self-esteem and self-efficacy (Phinney, 1990; Smith & Silva, 2011). It must be considered that when placed in a solo

status situation it does not necessarily mean that Black individuals with high levels of racial identity will feel the level of distress that the writer assumed, because they might experience a higher form of confidence in their identity instead.

Another potential reason as to why these hypotheses were not supported could be due to the possibility that the manipulation was not successful. A manipulation check was conducted to see if participants were able to accurately determine how many Black individuals were in the picture of the vignette. As seen in Chapter 4, not every participant passed the manipulation check. Almost 80% of participants answered correctly in the solo status vignette, 61.2% answered correctly in the vignette with 1 of 2 Black individuals present, and 42% of participants answered correctly in the even split vignette. All participants, regardless of whether they passed the manipulation check, were included in the analyses, which means the influence of an unsuccessful manipulation may be present within the findings. Furthermore, the manipulation may not have caused individuals to feel any state anxiety or obligation to represent because there may not have been enough White people in the room shown in the picture for the participant to feel anxious or as if they were in a solo status situation. Additionally, participants were not physically in the room experiencing a solo status situation. Perhaps if participants were in the room they would have felt more of an obligation to represent their race or felt more state anxiety compared to what the manipulation caused.

However, another potential reason as to why no significant results were found could be due to the participants' personal experience within the Black community regarding their skin tone. The famous Clark and Clark (1940) study showed that lighter skin toned Black children showed a partiality to White dolls than Black dolls. Historically, Black people with lighter skin tone have been provided more opportunities, a manifestation of discrimination based on skin

tone that predates the American Civil War, (i.e., lighter skinned slaves obtained better positions and better education opportunities; Hughes & Hertel, 2017). Although, racial identity has changed over time, there continues to be a divide within the Black community about skin tone within social, family, and academic settings that affect how one relates to their racial group (Hunter, 2016). A study by Hughes and Hertel (2017) showed that lighter skinned Black children are graduating at a higher rate compared to their darker skinned classmates. This concept is known as color-based discrimination, or colorism, and its effects since the days of slavery of Black people in America continue to plague those within the Black community today.

Studies continue to show that Black people with lighter skin tones are more likely to be involved in Greek life or other school organizations (Gasman & Abiola, 2016), because they are more likely to attend college compared to their peers with darker skin tones (Ryabov, 2013). Given that the writer obtained most of her sample from college students, there is a higher possibility that Black individuals with lighter skin tone participated in this study. This does not mean that there is a failure in randomization, but that a systemic issue causes more lighter skin toned Black individuals to be found in higher academia compared to darker skin toned Black people. Black individuals with lighter skin tones have been shown to have a partiality toward and relate closer to White individuals (Hughes & Hertel, 2017). Assuming that the manipulation worked, and that stronger racial identity did not relate to stronger self-confidence, participants with lighter skin tone may not have felt the effects of state anxiety due to the current potential stronger connection to the White racial group. There may have been no obligation to represent their Black race if there was not a strong connection to it already, which could be explained by skin tone and the existence of colorism within the Black community. Unfortunately, exploring

the role of skin tone in the lack of findings for the current study was beyond the scope of this study.

Furthermore, although there have been studies that show shifting behaviors in Black individuals within academic (Sekaquaptewa et. al., 2007; Waldman, 2004) and work environments (Johnson et. al., 2016), it must be acknowledged that these behaviors may not extend to social environment interactions. The manipulation within this study had participants imagine that they were experiencing solo status at a friend's house party. This interaction could be vastly different from an office meeting or classroom setting, which are most likely settings that the writer's participants are more commonly experiencing since the sample also came from the community. In addition, social settings may, at least in some cases, feel more voluntary than academic and work settings.

Solo Status and Anxiety

During this study, three hypotheses stated that there would be a relationship between solo status and anxiety. I examined whether state anxiety differed amongst participants exposed to the three different vignettes using an ANCOVA to test Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 stated that the solo status vignette would create more psychological effects in the form of state anxiety for participants, while controlling for social desirability and trait anxiety, compared to those in the other two vignettes; however, the ANCOVA revealed no effect. Hypothesis 4 stated that African American/Black participants with higher levels of trait anxiety would feel a greater obligation to represent their race. Hypothesis 4 was answered in the analysis for Hypothesis 5, which stated that the relationship between trait anxiety and obligation to represent would be stronger for individuals exposed to the solo status vignette than for individuals exposed to the vignette with two African American/Black individuals present and for individuals exposed to the even-split

vignette. A hierarchical multiple regression showed that the obligation to represent was not exacerbated in the solo status condition compared to the other two conditions. The solo status condition, where participants imagined being the only Black individual present in a room of White people. This condition was contrasted with the other two vignettes, one where there were 2 Black individuals in a room of White people and a vignette where there was an evenly distributed number of Black and White people in a room. Several factors may explain the failure to find support for both hypotheses.

With regards to Hypothesis 2, the author must consider again that the manipulation may not have worked to make participants feel as if they were experiencing a solo status situation. There could have also been the possibility that the Black people chosen to be in the picture may not have been salient enough since people within the Black race have varying skin tones with some skin tones being more salient than others (Cross, 1985; Gaither, et.al., 2014). Previous studies such as Steel and Aronson's (1995) study on stereotype threat, has shown how the relationship between racial saliency and state anxiety affect one another. The study on stereotype threat revealed that when a negative stereotype and race were made salient, participants felt higher levels of anxiety as given by the STAI, which was the same instrument this writer provided to participants. However, the manipulation may not have been as effective in creating racial saliency, which in turn could have affected participants' levels of state anxiety. However, there was a moderate bivariate correlation in a sub-hypothesis for Hypothesis 2 between trait anxiety and state anxiety, in which people with higher levels of trait anxiety had higher levels of state anxiety. Because this occurred, it was important to control for the trait anxiety variance on state anxiety. However, after conducting an ANCOVA it revealed that state anxiety did not differ across conditions, which was consistent with findings for Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 4 was answered in a regression analysis for Hypothesis 5 and the semipartial coefficient was examined, which showed that participants with higher trait anxiety felt more obligated to represent their race. This could mean that Black individuals with naturally higher levels of anxiety may also be more aware of their surroundings, have high levels of race consciousness, or feel a desire to alter their behavior in order to not draw attention to themselves or reinforce a negative stereotype, a pattern shown in studies throughout the literature to occur amongst Black individuals (Johnson et. al., 2016; Pollak & Niemann, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Having high levels of trait anxiety was primarily shown in Steele and Aronson's (1995) study when they introduced the concept of stereotype threat into the literature. Hypothesis 4 revealed that individuals with high trait anxiety would have a stronger obligation to represent, yet a sub-hypothesis in Hypothesis 5 showed that obligation to represent was not exacerbated in the solo status condition compared to the conditions where there were 2 Black individuals in a room and the condition where there was an even number of Black and White people in a room.

Even though trait anxiety did result in higher levels of obligation to represent it was not exacerbated in the solo status condition when being compared to the other 2 vignettes. This could be due to the tendency for highly anxious individuals to be nervous and very aware of their surroundings regardless of the setting (Waldman, 2004). People who are naturally anxious have a tendency to want to feel accepted and a desire to not stand out (Steele & Aronson, 1995), so in each situation they may have always felt a similar level of obligation to represent their race. Again, the manipulation may not have been effective enough to result in higher levels of anxiety or create a feeling of them being in a solo status situation. As previously discussed, the findings in past research for academic or work environments may not extend to the social situation that the writer incorporated into her manipulation.

Furthermore, it can be important to distinguish anxiety around evaluation in general, anxiety about evaluation because everyone is not like me, anxiety because people have a stereotype about me, feeling an obligation to represent one's race, and shifting one's behavior to represent one's race. These are closely related constructs that can co-operate but may be conceptually distinct. People who are anxious may fear that they are being evaluated in general. Due to a heightened sense of arousal, people who are anxious are very aware of their surroundings and may become worried that they are somehow different from the other people in the room and can fear their evaluation of them. However, there is a difference between fear of evaluation and fear because other's in a room, for example, are not like oneself. The fear that others are not like oneself can come from the same fear of evaluation, but this time the person is noticing a distinct difference that he/she has from others in the room. This could even lead a person to become aware of their difference to the point that they realize there are stereotypes about the difference that he/she holds apart from the others in the room. If these were seen as stages, the person who is experiencing this anxiety may begin to feel a desire to shift his/her behavior.

The writer viewed shifting behavior as a desire to not portray a negative stereotype that is related to a person's group. This can be seen in the code-switching literature, which is in reference to African American's changing their language when around other Black people or non-Black people (Young, 2014). The writer highlights that Black individuals will shift their behaviors when placed in certain social contexts surrounded by White individuals. Similar to code-switching and stereotype threat, it was suspected that shifting behavior would result in an obligation to represent one's race. In other words, when a Black individual begins to shift his/her behavior, he/she might be doing so in order to avoid negative stereotypes of one's race. This is

different from a general fear of evaluation because if a White person were to enter a room full of Black people, he/she would not have the same anxiety surrounding their racial group because the White racial group does not have as many negative stereotypes attached to their social group as the Black racial group does (Stewart, et. al., 2012). Thus, it would not create a sense of obligation to shift one's behaviors in an attempt to represent one's race. Finally, feeling an obligation to represent one's race is different from evaluation and anxiety in general because there is a social group connected to the individual that he/she is thinking of as they act. The thought of representing a social group is not connected to a fear of general evaluation and general anxiety.

Family Connectivity

A final hypothesis was tested to look at the potential connection between family ties and obligation to represent. It was assumed that participants with strong familial connections would feel a strong obligation to represent their race, which was tested in Hypothesis 6. A partial correlation revealed lack of a significant relationship between the two. Such a finding could be connected to the confidence and security that people tend to feel when they have a social support system. For instance, people with strong family support may feel like they are already secure in that system and may not feel an obligation to change their behavior in another system to feel connected to their race (because they already have security in their family system). Having a healthy social support network, especially a close and flexible family system, can help reduce the effects of everyday stressful events (Pollock, et. al., 2015). Family support can be a form of social support which has been shown to create self-confidence and improve self-esteem which has been shown to occur in Black individuals with a strong family system (Nillson et. al., 1999; Okeke-Adeyanju, 2015; Pollock, et. al., 2015).

Implications

This study has several implications. To begin, the manipulation did not result in higher levels of state anxiety for those who were assigned to the solo status vignette. Perhaps with a stronger manipulation, state anxiety may have been affected differently in the results. At the least, with a stronger manipulation, future researchers might be able to have a better understanding of social interactions that Black individuals encounter when experiencing solo status situations. This study's findings can prove helpful for future researchers and for therapists working with people in the Black community to know that there is no relationship between higher racial identity and obligation to represent. For example, if a therapist is working with a Black client who is struggling with his/her racial identity, it can be important to know, as a potential rule out of symptom causation, that higher levels of racial identity do not indicate more of an obligation to represent one's race.

This study also showed that Black individuals with high trait anxiety felt more of an obligation to represent their race. This knowledge can be helpful to teachers or employers. For example, several college counseling centers offer mental health screenings for students, whether it is for an outreach event, research, or intake paperwork collected before meeting a therapist (Quilantan, 2018). If a Black student were to take a screener for anxiety, this study could be provided as a resource for him/her to look to their environment as a potential reason as to why they are feeling anxious. If he/she feels obligated to represent their race, it could be affecting their level of anxiety. This finding can also prove beneficial for therapists holding group sessions to be aware of the potential for psychological distress that could be occurring for the Black individual in the room.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that may have affected the outcome of each hypothesis tested. To begin, the manipulation may not have been strong enough, or had any effect, to create high levels of state anxiety or an obligation to represent in participants as the writer anticipated. Although, steps were taken to control for attractiveness and facial expression by standing far away and blurring the picture, the picture may not have been blurred enough to control for these concerns. It should also be considered that viewing scenes in a picture that are meant to simulate social situations may not be strong enough to cause people to feel as if they were in the solo status situation. The measures that were used could also be a limitation to the study since they may not have been sensitive enough to measure any differences that may have been present. Instead of relying on self-report the researcher could have used a measure of physiological response to determine if the manipulation was having the effect that was expected before giving the measure of obligation to represent.

Another limitation that was not considered during the study was that people can identify as Black yet not identify as African American, such as Africans, or Afro-Latinx, or Caribbean individuals. The author did not sort the different identities out during the data collection process. Race is defined as a biological difference among people (i.e., Black and White), which was ultimately socially constructed as a hierarchical system to establish power between Europeans/Euro Americans and groups of people that they colonized or enslaved, whereas ethnicity refers to one's group affiliations that is typically associated with culture (i.e., African American or European; Williams & Deutsch, 2016). Each ethnicity has its own culture, and solo status situations along with obligation to represent one's race might be seen differently among the cultures. It should not be assumed that all people in the Black community have the same

concept of representing one's race or have experienced solo status situations often enough to feel anxious or any emotional distress. These distinctions were not clearly thought about in the process of selecting the measures, because as many researchers have done in the past (Douglas, Wang, & Yip, 2016; Phinney, 1990), the mistake of using race and ethnicity interchangeably occurred throughout the entire study. However, since they are not the same thing (Williams & Deutsch, 2016), and the writer focused on studying an obligation to represent race and not ethnicity from the perspective of Black people, a measure that would accurately measure a Black person's racial identity could have been more appropriate compared to the MEIM-R. Not having participants identify their ethnicity created a limitation because even though the MEIM-R is accurate at assessing ethnic identity across all ethnicities (Brown et. al., 2014; Phinney & Ong, 2007), it may have affected the interpretability of the data because differences between ethnic identity and race of participants were not taken under consideration.

Furthermore, the sample mostly attended Predominately White Institutions, also known as PWI's, where participants were more likely to experience solo status situations. This may not be representative of the general population where Black individuals may have a racially and ethnically diverse circle of friends or colleagues, in their everyday life. Unfortunately, Black students report feeling unwelcomed, unsupported and experience hostile interactions while attending PWI's (Lee & Barnes, 2015), yet this may not be reflective of the average experience of a Black individual in a workplace environment outside of a school setting. It must be acknowledged that these interactions may not be the same for all Black individuals outside of PWI's. Although, the opposite could have also taken place based on some studies that have shown that Black individuals with lighter skin tone attend college compared to peers with darker skin tone (Ryabov, 2013). Black individuals with lighter skin tones have been shown to have a

partiality toward and relate closer to White individuals (Hughes & Hertel, 2017), and because most of this study's sample came from colleges/universities, this partiality may have affected the way that participants responded to the manipulation. However, exploring the lack of skin tone in the findings is beyond the limits of this study, yet are still important to be recognized as a possible limitation to the results.

The MEIM-R is also limited because it was primarily tested on student samples. Although, there have been studies conducted with the MEIM-R on non-student samples, the MEIM-R's psychometric properties show that there is a large student sample (Brown et al., 2014). The lack of community sample that the MEIM-R has could be a reason as to why no relationship was found between obligation to represent and racial identity, in the course that some participants were obtained from the community in this study. Obligation to represent was negatively correlated to racial identity. People who reported having stronger racial identity felt less of a desire to represent. Most participants reported having a weaker racial identity compared to a stronger racial identity, which again could be due to the MEIM-R being a great measure of ethnic identity but not of racial identity, specifically Black racial identity because it may not have been precise enough. This could be due to the lack of a diverse sample or possibly because the items were not geared specifically toward Black racial identity.

Additionally, there was only one Black female in the solo status vignette, which was not reflective for each participant who was sorted into that condition. The vignettes included a picture and a written section that stated participants were invited to a party by a White friend where they either eventually notice that they are the only Black person in the room, one of two Black people, or that the room is evenly mixed. However, participants were never told to imagine that they were in the picture. Instead they were shown a picture of a Black person who

was already in the room. In the solo status vignette, for example, participants were instructed that they were entering the party of a friend where upon entering he/she notices that he/she is the only Black person in the room. However, the vignette picture already showed a Black individual in the room, which was not the actual participant. Additionally, the person in the solo status was a woman, and any man who participated in the study may not have been able to relate to this solo status situation that the writer attempted to create. Both situations could have weakened the manipulation, because showing a picture of a Black person already in the room who is not the participant could have created a sense of not feeling as if he/she was in a solo status situation.

Furthermore, the vignette asked participants to imagine that a friend invited them to a party, which could have given participants a sense of calm and possibly the expectation that the people at the party will be similar to their friend. Thus, this scenario would most likely not create a sense of anxiety or a felt obligation to represent their race. Also, the writer did not gather information about the social groups of participants, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the lack of knowledge about social groups of participants makes it difficult to know the extent to which individuals who infrequently find themselves in social settings where they are the only Black individual present were represented in the study sample.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research are suggested. To begin, based on the results it could be beneficial if the manipulation was stronger. This could be helpful so that the researcher would be able to say with enough confidence that the results were not found even with a strong manipulation. To make the manipulation stronger, the author would suggest adding more White people in the picture of the solo status vignette in the hopes of making the Black person in the picture more salient and for the room to look more crowded so as to add an

overwhelming effect to the situation. Another consideration to add in the solo status vignette would be for the picture to show the Black individual walking into the party, instead of being in the middle of the party, and for the written vignette to reflect this by explaining that upon walking into the room he/she notices immediately that he/she is the only Black person at the party. The hope would be that having participants view an image of an initial impact of a Black person walking into a solo status situation and imagining that they are also in the situation would help create a more realistic experience of the initial shock of entering a solo status situation. The picture would also depict the Black individual separated from the rest of the group as he/she would be at the door, or near it, which could portray a sense of non-belonging, which is a different message of belonging that is being sent from the person in the middle of the party. In order to further strengthen this manipulation, future researchers could have participants watch a video of a Black individual experiencing a solo status situation in a social setting instead of reading their assigned vignette and picture. To strengthen it even more, participants could be placed in one of the three rooms compared to having the vignettes. This would eliminate the need for participants to imagine a solo status situation and instead allow them to experience what it feels like to be the only Black person in a room.

It could also be more prudent to consider the positive effects of a strong racial identity verses only the potential negative effects. This could be helpful so that the researchers can have an understanding of how beneficial a strong racial identity can be. Furthermore, if a researcher is measuring race and not ethnicity, the writer would suggest obtaining a measure that could more accurately measure Black racial identity instead of utilizing a measure that is more suited to assess ethnic identity. Although, the MEIM-R has been known to be effective in measuring

ethnic identity across various groups, it can be complicating to state that a researcher is studying racial identity yet uses a measure of ethnic identity instead.

Another recommendation would be to find more ways to gather participants other than via emails to black organizations at colleges/universities since this was very difficult and time consuming to do. Although, FindParticipants.com was utilized for faster data collection, there were other options that could have been considered before this, such as going onto Black listservs, attending classes or organizations to gather data via a survey, or utilizing newsletters to collect data from participants could be helpful. This research is important to the literature due to the lack of current research on representation of race within the Black community. Further research in this area could prove useful to therapists, teachers, researchers, and people within the Black community as well to understand what would cause Black individuals to feel an obligation to represent one's race.

Conclusion

Ultimately, only Hypothesis 4 was supported in the present study. The findings showed that Black individuals with a higher level of trait anxiety felt more of an obligation to represent their race. A stronger racial identity may have had a different effect on participants than anticipated, in that it may have meant participants had more confidence verses more anxiety, especially in solo status situations. Interestingly, most of the participants had a low ethnic identity strength, which did not allow for enough variability to detect a significant difference amongst the conditions. Furthermore, the manipulation may not have been strong enough to allow for significant results to occur, which should be considered in future research.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

I am a counseling psychology doctoral candidate in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling at Auburn University. Currently, I am completing my dissertation under the guidance of Dr. Annette Kluck. I would like to invite you to participate in my study, which examines social interactions with African American/Black individuals over the age of 19. **Participants can enter in a drawing for one of four \$25 eGift cards to Amazon.** I invite you to participate in the study and I ask that you please pass this email along to your Black Student union members and colleagues. Please also pass this study along to non-Black student union members who meet the inclusion criteria listed below.

You are eligible to participate in the study if you are between the ages of 19-40 years old and identify as an African American/Black individual. The study is comprised of an online survey, which should take about **10-15 minutes to complete**. Any data collected in this study will remain anonymous. At the end of the survey, participants who are interested in entering into a drawing for one of four eGift cards to Amazon will provide their email address in a separate survey. That email address will be used to award the eGift card to the participant. If you are interested in participating, this link will lead you to an informational letter surrounding the study and the survey: https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_25z7gQWOw5HVo7H

If you would like to know more information about this study, please feel free to email me first, Jasmine Tyson, at jzt0014@auburn.edu or my advisor, Dr. Annette Kluck (ask0002@auburn.edu). Thank you for taking the time to read this email and your commitment to the Black community.

Best,
Jasmine ☺

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Appendix B
Demographics Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity? Mark all that apply.
 - a. African American/Black
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. White/Caucasian
 - d. Hispanic/Latino/Latina
 - e. Native American/Alaska Native
 - f. Other
3. What region of the country are you're from?
 - a. South
 - b. Northeast
 - c. Southwest
 - d. Midwest
 - e. Mountain
 - f. Pacific (including Hawaii and Alaska)
 - g. I am not from the US
4. Please indicate your year in school at the university:
 - a. First year undergraduate
 - b. Second year undergraduate
 - c. Third year undergraduate
 - d. Fourth year or beyond...
 - e. Graduate student
 - f. Non-degree seeking/other
5. What is your gender or gender identity?
 - a. Man
 - b. Woman
 - c. Transgender man
 - d. Transgender woman
 - e. Other
6. What type of college do you attend?
 - a. HBCU
 - b. Public
 - c. Private

Appendix C
Manipulation check

How many African Americans/Black individuals did you see in the picture? _____

Appendix D
Vignette with Vignette Pictures

Solo Status Vignette

A good friend, who is White, invites you to a party at her house. Upon arrival at her house your friend greets you warmly and you see a house full of people having an enjoyable time socializing. After mingling for about 5 minutes you also notice that you are the only Black person and everyone else is White.



1 of 2 Black individuals present

A good friend, who is White, invites you to a party at her house. Upon arrival at her house your friend greets you warmly and you see a house full of people having an enjoyable time socializing. After mingling for about 5 minutes you also notice that you are only 1 of 2 Black individuals present at the party and everyone else is White.



Half Black and half White individuals present

A good friend, who is White, invites you to a party at her house. Upon arrival at her house your friend greets you warmly and you see a house full of people having an enjoyable time socializing. After mingling for about 5 minutes you also notice that the racial representation of Black and White individuals present at the party is about 50% even



Appendix E
Vignette Picture Information Letter

I consent to this picture being taken and I understand that my likeness will be used for the purpose of this study conducted by Jasmine Tyson. The study will be placed online and the picture will be located on a link where the study can be found.

Name of participant _____ Date _____

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Appendix F
List of Black Student Unions/Organizations

Alabama

- Auburn University
 - Group: BSU
 - President/contact info: John Blanding job0007@auburn.edu

 - **Group:** Black Graduate and Professional Student Association
 - Contact info: aubgpsa@gmail.com, Dr. Calder ckc0024@auburn.edu, Dr. Norton (Pres) Norton jrn0010@auburn.edu, Dr. Hunter (Advisor) eac0006@auburn.edu, Dr. Roberts nrr0012@auburn.edu

- University of Alabama – Sent
 - Group: BSU
 - President/contact info: Candance Allen clallen6@crimson.ua.edu and Darnell Sharperson ddsharperson@crimson.ua.edu (VP)

 - **Group:** African American Graduate Student Association
 - Contact info: aagsaua@bama.ua.edu, Dr. Holland (president) sholland@crimson.ua.edu, Dr. Robinson (VP) rmrobinson5@crimson.ua.edu, Dr. Singleton (Advisor) Gsingleton@eng.ua.edu
 - **Group:** Black Faculty and Staff Association Ambassadors
 - Contact info: BlackFSA@ua.edu, Dr. Long jklong2@crimson.ua.edu, Dr. Mosley fmosley@crimson.ua.edu, Dr. Payne-Foster ppayne-foster@cchs.ua.edu

Arizona

- University of Northern Arizona
 - Group: BSU
 - President/contact info: Dr. Fredrick Gooding Jr. Frederick.Gooding-Jr@nau.edu

- University of Arizona
 - Group: African American Student Affairs
 - President/contact info: lambetht@email.arizona.edu K.C Williams (Director) kcwilliams@email.arizona.edu Zachary Brown (Coordinator) zrbrown@email.arizona.edu

 - **Group:** BSU
 - Contact info: uofablackstudentunion@gmail.com

 - **Group:** University of Arizona Black Alumni (UABA)
 - Contact info: tanishap@email.arizona.edu

Arkansas

- University of Arkansas
 - Group: BSU
 - President/contact info: Facebook
- University of Arkansas
 - Group: African Students Association
 - President/contact info: Emmanuel Onochie enonochie@ualr.edu and Davie Briscoe dlbriscoe@ualr.edu

California

- UC Davis
 - Group: Black Student Union
 - Email: mmawilliams@ucdavis.edu
 - **Group:** Black Graduate and Professional Students Association
 - Contact info: bgpsa.ucdavis@gmail.com
- UC Berkley
 - **Group:** Black Graduate Student Association
 - Email: gpherribo@berkeley.edu
 - **Group:** BSU
 - Email: chair.calbsu@gmail.com
 - **Group:** Black Engineering and Science Students Association
 - Email: ucberkeleybessa@gmail.com
 - **Group:** Black Graduate Engineering and Science Students
 - Email: cbiaou@berkeley.edu
 - **Group:** Black Students in Health Association
 - Email: calbsha@gmail.com

Colorado

- University of Colorado at Boulder
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: Xavier.Cochrane@colorado.edu and Victoria Dadet Victoria.Dadet@colorado.edu
 - coloradobsa@gmail.com
 - **Group:** Black Law Students Association (BLSA)
 - Email: hella.zelleke@colorado.edu
- University of Northern Colorado
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Bri Gilbert gilb1268@bears.unco.edu
 - **Group:** Black Women of Today
 - Contact info: Talaya Banks Bank5407@bears.unco.edu

Connecticut

- University of Connecticut
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsa.uconn@gmail.com
 - **Group:** Black Student Association
 - Email: waterburybsa@gmail.com

- Eastern Connecticut State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Jeannine Batiste (advisor) batistej@easternct.edu and Chris Ambrosio ambrosioc@easternct.edu
 - Group: Caribbean Students Organization
 - Email: csa@my.easternct.edu Damali Abbensetts (Advisor) abbensettsd@easternct.edu, Indira Petoskey petoskeyi@easternct.edu, Lloyd Weir weirl@easternct.edu

Delaware

- University of Delaware
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsu.udel@gmail.com

Florida

- University of Central Florida
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Brandon Briggs sec.bsu1969@gmail.com
 - **Group:** Black Female Development Circle
 - Email: bfdcucf@gmail.com
 - Group: National Black Law Student Association
 - Email: ucfnblsa@gmail.com
- Florida Atlantic University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Juan Izaguirre Pena jizagui2@fau.edu
 - **Group:** National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
 - Email: ncnwfau1935@gmail.com

Georgia

- Georgia State University
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: cmccrary@gsu.edu Bernard McCrary
 - Group: Black Graduate Student Association
 - Email: cmccrary@gsu.edu Bernard McCrary and bgsa.gsu@gmail.com

Hawaii

- University of Hawaii at Manoa
 - Group: Office of Multicultural Student Services
 - Email: bautista@hawaii.edu

Idaho

- Boise State University
 - Group: Afro-Black Student Alliance
 - Email: nandiialexander@u.boisestate.edu Nnandii Alexander, President
-

Illinois

- Northeastern Illinois University
 - Group: African, African American Student Resources (send email inquiring about her sending this to a BSU or equivalent group)
 - Email: Meagan Mitchell at m-mitchell4@neiu.edu
- Western Illinois University
 - Group: Black Student Association
 - Email: lt-cooper@wiu.edu La'India Cooper (president), cj-simien@wiu.edu Carl Simien

Indiana

- Purdue University
 - Group: Black Student Union
 - Email: evans274@purdue.edu Lillian Evan (Advisor)
- Indiana State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: dinkle2@sycamores.indstate.edu Devin Hinkle (Chief Executive Officer), rthigpen@sycamores.indstate.edu Raelyn Thigpen (Chief Membership Officer), Julia.Bruce@indstate.edu Julia Bruce (Advisor)

Iowa

- The University of Iowa
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: arika-allen@uiowa.edu Arika Allen, amari-douglas@uiowa.edu Amari Douglas, nakiya-handy@uiowa.edu Nakiya Handy, shantel-turner@uiowa.edu Shantel Turner
- University of Northern Iowa
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Brittany Hudson britt.hudson@uni.edu, Juana Hollingsworth juana.hollingsworth@uni.edu

Kansas

- Kansas State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Bryon K. Williams bryon@k-state.edu (Advisor), Bryan Davis bryandavis20@k-state.edu (President)
- Wichita State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Khristian Jones kxjones2@wichita.edu (President), Karina Moody krmood@wichita.edu (Vice-President), Traniece Bruce traniece.bruce@wichita.edu (Advisor)

Kentucky

- University of Kentucky
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Kahlil G. Baker kahlil.baker@uky.edu (Advisor), David Simms d.simms14@uky.edu (President)
- Kentucky:
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: Ryan Dearbone (Advisor) ryan.dearbone@wku.edu, Dexter Crowdus (President) dexter.crowdus670@topper.wku.edu

Louisiana

- Louisiana Tech University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: dlvaughn@latech.edu Devonia Love-Vaughn (Advisor)
- Southeastern Louisiana University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Braylen Hamilton braylen.hamilton@selu.edu (President), Lorrienne Lucas lorrienne.lucas@selu.edu

Maryland

- University of Maryland
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: tadams14@Terpmail.umd.edu Tamara Adams (President)
- Towson University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Anee Korme (Advisor) akorme@towson.edu

Massachusetts

- Westfield State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Ashiah Richeme (Advisor) aricheme@westfield.ma.edu
-

Michigan

- The University of Michigan
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: BSUeboard17-18@umich.edu
- Michigan State University
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: Jasmine Lee (Advisor) leejasm@msu.edu, Shanika Dalise Kidd (Group Admin) kiddshan@msu.edu bsaemail1@gmail.com

Minnesota

- University of Minnesota
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsu@umn.edu
- Minnesota State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsu@mnsu.edu, Kenneth Reid (Advisor) kenneth.reid@mnsu.edu

Mississippi

- University of Mississippi
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Nekkita Beans (President) nsbeans@go.olemiss.edu, umissbsu@gmail.com
- Mississippi State University
 - Group: Black Student Association
 - Email: Arsemen Brow (President) amb1278@msstate.edu, Khara Robinson (VP) knr212@msstate.edu, Rasheda Boddie-Forbes (Advisor) rboddie-forbes@saffairs.msstate.edu

Missouri

- Missouri State University
 - Group: Association of Black Collegians
 - Email: deandrebranch@MissouriState.edu
- University of Missouri
 - Group: Legion of Black Collegians
 - Email: Marshall Allen (President) matk7@mail.missouri.edu, Tyler Brumfield (VP) tlb7wb@mail.missouri.edu, Velma Buckner (Advisor) bucknerv@missouri.edu, Shelby Anderson (Co-Advisor) sdaqn8@mail.missouri.edu

Montana

- University of Montana
 - Group: BSU

- Email: LeShawn George leshawn.george@umontana.edu, Dr. George Price george.price@mso.umt.edu

Nebraska

- University of Nebraska Omaha
 - Group: Black Excellence
 - Email: Multicultural Affairs mca@unomaha.edu to send to the student organization Black Excellence members and advisor
- University of Nebraska Kearney
 - Group: Black Student Association
 - Email: Tori Payne (President) paynetd@lopers.unk.edu, Dr. Mueller (Advisor) muellermr2@unk.edu

Nevada

- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
 - Group: Black Student Organization
 - Email: Dr. Oakes (Chief Diversity Officer) barbee.oakes@unlv.edu to contact the Black Student Organization members
- University of Nevada, Reno
 - Group: Black Student Organization
 - Email: Precious Gbenjo (VP) oluwafemifolag@nevada.unr.edu, Ronald Dupree (Advisor) rondupree12@gmail.com

New Hampshire

- Plymouth State University
 - BSU
 - Email: Brian Dye bsdye@plymouth.edu to send to BSU members

New Jersey

- Rutgers University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Paul Robeson Cultural Center prccrutgers@echo.rutgers.edu
- William Patterson University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Danielle Wallace (Advisor) wallaced12@wpunj.edu

New Mexico

- University of New Mexico
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Brandi Stone (Advisor) bcw29@unm.edu, bsu@unm.edu, Arlen D. Nelson adbnelson56@unm.edu, Addryll L. Nance nancea@unm.edu
- Eastern New Mexico University

- Group: Brothers and Sisters United Organization
- Email: Dr. Jeffery Long jeff.long@enmu.edu

New York

- Albany State University
 - Group: Black Alliance
 - Email: secretary.asuba@gmail.com
- State University of New York Geneseo
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsu@geneseo.edu

North Carolina

- North Carolina State University
 - Group: African American Student Advisory Council (ask to send to AASAC organizations)
 - Email: Leah Young (Advisor) lyoung3@ncsu.edu, Kenton Gibbs (Chairperson) aasacncsu@gmail.com
 - Group: Black Student's Board
 - Email: Raven Blount uab-blackstudentsboard@ncsu.edu
- East Carolina University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Tyler Morrison (President) morrisont11@students.ecu.edu, Jasmyn Troy (VP) troyj11@students.ecu.edu,

North Dakota

- University of North Dakota
 - Group: BSA
 - Email: Tamba-Kuui Bailey tambakuui.bailey@und.edu

Ohio

- The Ohio State University
 - Group: Black Student Association
 - Email: Jaden Royal royal.36@osu.edu, Kristofer Yarborough yarborough.20@osu.edu, Jasmine Hamilton (Advisor) hamilton.622@osu.edu and osubsa@gmail.com
- Miami University (Oxford)
 - Group: Black Student Action Association
 - Email: Paris Morgan morganpb@miamioh.edu
- Kent State University
 - Group: Black United Students
 - Email: Iniah Dunbar (President) %20idunbar@kent.edu
- University of Cincinnati

- Group: United Black Student Association
- Email: Satra Taylor (President) white2li@mail.uc.edu, Marilyn Kershaw (Advisor) kershamn@ucmail.uc.edu

Oklahoma

- University of Oklahoma
 - Group: Black Student Association
 - Email: Nathan Bowser (President) nebowser@ou.edu, Kennedie Akinwande (VP) kennedie.akinwande@ou.edu, oubsa1967@ou.edu
- University of Central Oklahoma
 - Group: Black Student Association
 - Email: Tobie Mitchell (President) tmitchell27@uco.edu, Kedriuna Townsend (VP) ktownsend4@uco.edu, Andy Reza (Advisor) preza@uco.edu

Oregon

- University of Oregon
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsu@uoregon.edu
- Oregon State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: blackstudentunion@oregonstate.edu

Pennsylvania

- Penn State
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Sheritha Mclean (President) sam6322@psu.edu, Joann Claude (VP) jsc5499@psu.edu, Annemarie Mingo (Advisor) axm583@psu.edu
- Edinboro University
 - Group: Black Student Union Association
 - Email: Pertrina Marrero (Director of Diversity and Inclusion) pmarrero@edinboro.edu ask to send to Black Student Union Association and other similar groups

Rhode Island

- University of Rhode Island
 - Group: NAACP
 - Email: Adrian Batista naacpuribranch@gmail.com
- Rhode Island College
 - Group: Harambee
 - Email: harambee@so.ric.edu

South Carolina

- University of South Carolina
 - Group: Association of African American Students
 - Email: Lashawna Wright (Advisor) wrightlat@mailbox.sc.edu
- Clemson University
 - Group: Clemson BSU
 - Email: Ian Bateman (President) ibatema@clemson.edu, Alesia Smith (Advisor) alesias@clemson.edu
- College of Charleston
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Lanasa Clarkson (President) clarksonla@g.cofc.edu

South Dakota

- University of South Dakota
 - Group: Union of African American Students
 - Email: uaas@coyotes.usd.edu

Tennessee

- University of Tennessee Knoxville
 - Group: Black Cultural Programming Committee
 - Email: Tanisha Jenkins bcpc@utk.edu
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Dr. Shannen Williams swill132@utk.edu, Ashley Evans aevans48@vols.utk.edu, Joshua Oliver jolive21@vols.utk.edu
- Middle Tennessee State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: mtsublackstudentunion@outlook.com

Texas

- University of Texas at Austin
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: texasbsa@gmail.com
- University of Texas at Houston
 - Group: Black Student Union
 - Email: uhblackstudentunion@gmail.com
- University of Texas at Dallas
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: Tierra Anderson txa150530@utdallas.edu, Monica Williamson (Advisor) monica.williamson@utdallas.edu, Calvinah Jenkins, BSA President csj140230@utdallas.edu, bsautd@gmail.com
- Sam Houston State University
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: lqh001@shsu.edu

- University of North Texas
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Lauren Whiteman (Advisor) lauren.whiteman@unt.edu, Dominique Thomas untbsu.president@gmail.com
- Texas A&M
 - Group: T.E.A.A.C.H (Teaching Everyone African American Culture & Heritage)
 - Email: Krystal Parks, Krystalparks@tamu.edu

Utah

- Utah State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: BSU@usu.edu
- Weber State University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Ikwo Frank ikwofrank@weber.edu, Betty Sawyer (Advisor) bettysawyer@weber.edu, michaelacarson@mail.weber.edu

Vermont

- The University of Vermont
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: uvmbsu@gmail.com

Virginia

- University of Virginia
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: Bsaatuva@gmail.com
- Virginia Tech University
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: bsa@vt.edu
 - Group: Black Organizations Council
 - Email: bocatvt@gmail.com

Washington

- University of Washington
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: uwtbsu@gmail.com

West Virginia

- Marshall University
 - Group: Black United Students Social Club
 - Email: Alexis Tyson, tyson13@marshall.edu

Wisconsin

- University of Wisconsin – Madison
 - Group: Wisconsin BSU
 - Email: mjmays@wisc.edu
- University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
 - Group: BSU
 - Email: BSUMKE@gmail.com, Nia Wilson nmwilson@uwm.edu

Wyoming

- University of Wyoming
 - Group: Black Student Alliance
 - Email: rcifto1@uwyo.edu

Appendix G
Information Letter
for a Research Study entitled

“Social Experiences for African American/Black Individuals”

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL NUMBER WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

**INFORMATION LETTER for a Research Study entitled
Social Experiences of African American/Black Individuals**

You are invited to participate in a research study to that will explore how African American/Black individuals think about social situations. The study is being conducted by Jasmine Tyson under the direction of Dr. Annette Kluck in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you identify as African American/Black and are between ages of 19-40 years old. *If you have already participated in this study please do not take this survey. You are only eligible to take this survey and enter the raffle once.*

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete 5 questionnaires, read a short vignette, and look at a picture that relates to the vignette. Afterward, you will be given the choice to enter a drawing for a \$25 Amazon eGift. Your total time commitment will be approximately 10-15 minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts? I cannot guarantee privacy in regards to the surrounding area that you take this survey; therefore, I recommend that you take this survey in an area in which others cannot see your computer screen.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? There are no direct benefits to you for participating.

Will you receive compensation for participating? To thank you for your time you will be entered in a raffle for a \$25 Amazon eGift card if you choose to enter your email at the end of the survey.

Are there any costs? There are no costs for you to participate in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, Jasmine Tyson, M.Ed, or Annette S. Kluck, PhD.

Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. We have created a separate survey that will automatically appear after you see the screen indicating that you have completed the study. You will enter your email in that separate survey if you wish to be entered into the drawing. The responses from the two surveys are kept separate and are not linked. In addition, only your responses to the study questions (not your email) will be downloaded and retained after the end of the study. Keeping your email separate will prevent individuals from matching your email to your responses to the questions. The data you provide will be confidential and stored in a format making it unidentifiable.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation will be used to fulfill an educational requirement and may be published in a professional journal, or presented at a professional meeting.

If you have questions about this study, contact Jasmine Tyson at jzt0014@auburn.edu or Dr. Annette Kluck at ask0002@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR DATA PROVIDED IN THE SURVEY INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 2/10/2018 to 6/15/2020. Protocol #17-213 EX 1706.