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Examining the Relationship Between Rural African-American Adolescents' Self-Perception and Their Academic Performance

Vincent Dewayne Tompkins
Walden University

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Vincent D. Tompkins

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

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Perception and Their Academic Performance

by

Vincent D. Tompkins

MEd, Delta State University, 2007

BS, Delta State University, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Counselor Education and Supervision

Walden University

June 2020

Abstract

Poverty, crime, and the need for public assistance are associated with dropping out of high school in the United States. African American adolescents have a higher dropout rate than their White peers, especially in the rural south. Moreover, racial discrimination toward African American adolescents is more prevalent in the rural south compared with the urban areas of United States. Academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination are probable factors that influence African American adolescents to leave school before they graduate. This study was conducted to determine a relationship between the combination of rural African American adolescent's academic self-perception as measured by Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents and experienced racial discrimination as measured by Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and its association with academic performance measured by grade point average. A total of 106 African American adolescents (age 14-17 years = 65.1% and Grade Level 12 = 36.8%) who lived in rural communities of the northwestern region of the Mississippi Delta were surveyed, and grade point average data were collected. A multiple regression analysis was run for this study using enter data entry. The results indicated that academic self-perception contributes to academic performance for this sample. In contrast, experienced racial discrimination was not a significant predictor of academic performance for this sample. Implications of the findings relate to how academic self-perception will bring about positive social change by school counselors and mental health school-based therapists identifying ways to increase academic self-perception. This will be a small step towards a safer and productive society.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to God, without his providence, provision, power and wisdom this dissertation would not have been written and Jesus Christ who is my personal Savior and Redeemer. I wish to further dedicate this dissertation to my loving parents the late James and Irene Tompkins my parental grandmother the late Willie Mae Youngblood, and my uncle the late James Youngblood who all gave me a foundation for life and taught me to do my best and be the best in all that I do. In addition, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my god-fathers the late Johnny Lewis, Joe Burton and god-mother Geraldine Burton who aspired me to achieve greatness in all that I do.

Above all, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife of 18 years Monica Tompkins. Words cannot describe the love and support she has given me through this process. Thank you so much! I also wish to dedicate this dissertation to my son Josiah Tompkins and Ireanna Tompkins, who I am so proud to be their father and who keep me young. I would like to acknowledge my brothers Willie Youngblood and James Tompkins Jr. and uncle and aunt Augustus and Cathy Youngblood who gave me support, helping hands, and sometimes short unique pep talks. I also wish to acknowledge John and Helena Beasley and Marlon and Valerie Johnson for their support, laughter and friendship. In addition, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my god-mother Georgia Lewis, who encouraged me and believed in me when sometimes I did not believe in myself. I wish to acknowledged my brother-in-law Aldo Johnson for his support and lending a helping hand, my uncle in laws Tony Richards and John Richards who gave me pep talks that encourage me to forge on and do not give up and to my aunt in law Dr.

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Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academic Self-Perception	2	2	4	2.99	.649
Experienced Racial Discrimination	11	0	11	4.23	3.037
Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.48	1.43	3.91	2.96	.476

Note: N=106

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academic Self-Perception	2	2	4	3.00	.649
Experienced Racial Discrimination	11	0	11	4.14	3.033
Grade Point Average (GPA)	1.64	2.27	3.91	2.99	.42408

Note: N=103 after dropping three cases.

Table 3.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.320	.103	.085	.40572

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Experienced Racial Discrimination Responses Sum Score, Academic Self-Perception Mean=Score
- b. Dependent Variable: Grade Point Average

Table 4.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1.883	2	.942	5.720	.004
Residual	16.461	100	.165		
Total	18.344	102			

a. Dependent Variable: Grade Point Average

b. Predictors: (Constant), Experienced Racial Discrimination Responses Sum Score, Academic Self-Perception Mean =Score

Table 5.

Coefficients of Variables

Variables	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.497	.203		12.284	.000
Academic Self- Perception	.188	.062	.288	3.031	.003
Experienced Racial Discrimination	-.016	.013	-.116	-1.222	.225

a. Dependent Variable: Grade Point Average

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Individuals begin to mold their self-image in the adolescence stage (Todd & Kent, 2003). Todd and Kent (2003) noted that this is the time in development when the *self* becomes the main focus. The authors noted that life transitions occur during adolescence where self becomes more exact and discrete, physical changes occur and academic identity emerges (Todd & Kent, 2003). Todd and Kent noted that during this stage, adolescents recognize who they are and how they fit into the world. Campbell, Pungello and Johnson (2002) found that children begin to be concerned about how others perceive them during adolescence. Jacobs, Bleeker, and Constantino (2003) elucidated that they consider what others expect them to be and include and internalize this expectation in their self-concept. In the same vein, they amalgamate their life experiences that they abstractly define as self (Jacobs et al., 2003). Young children often rate themselves highly in all domains such as social acceptance, ability and achievement, appearance, athletic ability, and behavior; however, adolescents become more critical of themselves in those domains (Campbell et al., 2002).

According to Baumeister, Campell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003), an increase or decrease in an individual's self-esteem corresponded with success and failure in life. Additionally, they found that this correspondence lends credence to the notion that an individual's level of self-esteem or self-perception is both the result and the cause of life's major successes and failures (Baumeister et al., 2003). However, policy makers, researchers, and educators have made the phenomenon of underachievement among

African-American adolescents in education an issue (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009). According to Fram, Miller-Cribbs, and Horn (2007), this phenomenon, is one of the consequence of racial discrimination against African-Americans as a race group who is marginalized in society. Dotterer et al. (2009) asserted that discrimination at school can possibly influence on school engagement by undermining self-confidence of students in the school. Some researchers found that racial discrimination affect self-esteem (Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2010; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006). Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003) found a negative correlation between self-perception and racial discrimination.

There is a distinction between self-esteem and self-perception (Marsha & O'Mara, 2008; Choi, 2005). In addition, self-perception is the variable that needs to be measured regarding performance (Marsh & O'Mara, 2008). Self-perception is a cognitive description of an individual's attributes and the affective evaluation of those attributes (Choi 2005). In this study, I examined the potential relationship between rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and academic performance to determine whether African-American adolescents' academic self-perception predicts academic performance. In addition, I examined experienced racial discrimination as secondary variable to ascertain whether a link exists between an experience of discrimination and African-American adolescent's academic self-perception and its relationship with academic performance.

Through this study, I hoped to identify a new way school counselors and school-based mental counselors approach high school dropout rates among African-American

students and racial discrimination in schools in the rural southern region of the United States. African-American adolescents have the highest dropout rate compared with White students (American Psychological Association, 2012). According to Kerpelman, Eryigit, and Stephens (2008), African-American adolescents have a greater proportion of academic barriers including underachievement and disengagement, and a disproportionately high rate of suspension and expulsions, compared with White adolescents. These academic barriers and other external factors such as minority status, living in poverty, and parental involvement influence their decision to drop out of high school (Davis, Ajzen, Saunders, & Williams, 2002). Ikomi (2010) noted that the action of dropping out of high school leads to unemployment, dependency on welfare, and increased violent felonies.

To address the high school drop out rate, the school counselor and mental health school-based counselors will potentially need to change or expand the ways they address the needs of African-American adolescents (Griffin & Steen, 2011). Through the current study, I hoped to broaden the understanding of poor academic performance and underachievement among rural African-American adolescents. Moreover, the knowledge gained from this study may help provide information leading to the creation effective intervention strategies may reduce dropout rates and bring greater awareness to the existence of racial discrimination in schools in the south regions and its effect on academic performance. Moreover, I hope that this study lead to future research in these areas.

In the following sections of this chapter, I explained the background of the problem, the problem statement, and the purpose of the study. I identified the research questions and hypotheses for this study. I elucidated the theoretical framework and the nature of this study. I defined key terms that was used through out this study. I recognized the assumptions, the scope and delimitations, and limitations of this study. I explained the significance of this study and provide a summary of this study.

Background of the Problem

Five studies revealed that adolescents with poor academic self-perceptions exhibit poor academic performance (Gordon, 2016; Joshi & Srivastava, 2014; Marsh, & O'Mara, 2008; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Preckel & Brunner, 2015). In addition, self-perception appears to be linked to many areas of psychology such as educational, developmental, health, social and personality psychology (Marsh & Craven, 2006). For example, Marsh and Craven (2006) found that researchers who investigate constructs other than self-perception are intrigued by how those constructs are related to self-perception. Sullivan and Evans (2009) asserted that self-perception is a factor in some adolescents leaving school early.

Researchers of cognitive development and educational psychology indicate that self-perception is multidimensional and young people's self-beliefs differ among domains of academic, social, emotional, and physical (Harter, 2012). Marsh, Trautwein, Ludtke, Koller, and Baumert (2005) indicated that young children are able to distinguish between different domains of self-perception. This differentiation occurs as children mature and encounter different experiences with and elucidations of their environment

(Marsh & O'Mara, 2008). Once young people reach adolescence, they begin to differentiate from one another along areas of academic, social, emotional, and physical than others (Saunders, Davis, Williams, & Williams, 2004).

Adolescents determine their academic self-perceptions only after they have received feedback on their academic competence from teachers and other persons involved in their education (Mandelman et al., 2010; Parker, 2010). Several researchers found that academic self-perception moderately correlates with academic performance in a diverse population of adolescents in urban school district (Campbell et al., 2002; Gillock & Reyes, 1996; Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh et al., 2005; Stringer & Heath, 2008).

According to Jones, Irvin, and Kibe (2012), researchers conducted the majority of the studies concerning the relationship among African-American adolescents' self-perception and academic achievement and performance in urban settings. However, Irvin (2012) indicated that adolescents from different ethnic groups in the rural south experience poverty; however, African-American adolescents who live in rural areas tend to encounter the most chronic and severe poverty. Moreover, Sullivan et al. (2005) found that poverty tends to engender deleterious behaviors such as truancy and failure to complete school. They determined that rural and urban African-American adolescents who live in poverty conditions tend not to achieve as much in the academic settings (Sullivan, Evans, & Johnson, 2005).

Kerpelman et. al. (2008) wrote "When African-American students do not see the academic domain as supporting their self-conception, they seek outlets other than

academic achievement to feel more positive about themselves” (p.997). In other words, attention to African-American adolescents’ self-perceptions in the academic domain needs to be increased and the adolescents themselves need to be encouraged if they are to gain academic success. Jones et al. (2012) posited that research indicates that possessing a greater academic self-perception correlates with higher academic performance. However, this declaration did not include for rural African-American adolescents who reside in the Mississippi Delta.

According to Gnuschke, Hyland, Wallace, Hanson, and Smith (2008) the Mississippi Delta is flat land that stretches from the tip of Memphis, Tennessee, down to Vicksburg, Mississippi, with the Mississippi River on the western border. This area is conventionally agricultural and predominantly rural (Yadrick, et al., 2001). The Mississippi Delta represents one of the poorest areas in the United States (Khan, Hayes, Armstrong, & Rohner, 2010). Killbrew, Smith, Nevels, Weiss, and Gontkovsky (2008) indicated some of the socioeconomic conditions in this area resemble those of a developing country. According to Morris and Monroe (2009), the U.S. South is a significant region in comprehending the schooling experience of African-Americans. They asserted that the majority of African-Americans in United States reside in the southern region of United States (Morris & Monroe, 2009). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 55% of African Americans in the United States reside in the southern region of the United States, up from 53% in 2000 (U.S. Census, 2010).

Although high schools in the Mississippi Delta are frequently integrated, most public schools are predominantly African-American (Al-Fadhli & Singh, 2010; Eckes,

2006). According to Eckes (2006), in response to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to desegregating Mississippi Delta schools in 1965, most White families in the rural Mississippi Delta area built and sent their children to private academies. She noted that these private schools still function today and located a few miles from predominately black public schools (Eckes, 2006). According to Morris and Monroe (2009) the U.S south has a history of segregated schools. Seaton and Yip (2009) noted that racial segregation is associated with racial discrimination. Eckes (2006) found that these conditions have negative effects on the educational systems. Minorities who are in currently segregated schools have the least institutional support (Helig & Holme, 2013).

Griffin and Steen (2011) noted that students of color are affected by numerous social, psychological, and environmental factors, but educational strategies and policies are focused only on school improvements and curriculum. In addition, these authors indicated that improving the schools' system and curriculum do not include all the changes necessary to ameliorate student academic performance including reducing drop out rates (Griffin & Steen, 2011). Through this study, I planned to examine academic self-perception as a factor that affects the African-American adolescents' academic performance. This study may potentially provided school counselors and mental health school-based counselors information about the relationship between the combination of African-Americans adolescents' academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its connection to academic performance. This awareness may lead educators, school counselors, and mental health school-based counselor to develop

strategies and interventions that could improve the self-perceptions of African-American adolescents and discourage racial discrimination in schools and school policies (Helig & Holme, 2013) to boost their academic performance. In addition, these strategies and intervention may assist in reducing the high dropout rate among African-Americans adolescents, and lead to a decrease in crime rates, unemployment rates and the demands on social services from this cohort.

The importance of academic performance should not be minimized in the efforts to reduce high school dropout rates. Students must achieve a certain level of academic performance to complete high school (Sirin & Sirin, 2005). This level of academic performance has been defined by passing grades in a required set of courses and overall grade point average (GPA) (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Cokley, McClain, Jones, & Johnson, 2012; Sirin & Sirin, 2005). Somers, Owens, and Piliawsky (2009) found one characteristic of students dropping out of high school includes poor academic performance. Moreover, they indicated that some dropout-prevention initiatives sought to improve academic performance by integrating experiential learning and varied instructional styles to suit diverse learning styles (Somers et al., 2009). The results of my study may also assist professional counselors in promoting teachers to provide varied instructional styles that are more likely to fit the diverse learning styles of African-American adolescents and ultimately heighten their self-perception. Moreover, school counselors and mental health school-based counselors can potentially use the information from this study to create interventions that will help African-American students achieve

the level of academic performance that engender high school completion and decrease reciprocal racial discrimination.

Problem Statement

According to Griffin and Steen (2011), educational reform efforts up to 2011 have not increased the achievement or decreased the opportunity gaps for students of color. Specifically, schools have marginalized African-American adolescents academically and socially, thus negatively affecting their self-perceptions and their academic achievement (Howard, 2003). Students are marginalized due to racial discrimination (Fram et al., 2007). Balfanz, Herzog, and Mac Iver (2007) argued that some students become disengaged from the educational system long before they reach high school. Furthermore, White and Kelly (2010) indicated that as a group African-American adolescents from low-income families experience one of the highest percentages of high school dropouts when compared with other groups. According to Aud et al. (2010), a high school dropout is an adolescent who is not enrolled in school and has not earned a high school credential such as a diploma or an equivalency credential (e.g. General Education Diploma [GED]). In 2014, the high school dropout rate for African-American adolescents was 7.4% compared with White adolescents whose rate is 5.2% (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2016). However, 42% of Hispanic students, 43% of African-American and 46 percent of American Indian students will not graduate on time with a high school diploma compared to 17% of Asian students and 22% of White students (Alliance for Excellent Education [AEE], 2011). In addition, Kelly and White noted that high school

dropouts negatively affect society as evidenced by higher crime rates, increased demands on social services agencies, and higher rates of unemployment.

According to Davis et al. (2002), African-Americans who lack high school diplomas have more unsuccessful outcomes related to employment, attending college, and higher income than their White peers. To address the high school dropout rate of African-American students, it is essential to understand the factors that are involved in all young people's decisions to drop out. Perhaps a combination of rural African American adolescents' academic self-perception and levels of experienced racial discrimination is a potential risk factor that is associated with academic performance. Stringer and Heath (2008) posited that positive self-perception of competence is one of the causes of many positive outcomes, which include academic performance. In addition, the experience of racial discrimination threatens African-American adolescents' academic performance (Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006; Wong et al., 2003).

Choi (2005) noted that individuals attribute cognitive description and affective descriptions of self and these attributes represent self-perception. According to Campbell et al. (2002), self-perception is an important component concerning an individual's well-being and sense of achievement. Researchers have reported a decline in students' perceptions of academic competence and self-perception during the adolescence stage (Parker, 2010). Researchers have illustrated that self-perception regarding their academic abilities has an effect on adolescents' academic performance (Todd & Kent, 2003; Liu, Keng, & Wang; Marsh & Mara, 2008). Campbell et al. conducted a study that addressed self-perception and academic achievement with participants from a Southeastern

university community and found a positive relationship between high school students' self-perception concerning their academic abilities and their attainments of academic success. This means that students' views about their academic abilities influenced their academic performance.

The aforementioned study is only one example of other studies (Parker, 2010; Stringer & Heath, 2008) that researchers have conducted illustrating the relationship between African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their academic performance in urban settings (Campbell et al., 2002). Increased awareness of a combination of African-American students' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and their association with academic performance in rural settings may lead to a better understanding and informed drop-out prevention efforts and academic achievement gap. Neblett, et al. (2006) found that the relationship between experienced racial discrimination and self-reported GPA (measurement for academic performance) is consistent with the notion that African American adolescents' experiences with racial discrimination induce academic attitudes and beliefs and the learning process in general and lead to performance. The current study could potentially initiate bridging the gap in the literature regarding the combination rural African American academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its connection to academic performance. Moreover, the information from this study may lead to further research in this area as well as examining other domains of self-perception as potential factors that predict academic performance. Potentially, counselors could use this information to

create effective strategies and interventions to address the achievement gap or high school dropout.

Purpose of the Study

The current study was a correlational study. I used this type of study to examine a potential relationship between the combination of academic self-perception and the experience of racial discrimination and its association to academic performance among African-American adolescents in rural areas, specifically those in the Mississippi Delta. In addition, this study may add to the body of knowledge in counseling scholarship by providing information that will aid mental health school-based counselors and school counselors in rural areas with similar socioeconomic conditions as the Mississippi Delta.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

As previously mentioned, I planned to assess the potential relationship between academic self-perception and experience of racial discrimination together with academic performance among African-American adolescents in rural communities. I measured academic performance, the dependent variable by using the student's GPA, academic self-perception, the independent variable by using Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter 2012) and the experience of racial discrimination, the independent variable by using the Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (Fischer, Wallace & Fenton, 2006). Vishnevsky and Beanland (2004) noted that the quantitative research method is appropriate when knowledge concerning measurable variables of interest is available. With this statement in mind, this study answered the following research question:

RQ1: What is the relationship between the combination of academic self-perception as measured by Harter's Self-Perception Profile of Adolescent and experienced racial discrimination as measured by Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and its association with academic performance as measured by GPA among rural African-American adolescents?

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), a hypothesis that states the investigator's expectations concerning what the data will illustrate is known as a directional hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis for this study is the following:

$H_1: R^1 \neq 0$ There is a correlation between the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination predicting academic performance among rural African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs.

A null hypothesis states the prediction that "there is no relationship or no significant difference between the variables" (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008, p. 436). The null hypothesis for this study is the following:

$H_0: R^1 = 0$ There is no correlation between the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association to academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs.

Theoretical Framework

I used the Harter Self-perception theory for lens of this study. Harter (2012) posited that self-perception is the basis of an individual's sense of competence in certain domains. According to Broderick and Blewitt (2006), Harter asserted that differing self-perception in different domains of self-perception emerged at different points of the life span. Harter and her colleagues explained that numerous dimensions of the self grow in importance from early childhood through adolescence and adulthood (Broderick and Blewitt, 2006). Campbell et al. (2002) indicated that Harter (1979, 1983, 1988, 1990) identified the domains of self-perception as social acceptance, scholastics, achievement, appearance, athletic ability, and behavior; however, the author acknowledged that a higher sense of worthiness has an affect on self-perception. I investigated the potential relationship between a combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its association with their academic performance. Harter's (1988) theory indicates a relationship between academic self-perception and academic performance because she noticed that as adolescents' self-perception of academic competence increased so did their academic performance. According to Broderick and Blewitt (2006), Harter found that some students may exhibit low levels of competence in certain domains, yet they may still have an overall high self-concept. Therefore, Harter's (1988) theory was beneficial for this study because I examined African American adolescents' self-perception related to their sense of academic competence.

As far as experienced racial discrimination, I used the aforementioned notion that African American adolescents' experiences with discrimination induce academic attitudes and beliefs and the learning process in general and lead to nonperformance (Neblett et al. 2006).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was quantitative using a correlational research design. According to Creswell (2009) quantitative research entails testing objective theories by investigating the relationship among variables. Moreover, the author explained that these variables are commonly measured by instruments to accumulate data that can be analyzed by statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research involves statistical inference methods to generalize the findings from a sample or group of participants that define the population (Gall et al., 2007).

With Harter's (1988) theory in mind, I examined the relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and its association with academic performance. Correlational research design allows the researcher to determine the relationship between two or more variables through statistical analysis (Gall et al., 2007). According to Martella, et al.(2013), it involves collecting two sets of data and specifying if they vary or covary. Researchers who use this design refer to variables as either predictor (independent variable) or criterion (dependent variable). Unlike experimental research design and causal-comparative research design, correlational research design does not require the researcher to manipulate the variables. Fitzgerald, Phillip, and Schenker

(2004) indicated that variables are not manipulated using correlational design; therefore, it is difficult to infer causation. They also posited that a significant statistical relationship between variables does not imply causality; however, this statistical relationship between variables is a precondition of causality (Fitzgerald et al., 2004).

I used correlational research design for this study. I explored whether or not a relationship exists between a combination of rural African-American adolescents' self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and academic performance. Fitzgerald et al. (2004) elucidated that correlational research typically explores variables that are not and cannot be manipulated, and it allows the researcher to emphasize relationships between variables. For this study, African-American adolescents' academic self-perception was the primary predictor, their experience with racial discrimination was the secondary predictor, and the adolescents' academic performance will be criterion in this study.

I used two assessment instruments, demographic sheet, and participant's GPA to gather the data to analyze. The specific type of data analysis that was used for this study was multiple regression analysis. This regression analysis illustrated the existence of the relationship between the combination of self-perception and the experience of racial discrimination and demographic variables (e.g. gender, grade level, race) that underlie self-perception and academic performance (Gall et al., 2007). I used demographic data such as gender, race, and grade level to describe the characteristics of the sample. Moreover, this regression analysis revealed the degree of positive or negative relationships between these variables. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), a

positive relationship between these three variables would indicate that as self-perception of academic increases and experienced racial discrimination distress decreases a student's GPA increases whereas a negative relationship would indicate that as self-perception of academic competence increases and experienced racial discrimination distress increases GPA decreases.

The population for this study was students who live in the rural south area of the Mississippi Delta. These students reside in small towns or outside these small towns surround by farmland in Bolivar County and Coahoma County. Most of these areas are consider poverty stricken. According to the US Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, individuals below poverty level in these counties range from 27% to 37.1% of the population. African Americans make-up the majority of the population in these three counties (US Census Bureau). These students are either from single parent homes or both parents' homes, or their grandparents are their legal guardians.

The students for this study attend a high school in Bolivar County and Coahoma County. All students enrolled in all three high schools were invited to participate in this study. The students who volunteer for this study were required to complete and turn in informed consent with parent's or legal guardian's signature, the two assessment instruments and demographic sheet to be included in this study.

Definitions

Academic performance is the educational outcome resulting from instructional time and carrying out academic assignment (Cokley et al., 2011). It is synonymous with *GPA* in this study.

Adolescents are individuals who are between the ages of 14 and 18 years old. They think more abstractly than younger children, and they are able to combine separate events and qualities to establish the self (Jacobs et al., 2003).

Academic self-perception is the individual's perceived knowledge concerning competence as applied schoolwork (Harter, 2012)

Grade Point Average (GPA): The calculation of letter grades that is used to measure the student's academic performance. Each letter grade has a certain numerical value, with A at 4, B at 3, C at 2, D at 1, and F at 0. These grades are computed to obtain an average. This average is measured on a scale range from 0 to 4.0 (Cokley et al., 2011; Somers et al., 2009).

Mississippi Delta is the northwestern area of state of Mississippi that stretches to Vicksburg, Mississippi. It lies between the Mississippi River and Yazoo River. This area is recognized for its unique cultural, history of racial division, and is consider one of the most impoverish area United States (Gnuschke et al., 2008).

Experienced racial discrimination is an individuals' belief that they were treated unfairly because of their race (Thompson & Gregory, 2011).

Assumptions

There are number of assumptions for participation in this study. For example, students were able to complete these two assessment instruments and demographic sheet at home or during *down-time* in their classes. They needed to be reading at least on an eighth-grade level to complete these questionnaires (Harter, 2012; Fisher, 2000). I assumed that the participants of this study would share honestly their own self-perceptions. Moreover, I used this design with the assumption that students would carefully and considerably reflect on how they perceive themselves in certain domains of the questionnaire as they mark their answers. Another assumption is that students would reflect a true experience of racial discrimination. In truth, this research cannot determine whether the participant's true academic self-perception or true experience of racial discrimination would be reflected, but researchers use such questionnaires to draw conclusions about the perception of respondents.

Another assumption is that I anticipated that the instruments used for the study would adequately measure the variables being examined although certainly other variables exist that would affect these variables under review. I intended to use the scholastic subscale on SPPA survey to measure academic self-perception. An assumption is this one subscale would adequately measure the participants' academic self-perception.

I intended to use linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between these three variables. The assumption concerning this relation is linear and a straight line would illustrate the relationship. However, the relationship may be nonlinear which can

be shown in scattergram. A curve line instead a straight line could best illustrate the relationship (Gall, et al., 2007).

Another assumption is that I conclude that the relationship between high school dropouts and academic performance. Academic performance might not be the factor for some adolescents who drop out of high school. A positive correlation implies a causal relationship. However, I have to keep in mind correlational research design is used for the purpose to examine the relationship between two or more variables or predict scores on one variable from research participants' scores on other variables (Gall, et al., 2007). These assumptions were not necessary to compensate for the context of this study

Scope and Delimitations

I examined the relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its prediction of academic performance. I conducted the study at three high schools in the Mississippi Delta. Some students complete their school years without receiving a diploma and become unemployed or involved in criminal activities (Somers & Piliawsky, 2004; Cassel, 2003; Davis et al., 2002; Whatley & Smyer, 1998). School counselors are challenged to find a way to keep the students interested in staying in school and help them perform sufficiently enough to graduate from high school. The intent of this study was to evaluate to see whether students have low self-perception of their academic ability. Their self-perception of their academic ability may be reflected in their academic performance. In addition, they may experience racial discrimination among their peers,

teachers, and other contexts outside of school, and this experience along with low academic self-perception could be reflected in their academic performance.

This study contains three delimitations. One of delimitations of this study is that I assume that I will specifically examine rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception. I intended to investigate the potential existence of a relationship between the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its link to academic performance among African-American adolescents who live in rural areas with the Mississippi Delta as its specific focus. I do not intend to suggest that any identified relationship between these three variables is the sole reason for high school dropout, truancy, or academic achievement gap in rural south. However, I intended to investigate whether academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination are potential factors to consider in addressing poor academic performance.

Another delimitation of this study was I only included African American students who attended three schools, two of which were majority African-American high schools in the north Mississippi Delta region. The majority of the students who attend these particular high schools live in impoverished rural communities in the surrounding areas. These communities represent some of the most impoverished rural communities in the Mississippi Delta (U.S. Department of Agricultural, 2015). However, I do not intend to illustrate that academic self-perception and the experience of racial discrimination are the only potential factors that influence low academic performance for all African American students in this region of the State of Mississippi. In addition, I do not intend to demonstrate that previously mentioned hypotheses supported by studies conducted in

urban areas will or will not apply to these students in impoverished rural areas or in the Mississippi Delta. However, I created a new line of inquiry in the body of knowledge for the counseling profession concerning the potential relationship between the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its connection to academic performance among African-American adolescents who live in rural communities.

The other delimitation of this study is that I used data from students who self-identify themselves as African American for this study. Students who self-identify themselves as non-African Americans will be excluded. I did not imply that non-African American students would not be invited, but the data collected from African American students is the only data that will be utilized for the context of this study. However, the data from non-African American students will be used in a study in the future.

Limitations

I used a correlational research design. One limitation for this proposed study is this research design is limited regarding illustrating cause and effect between the variables that were used for the study (Gall et al., 2007; Martella, et al. 2013). This means that I would not be able to determine specifically how African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination affects their academic performance using this research design. Moreover, if the results seem to reveal a correlation, it would not indicate a causation (Martella, et al., 2013). I used the scholastic subscale of Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents to measure the participants' academic self-perception and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index

(ADDI) to measure their distress with racial discrimination. I used their GPA to measure their academic performance. Therefore, the internal validity might be threatened by instrumentation.

Another limitation was the use of a strictly voluntarily participant participation. Therefore, the students who do not complete the questionnaires was not be able to share how they perceived themselves across different domains of self perception, share any encounter with racial discrimination or be evaluated to determine whether or not their academic self-perceptions and potential experience of racial discrimination have a relationship with their academic performance. This limitation might be viewed as self-selection bias because data from all students at the school would not be considered for this study. However, I used nonprobability sampling.

I computed the correlation coefficient and multiple correlation coefficient by using the multiple regression data analysis. I used the correlation coefficient and multiple correlation coefficient to determine the degree and magnitude of the potential relationships (Gall et al., 2007). I was able to infer the direction of the relationship and this inference limits the study. According to Martella et al. (2013), it difficult to interpret specifically the meaning of a correlation coefficient due to size of it and how it is used. I was only able to infer the direction of the relationship.

Significance of the Study

According to Somers and Piliawsky (2004), researchers have long been interested in risk factors that cause students to underachieve, which in turn results in students evading or actually dropping out of school. According to Brody et al. (2006), several

million African-American families reside in the rural southern regions that extend from South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Morris and Monroe (2009) asserted that the majority of African-Americans in United States reside in the southern region of United States. In addition, they noted that this region is one the most impoverished areas in the United States (Brody, et al, 2006).

Due to the limited access to modern institutions because of geographic distance, African-American adolescents in these regions experience deficits that includes a relative lack of access to specialized health services, mental health services, and the specialized educational opportunities (Weber, Puskar, & Ren, 2010). Sullivan et al. (2005) asserted that students who reside in impoverished areas are most likely to attend inferior schools according to ranking by the state's department of education. However, Morris and Monroe (2009) noted that the U.S. South is a significant region in comprehending African-Americans' schooling experiences.

Somer, Owens, and Piliawsky (2009) reported that students, who attend inferior schools are faced with the demands and the amount of support needed to develop academic skills is disproportionate in the school districts. According to Sullivan et al. (2005), African-American students' meaning of academic achievement differs from White students' meaning. Systemic inequities influence the African-American students' worldviews in ways that cause them to regard academic achievement as lacking value (Kerpelman et al., 2008). This postulation is important to understand because Jones et al. (2012) cited research that suggests having a higher self-concept concerning their academic competence is linked to higher academic performance.

With the notion that higher academic self-perception is linked to higher academic performance in mind, I intended to give school counselors additional information to address poor academic performance among African-Americans adolescents who reside in rural areas. Wigfield, Lutz, and Wagner (2005) noted that students tend to clearly define their sense of competence in different areas. Sullivan et al (2005) reported that some research studies revealed that perceived scholastic competence and academic ability contributed to global self-concept in African-American students. This means that if the student has a high self-perception concerning academic ability it will affect their overall self-concept, which in turn, engenders high academic performance (Jones et al., 2012). Day-Vines and Day-Hairston (2005) found that without the appropriate information well-intended interventions would not succeed. Therefore, school counselors and mental health school-based counselors in rural areas can use the results of this study to support and create effective interventions that will enhance rural African-American adolescents' self-perception in the academic domain. Wigfield et al. (2005) revealed that school counselors could assist adolescents in making judicious matches among their competences, belief, and priorities.

The results of this study may be used to improve educational programs in rural areas for African-American adolescents who are at risk of dropping out of high schools. Dropping out of high school is the most damaging outcome of adolescents' frustration concerning the demands of education (Somers et al., 2009). This frustration may emerge from their negative self-perception and their lack of confidence in their academic abilities (Wigfield, Lutz, & Wagner, 2005). Low self-perception is also a potential risk factor that

may cause learning problems (Piliawsky & Somer, 2004). According to Whaley and Smyer (1998), academic self-perception is a cognitive variable that some researchers found to be correlated with African-Americans adolescents' academic motivation in public school systems.

Paisley, Ziomek-Daigle, Getch, and Bailey (2007) noted that school counselors and need to position themselves to spearhead efforts that will promote the healthy development of youth as they undergo the trials of maturation. White and Kelly (2010) asserted that the social, mental and financial repercussions related to high school dropout are substantial. In addition, they indicated that students who drop out of high school have higher rates of unemployment, lower paying jobs, and are likely to become involved in the justice system due to criminal acts they have committed (White & Kelly, 2010). If a relationship is identified between academic self-perception and academic performance, then programs designed to increase students' academic self-perception, could assist in the efforts to decrease both the unemployment rate and number of students committing criminal acts. I posit the information from this study could potentially be used to create a plan or integrate this information into an existing plan for high school dropout prevention.

I intended to add to the body of knowledge in the school counseling profession by providing information that would aid in the development of counseling intervention strategies to address poor academic performance in rural adolescents. Most of the literature concerning the relationship between African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and academic performance includes studies, which have been conducted

in urban and inner-city settings studies (Cokley, McClan, Jones, & Johnson, 2011; Evans, Copping, Rowley, & Kutz-Costes, 2011; Gordon, 2016). Moreover, these studies do not address solely the relationship between African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and academic performance. Unfortunately, a limited amount of literature is available concerning rural African-American adolescents and academic performance (Cunningham & Swanson, 2010; Khan, Haynes, Armstrong, & Rohner, 2010; Farmer, Dadisman, Latendresse, Thompson, Irvin, & Zhang, 2006; Sullivan et al., 2005). I proposed to bring an awareness of African-American adolescents' experience of racial discrimination and the potential manifestation in academic performance. Within the literature that I have reviewed there was minimal literature identified regarding rural African-American adolescents' experience of racial discrimination and academic performance (Heilig & Holme, 2013, Morris & Monroe, 2009; Eckes, 2006). School counselors and mental health school-based counselors in rural areas can use the information provided in this study to better understand the potential relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its association with academic performance.

According to Ratts, Dekruyf and Hayes and Chen (2007), social justice advocacy among school counselors and mental health school-based counselors is to address injustices (racial discrimination), increase access to sufficient educational resources, and improve educational results for all students. School counselor and mental health school-based counselors need to assume a position as the students' advocate to make sure all students will not be denied access to all learning resources and therefore be barred from

benefitting from the improvement in their schools. Bemak and Chung (2007) posited that the need for school counselors to embrace the role as advocate for social justice is notably important for students in poverty and students of color. In addition, they reported that school counselors who ignore the influence of inherent power structures that widen the achievement gap are aiding in maintaining that achievement gap and accept the false belief that students in poverty and of color cannot perform at high level (Bemak & Chung, 2007). The results of this study may give school counselors information to develop new approaches in improving the educational experience for all students who can and should be a part of the improvement in educational outcomes.

Summary

According to Whatley and Smyer (1998), interest in the self-perceptions of African-American adolescents has resulted in a long history of research in the social sciences. But in truth, after an exhaustive review of literature, I found a lack of information concerning rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination. This study would determine whether a relationship exists between a combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its association with academic performance.

Most of the theories that relate to self-perception and academic performance revolve around the notion that self-perception is multidimensional and adolescents' academic self-perception level determines the quality of their academic performance (Arens, Yeung, Craven, & Hasselhorn, 2011; Campbell et al., 2010; Guay, Marsh, Boivin,

2003; Mandelman, Tan, Kornilov, Sternber, & Grigorenko, 2010; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh & Mara, 2008; Marsh, Parada, & Ayotte, 2004; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982; Trautwein, Ludtke, Koller, & Baumert, 2006; Zahra, Arif, & Yousuf, 2010). For example, if a student has a high self-perception in the domain of athletics he or she might perform better in certain sports than those who do not have a high self-perception in that domain.

Chapter two included a review of related literature concerning factors that shape the development of African-American adolescents' self-perception. I included a review of research concerning African-American adolescents' academic self-perception, their experience of racial discrimination and their association to their academic performance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As previously mentioned, African Americans who do not have a high school diploma have problems in gaining employment, attending college, and lower income than their White peers (Davis et al., 2002). To address the high school dropout rate of African American students, it is essential to understand the factors that are involved in all young people's decisions to drop out. Perhaps a combination of rural African American adolescents' academic self-perception and levels of experienced racial discrimination is a potential risk factor that is associated with academic performance.

The purpose of this study is to examine a potential correlation between a combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents in rural communities specifically in the Mississippi Delta. This study's results may add to the body of knowledge in counseling scholarship by providing information that would assist mental health school-based counselors, and school counselors in their approach in addressing academic performance and the risk of dropping out of school. This material may aid school counselors, mental health school based counselors, and educators in developing interventions and strategies that would heighten the academic performance of African-American adolescents. Furthermore, these interventions and strategies potentially aid in reducing academic underachievement, which is a contributing factor of high school dropout among African-American adolescents (Okech & Harrington, 2002).

Potential Factors That Are Involved Decisions to Drop Out of School

Education. Because poverty negatively influences some African American adolescents' ability to think positively about their future, they may see attaining an education as a futile effort. This mindset can lead to absenteeism suspension, expulsion and school drop-out. According to Aud et al. (2010), students who are habitually absent tend to have academic difficulties and are not likely to complete school. In addition, the researchers reported that in 2009, the percentage of African American adolescents who were missing 3 or more days of school was slightly higher (23%) White students (19%) (Aud, et al., 2010). Aud et al. (2010) identified that a larger percentage of African American adolescents (43%) of students in Grades 6 through 12 were suspended from school than White students (16%) in the year of 2007. Furthermore in the same year, they noted that a large percentage of African American students (13%) compared with White students (1%) in Grades 6 through 12 were expelled.

High School Dropout. In 2007, a higher percentage of African American students (8%) between the ages of 16 and 24 years old were not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school credential (a diploma or an equivalency credential such as General Educational Diploma [GED]) compared with White students (5%) (Aud, et al., 2010). In 2013, the percentage of African American students dropped from 8% to 5.8%; however in that year they had the highest percentage rate among Hispanic students (5.7%), and White students (4.3%).

According to Ikomi (2010), adolescents who fail to complete high school tend to expand the unemployment rate, increase percentages of people depending on welfare, and

earn less income. Moreover, high school dropouts are at greater risk of being involved in criminal activities to support themselves (Bolland, et al, 2007) or become incarcerated for their criminal involvement (Cassel, 2003). A high school diploma alone does not promise employment; however, it is more associated with better quality of life indicators.

For African American adolescents not being enrolled in school and not having earned a high school credential are related to negative effects on their psychological functioning (Liem, Lustig, & Dillion, 2010). Liem et al. (2010) found that depression is common among adolescents who leave school and leaving school has also led to impairments in important areas of functioning for individuals 18 years and older. Conversely, research has also discovered that some adolescents who dropped out of high school increased their self-esteem because they left an environment associated with feeling unsuccessful (Liam et al., 2010).

Racial Discrimination. Seaton (2010) suggested that some theories indicate that racial discrimination is a part of African American adolescents' environment, which threatens their developmental outcomes or identity achievement. In addition, Seaton et al. (2011) posited that racial discrimination causes a progression from unawareness to awareness of how race plays a role in the African American adolescents' lives. African American adolescents' parents who rear them to have racial pride do not analyze negative stereotypes and beliefs about African Americans. (Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richard, & Ragsdale, 2009). This awareness may engender positive or negative beliefs concerning their racial group, which in turn affect the development of their racial identity. Racial discrimination, poverty, and education disparity influence African American adolescents'

identity and racial identity development (Cokley et al., 2011; Seaton, Yip, Morgan-Lopez, & Sellers, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2005).

In this chapter, I explained the literature search strategy that I used to develop this literature review. I included the rationale of selecting the theory that will be the lens of this study. In addition, I provided an exhaustive review of the current literature of the key variables of this study such as academic self-perception and academic performance, the experience of racial discrimination among African American adolescents, and experienced racial discrimination predicting academic performance.

Literature Search Strategy

To construct this literature review, I used the EBSCOHost database from Walden University Library databases, APAPsycInfo, Academic Search Complete, CINAHL Plus with full text, Pubmed, JSTOR, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Moreover, I used resources and data from the U.S Department of Education and the U.S. Census Bureau. The key terms that were used in databases and literature search are as follows: *self-perception, self-concept, academic performance, and academic competency, and high school dropout*. I used combinations of these key terms and other related terms. They were the following: *African-American adolescents AND self-perception, African-American adolescents AND academic performance, African-American adolescents AND Achievement gap, African-American adolescent, AND high school dropout, African-American adolescents AND poverty, African-American adolescents AND education, African-American adolescent AND human development AND racial identity, self-concept AND academic performance, self-perception AND African-American*

adolescents, AND African-American adolescents AND underachievement, African-American adolescent AND racial identity, African-American adolescent AND experienced racial discrimination, African-American adolescents, experienced racial discrimination AND academic performance.

I used peer-reviewed literature that was dated 2003 to 2016. Some peer-reviewed literature that was used in the literature review dated in years of 1892, 1902, 1966, 1998, 2000-2002. These citations were used in other articles as both seminal and foundational works specifically James (1892) Cooley (1902), and Shavelson and Bolus, (1982). James and Cooley citations were seminal work for Harter's self-perception theory, which I intended to use as a lens for the current study. Shavelson and Bolus (1982) was seminal work and foundational work that enhance the understanding of self-perception being multidimensional. I did use Boolean limiters to focus my search result without searching through items that were germane to my search. In efforts to quote the citation correctly, I avoided the use of secondary citations by accessing and reviewing the original article. This literature search strategy led me to the following theories that will be discussed henceforward.

Academic Self-Perception Has a Relationship With Academic Performance Theory

Self-perception is a vital factor in academic performance and achievement. Some studies revealed that adolescents with poor academic self-perceptions experience unsatisfactory academic performances (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005; Marsh, & O'Mara, 2008; Stanley, Canham, & Cureton, 2006). Likewise, adolescents with high academic self-perception perform well in school. Kenney and

McEachern (2009) indicated that students with high self-concepts commonly are confident in carrying out school-related tasks. According to Bouffard, Markovits, Vezeau, Boisvert, and Dumas (1998), self-perception affects personal commitment to the task, self-regulation of the efforts devoted to cognitive processing information, perseverance and effective reactions to difficulties, which in turn affect performance.

However, some researchers noted that self-perception does not affect academic performance (Baumeister, Campbell, Kruger, and Vohs 2003; Stevenson, 1992). For example, Baumeister et al. (2003) postulated that self-perception has no effect on academic performance but academic performance is linked to other factors (e.g. parental involvement, family background, and student's ability) that produce a desirable behavior such as making good grades. However, Baumeister et al. (2003) drew their conclusion from studies that were conducted by Bowles (1999); Ortiz and Volloff (1987); and Zimmerman, Copeland, Shope, and Dielman (1997). These studies had small sample sizes and correlated self-perception and scores from standardized tests. Moreover, Marsh and Craven (2006) rebutted Baumeister et al.'s (2003) claim by asserting that self-concept conciliates the variable that influences a variety of desirable outcomes including academic achievement. Furthermore, self-perception is developed by such factors as parental involvement and family background (Marsh & Craven, 2006).

With this rebuttal in mind, I used Harter's self-perception theory as the foundation for this study. According to my review of the literature, this theory will be tested for first time using African American adolescent population. Harter (2012) noted that self-perception is the basis of an individual's sense of competence in certain domains. The

author affirmed that self-perception is a multidimensional system (Gumus, 2010). Harter (2012) noted that individuals of different ages appraise self differently in different areas of their life. She conceptualized self-perception as domain-specific evaluation of an individual's competence in different arena (Harter, 2012).

Wichstrom (1995) asserted that Harter's self-perception theory derived from the works of William James (1892) and C.H. Cooley (1902). James (1892) interpreted that self-concept is based on perception of an individual and what they do in certain area of life. Moreover, he asserted that self-esteem is the ratio of the number of successes in certain domains that are important to that particular individual (James, 1892; Sullivan & Evans, 2006) to their pretenses. However, Cooley (1902) posited that society makes the person (self) instead the person making society. Additionally, he noted that we see society as a sum of persons not as causative (Cooley, 1902). This notion means that self is developed on the views of others in society. According Trautwein et al. (2006), global self-esteem in Harter's theory derives from this notion. Global self-esteem emanate from an individual's accomplishments in important areas and praises from important people in that individual's life.

The current study addressed the relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its association with academic performance. As previously mentioned, Harter's Self-Perception theory was applied for the first time to African American adolescents. There are few models that have proposed a relationship between academic self-perception and academic performance exist (Calsyn & Kenny, 1977; Harter, 2012;

Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Marsh & Craven, 2006). Marsh and Craven (2006) noted that in *self-enhancement model* by Calsyn and Kenny 1977 academic self-perception is the primary determinant for academic achievement, but their *skill-development model* achievement influences academic self-concept. Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) noted that self-perception is multidimensional and hierarchical in structure and global self-concept is the apex of the hierarchical structure. This structure is divided into academic and nonacademic categories. The academic self-perception is further separated into self-perception in school subjects (Mathematics, English, history and so on)(Arens, Yeung, Craven, & Hasselhorn, 2011). However, Trautwein, et al. (2006) noted that Shavelson, et al. (1976) hierarchical theory is useful in research that connects self-concept to academic achievement. Conversely, Shavelson et al. (1976) theory emphasizes academic self-perception in certain school subjects. Marsh's reciprocal effect model states that academic self-perception and achievement are reciprocal (Mandelman, Tan, Kornilov, Sternberg, Grigorenko, 2010). This model means that academic self-concept and academic achievement are respectively reinforcing variables, which each has an influence on the other (Marsh & O'Mara, 2006).

Harter's self-perception theory is based on the multidimensional framework (Harter, 2012). This theory involves the notion that individuals evaluate themselves differently in different domains of their lives. Harter's Self-Perception theory allowed me to explain and predict the relationship between academic self-perception and academic performance. I was interested in determining how African American adolescents perceived their academic abilities and its association with their academic performance.

The aforementioned theories are more focused on academic achievement than academic performance and achievement heightens an individual's academic self-perception.

The present study involved examining the relationship between the combination of African American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination. I intended to use the conceptual framework by Neblett, et al (2006) that racial discrimination is related to academic performance. However, there are several theories that propose that there is relationship between racial discrimination and academic performance (Ogbu,1986; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001; Whaley, 2003). Ogbu, 1986 as cited by Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts and Fulmore (1994) argued that underachievement is common among African American adolescents due to it is a response to their restricted social and economic opportunities in adult life. According to Taylor et al (1994), Ogbu (1986) explains that experienced racial discrimination generated a lack of confidence among some African-Americans that they could be as competent as Whites in what was considered the White domain as in the attainment of good jobs and the performance of academic tasks. Spencer, et al (2001) explained the relationship between racial discrimination and academic performance through the theory *Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory*. Spencer, Fegley, & Harpalani, (2003) noted that this theory emphasize identity development and how African American adolescents perceive themselves and connect their identity to social factors such as racial discrimination identity. Chavous,Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn (2008) noted that this connection affect academic attitudes and performance.

Even though identity development is associated with racial discrimination and the academic attitude, Whaley (2003) *Cognitive Cultural theory* states that African American adolescents have differing sources of identity, which consist of individual self, cultural self, and social roles. The author noted that these sources of identity are stored into a cognitive structure known as the *cognitive schemata* (Whaley, 2003). Cognitive schemata expedite the processing of information that is congruent with the content of the sources of identity. This theory emphasizes identity development and how social factors such as racial discrimination affect their cognitive schemata, which in turn affect their academic competence.

The authors of previously mentioned theories elucidated the meditational role that racial discrimination plays in academic performance (Whaley, 2003; Spencer, et al 2001; Ogbu, 1986). However, those theories did not allow me to explain and predict direct relationship between experienced racial discrimination and academic performance independent of racial identity. Neblett, et al. (2006) conceptual framework allowed me to better explain the relationship between racial discrimination and academic performance. Moreover, it allowed me to directly connect racial discrimination without identity development to self-perception to form the independent variable, which is the combination of African American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination.

Academic Self-Perception and Its Relationship with Academic Performance

Self-perception is considered to be one of the most widely investigated variables in the behavior sciences (Graigordil, Perez, Mozaz, 2008). According to

Stringer and Heath (2008) academic self-concept and its relationship with academic performance has received a significant amount of study and has even set off controversy. Furthermore, they indicated that the core assumption of such studies is that positive self-perception of competence engenders positive outcomes, which includes good academic performance (Stringer & Heath, 2008). In other words, individuals must perceive that they are competent to perform well academically before they can achieve. Stringer and Heath (2008) added to academic self-perception literature in their study involving children in Grades 4 and 5 who attended local Montreal public schools. In their cross-sectional study, they used WRAT-3 reading subtest & Mathematics subtest instruments to assess academic performance and WISC-III Block Design & Vocabulary assessment to measure IQ. They used Harter Self-Perception Profile for Learning Disabled Students (SPPLD) to measure academic-self-perception in reading and mathematics. They used a sample of 155 students, who grade range from fourth grade to fifth grade. They were divided up in small groups that consist of 15 participants. They found in their study that those students who rated themselves very competent did not improve over time their academic performance (Stringer & Heath, 2008). Moreover, they noted that there were changes in their academic self-perception, but there no change in their performance. However, they noted in their limitations section that students with learning disabilities academic self-perception are inflated and adolescents could potentially show the effect of academic self-perception has on academic performance.

Individuals become more aware of their strengths and weakness in specific academic areas (e.g. math, English, history) as they transition from childhood to

adolescence (DeFreitas & Rinn, 2013). Prince and Nurius (2013) applied the theory that academic self-perception has relationship with academic performance in their correlational designed study. Their sample consists of high school students who were in the twelfth grade. They used a six item mean-based measure to assess academic self-concept. They used an eight point self-reported scale to assess academic achievement (Dependent variable). They found a correlation ($r = .36$) between positive academic self-concept and academic achievement, educational aspirations, proactive help seeking (Prince & Nurius, 2014). Prince and Nurius, (2014) noted that academic self-concept emerged as the strongest predictor and the largest beta coefficient ($b = 122.26$) from the net of all other predictors (e.g sociodemographic data, school factors, parental factors).

Other researchers examined and found academic self-concept or self-perception as a strong predictor of academic performance and academic achievement. Cokley et al. (2011) conducted a correlational designed study that they examine the impact that academic disidentification, academic self-concept, devaluing academic success, and racial identity have on academic achievement among African American adolescents. Their sample consisted of 96 African American high school students who attended an urban public high school. Their ages ranged from 15-19 years old. Cokley et al. (2011) used the following instruments to measure the variables involved in their study: Racial Centrality scale to measure racial identity, devaluing Academic Success subscale to assess devaluing academic success, Academic Self-Concept Scale to assess academic self-concept and demographic information (e.g., gender, age, school-reported GPA). They used a hierarchical multiple regression model to examine the variables (e.g gender

and age) they thought predicted GPA. They found that students with higher academic self-concepts had a higher GPA (Cokley, et al., 2011). In addition, they asserted that academic self-concept was the strongest predictor of GPA followed closely by age, gender, and racial identity.

The Experience of Racial Discrimination Among African-American Adolescents

The previously mentioned models have corroborated the fact that academic self-perception is a predictor for academic performance (GPA). Yet, experienced racial discrimination is relevant risk factor that can influence self-perception relating to African-American adolescents' academic competence (Cogburn, Chavous & Griffin, 2011). Experienced racial discrimination is the perception that one has been treated unfairly based on race (Thompson & Gregory, 2011; Benner & Graham, 2013). It is a risk factor for African-American adolescents' everyday lives (Cogburn et al., 2011). Seaton and Yip (2009) noted that experiencing racial discrimination is considered a norm for children and adolescents of color. Seaton Caldwell, Sellers, and Jackson (2010) examined the attribution (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, age) for perceived discrimination and explored the difference in discrimination based on ethnicity. The sample included 1170 African American (n=810) and Caribbean Black (n=360) adolescents. Their age ranged between 13 years old to 17 years old. They use the Everyday Discrimination scale measure chronic, routine and less obvious experience of discrimination. To measure discrimination attribution they read the specific question "We've talked about a number of things that may have happened to you in your day to day life. Thinking of those things that have happened to you overall what do you think was the main reason for this/these

experiences (Seaton et al., 2010)? The participants were given 13 items to choose the overall attribution, which included race/ethnicity, gender, age, physical appearance (i.e. height and weight) They found from their study where they had a sample of 810 African-American adolescents and less than half of that sample (43%) attributed their discrimination to their race. In addition, they noted the amount of discriminatory experiences did not vary for those adolescents who attributed discrimination to race and ethnicity, physical appearance, or gender and they reported more discriminatory incidents those who attributed it to age or other reason (Seaton, et al., 2010). However, they used an instrument that measured annual time frames of experienced racial discrimination, but they asserted that a smaller time period and experiential sampling methods may assess discriminatory experiences more accurately (Seaton, et al., 2010).

Even though race potential attribute to discriminatory incidents and it is common among African American adolescents, some researchers noted that the frequency of experienced racial discrimination is a potential risk for psychological well-being. Sellers et al. (2006) conducted a cross-sequential longitudinal study that involved 314 African American adolescents whose age ranged from 11 to 17 years old. In this study, they examined whether to frequency of African American adolescents' perceived experiences with racial discrimination is a significant risk factor for lower levels of psychological functioning. They also examined whether racial identity attitudes acts as a resilient factors against the effect of racial discrimination on psychological well-being. They used Daily Life Experience scale to measure experienced racial discrimination. This scale is self-report scale that assess the frequency and affect of 17 microaggressions, which refer

to daily life hassles that are traced to racial discrimination in a year (Sellers, et al., 2006) They found in their study that 63 participants (20%) experienced each of the 17 racial hassles within that year. They noted that the most common racial hassle that was experienced by the participants were: “Being accused of something or treated suspiciously and “Being treated as if you were stupid being talked down to” and the least frequently reported discriminatory incident of race were being insulted or called a name or harassed (Seller et al., 2006, p.200). They also found a correlation ($r=.28$) between experiencing racial discrimination and depressive symptoms (Seller et al., 2006).

Experienced Racial Discrimination Predicting Academic Performance

Benner and Graham (2013) indicated that racial discrimination is relatively common in schools and other public places. Seaton and Yip (2009) conducted a cross-sectional study that examine whether the utilization of multiple dimensions of racial discrimination and the inclusion of contextual factors like neighborhood and school settings provide an perspective on what influence perceptions of racial discrimination among African American adolescents. From their findings, Seaton and Yip (2009) indicated that when school diversity increases and there is a lower percentage of African-American students and higher percentages of non-African-American students the perception of racial discrimination heightens among African-American students. In addition, they asserted that examining the relationship between diversity of the school staff and discriminatory incident would enhance our understanding of how the school setting influence adolescents’ perspective of racial discrimination.

As previously mentioned, African-American adolescents experience racial discrimination in the school settings (Benner & Graham, 2013; Wong et al., 2003). Some researchers have noted that experienced racial discrimination in school settings has an effect on the African-American adolescents' academic performance. In a longitudinal study, Thompson and Gregory (2011) followed a cohort of low-achieving African American students across their first 2 years in high school to examine whether their perceptions of discrimination changes across those years. They also investigated whether ninth-grade perceptions of discrimination are potential risk factor that decreases the likelihood of academic success. The sample were ninth grade students who were enrolled the school's transition program that was designed for students who identified as low-achievers due to low-achievement in all subject areas during their eighth grade year. They followed these students from beginning of ninth grade to the end of their 10th grade year (Thompson & Gregory, 2010). They indicated from their study that experienced racial discrimination was connected to lower classroom engagement and academic motivation. However, they asserted that experienced racial discrimination may influence some African-American adolescents in their first year of high school to lose trust in schools and to make less efforts in academic performance (Thompson & Gregory, 2011). From this distrust in the school settings, experienced racial discrimination increase the likelihood for some African-American adolescents who questioned their ability to be successful in academics will contemplate leaving school (Thompson & Gregory, 2011). Nonetheless, they only used at risk students for their study, which their results may not be generalizable to a more diverse group.

Neblett, Phillip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) conduct a correlational study that investigated the relations among experienced racial discrimination, parent race socialization and achievement outcomes among African American adolescents who are in middle and high school. Their sample consisted of 548 African American students in Grade 7 through 10. They used the Perceived Discrimination Scale to measure how they experience discrimination due to race. They used self-reported grades to measure academic performance. They noted that African-American adolescents who reported more frequent encounters with racial discrimination and who reported receiving more racial pride and negative messages about race from their parents were less engaged and persistence in learning activities in class (Neblett, et al., 2006). According to Neblett et al. (2006), racial pride involves parents teaching their children about heritage and ingraining positive feelings towards African Americans. They also noted that negative messages about race relate to racial socialization messages. They discovered that the relationship between experienced racial discrimination and self-reported grades was congruous with the notion that adolescents' experiences with discrimination may affect their academic attitude and the learning process, which negatively affects academic performance (Neblett, et al., 2006).

Based on the previous literature, academic self-perception and racial discrimination are factors that potentially predict academic performance. I intended to use quantitative research method to investigate the relationship between the combination of rural African American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and its association with academic performance. Even though some

previous studies in the literature used various research methods, the findings from quantitative research method purveyed vital information about the impact of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination.

Urban Adolescents versus Rural Adolescents

African-Americans adolescents who live in rural settings have more limited access to resources than those living in urban areas. According to Weber, Puskar, and Ren (2010) rural adolescents are a notably vulnerable population because of distinctive problems of limited access to resources due to geographic distance, lack of adequate health services and deeper levels of poverty. Irvin (2012) noted that the majority of poverty stricken counties in the United States are rural. Furthermore, he indicated that African-American adolescents who live in the rural South tend to undergo severe and chronic poverty (Irvin, 2012). Weber et al. (2010) asserted rural adolescents are vulnerable to different social factors than urban adolescents and they are more susceptible to be at risks of poor physical and mental health, of dropping out of high school, of early sexual activity and other behavioral problems.

Researchers have established that some African-American adolescents view their environment as hopeless and have difficulties in creating goals for their future (Bolland, Bryant, Lian, McCallum Vazsonyi, & Barth, 2007; Sullivan, Evans, and Johnson, 2005). Sullivan et al. (2005) noted that young people in rural settings tend to have lower educational goals than those living in urban settings. Farmer et al. (2006) posited that compared to urban settings, the high school dropout rate and career difficulties are higher for young people living in poverty-stricken rural areas. Farmer et al (2006) conducted

multimethod design study as a part of a longitudinal study. They used a cohort of African American youth from the fifth grade to the 12th grade (Farmer et al., 2006). The purpose for their study was to examine community adults' perceptions of the trajectory for successful outcomes for impoverished rural African American youth in the Deep South. They interviewed the focus group that involved parents, teacher, and community leaders and found that each group member's view was due to highly limited economic resources, educational opportunities and employment option it is necessary for most youth to leave the community to establish successful careers and economic independence (Farmer, et al., 2006). In addition, they indicated that African-Americans adolescents from low-income backgrounds are less likely to display school engagement, experience social support for planning, and receive education in careers beyond high school (Farmer et al., 2006).

As previously mentioned, lack of career and education opportunities and limited economic resources are barriers that rural African American adolescents commonly encounter. However, some researchers noted racial discrimination is an issue that rural African American adolescents face as well. Berkel et al. (2009) asserted that most of studies regarding racial discrimination are conducted in urban areas, but this issue may have a greater effect on African Americans families living in the rural area. They conducted a mixed method study. They investigated the relationship between negative and positive contextual influences (i.e. racial discrimination and collective socialization) on intrapersonal mediators and distal outcomes for rural African American adolescents. They used a combination of panel and focus group data from African American families residing in the northeast Georgia. Berkel, et al., (2009) noted that the quantitative data

were obtained from the Georgia subsample of the Family and Community Health Study and the qualitative data were obtained as a supplement to the Family Processes and the Development of Competence in Rural African American Children Study. The quantitative data sample consisted of 373 families with a child who was 10 or 11 years old at the time of recruitment and qualitative data consist of 12 focus groups. They found that African American adolescents encountered discriminatory incidents in the domains of school discipline, academics, social networks and the police (Berkel, et al., 2009). They discovered from their qualitative findings that some of the participants mentioned that White students were commonly granted more privileges, allowed more leniency with dress codes and disciplined less sternly. As far academics, males noted that they were less likely to engage in class or be called upon by the teachers. Some of male participants stated that the teachers perceived them as inferior to the White students due to underestimate their intelligence.

Summary

The review of the literature revealed a theme that African-American adolescent's self-perception has an effect on academic performance through other external factors that affect their self-perception. Researchers and theorists of the aforementioned theories all concurred that academic self-perception is a factor in academic performance and achievement, but it is not solely a factor for poor academic performance. The external factors (e.g. racial discrimination, poverty, family, environment and school environment) that affect African-American adolescents' self-perception are considerable factors. However, these external factors indicate that they can possibly be factors that lead to poor

academic performance. This possibility creates confusion in the literature about whether the external factors alone affect their self-perception, which in turn, affects academic performance or self-perception alone affect academic performance. However, I found in the review of literature that experienced racial discrimination is a factor that can affect both African-American adolescent's academic self-perception and academic performance, which was examined in this study.

The previously noted theories were developed from studies that were conducted in urban settings. I posit that applying those theories to African-American adolescents who reside in a rural area might be problematic. I must consider the differences in the environmental and social resources that are involved in an urban setting versus a rural setting (Weber et al., 2010). I potentially began to close the gap in the literature concerning the relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience of racial discrimination and it predicting academic performance. With this study, I highlighted this phenomenon in one of the Mississippi Delta region, the most poverty stricken rural area in the southern region of the United States of America.

I conducted a regression analysis in order to examine the relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and it predicting academic performance. The research design and methodology was explained in Chapter three.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Methodology

Overview

In the present study, I examined the potential relationships between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and its link to academic performance. The following sections elucidate how I implemented this study. In this chapter, I identify the following: Type of study, research design, the population, sampling type, sample size, procedure for drawing the sample, data collection, instrumentation validity and reliability of the instrument, threats of validity, ethic procedures, and confidentiality.

Type of Study

I used the quantitative research method to conduct the study. Quantitative research design involves investigating the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable, testing theories and hypotheses, and measuring the frequency of observations (Ahmad, Ghazali, & Hassan, 2011; Hoe, 2012). The independent variable is the variable the researcher predicts change in the dependent variable, and the dependent variable is the variable that the researcher believes will emerge as a result of the independent variable (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2008; Gall, et al., 2007). Researchers who use this method utilize instruments to measure these variables then generate and analyze the data by using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research method is used to test the theory used for the study (Gall, et al, 2007). According to Castellan (2010), quantitative research method is taking collected

facts of observed human behavior to substantiate a certain theory that allows the researcher to assert causes and predict human behavior. The researcher tests the theory by analyzing the relationship between variables (Castellan, 2010).

The variables for this study are rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination, the independent variables as measured by Self-Perception Profile for Adolescent and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index, and their academic performance, the dependent variable as measured by the participants' GPA. Additional variables were extracted from the demographic sheet in Appendix C to describe the characteristic of the sample.

Research Design

The research design that was used for this study is a relational correlational research design. This research design allowed me to investigate the potential relationship between academic self-perception along with experienced racial discrimination and their association with academic performance. I tested and found out the potential influence of this relationship. The result might potentially increase the awareness of school counseling professionals, mental health school-based counselors, and school administrators about the relationship between academic self-perception along with experienced racial discrimination and academic performance for African American adolescents to help them create more effective intervention to improve rural African-American adolescents' academic performance and their learning environment.

Relational correlational research design allows the researcher to determine the relationship between two or more variables through statistical analysis (Gall et. al., 2007;

Martella et al., 2013). Rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception was measured by the scholastic subscale and global self-worth subscale results of the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA), experienced racial discrimination was measured by results of Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI) and their academic performance was measured by their (GPA) and the demographic variable.

Population

The population for this study consisted of students at three high schools that represent African-American students who live in poor, rural areas of the Mississippi Delta. The three schools were selected in order to represent cultural and racial demographics of the Mississippi Delta. Khan, Haynes, Armstrong, and Rohner (2010) asserted that the Mississippi Delta is regarded as one of the poorest regions in the United States. They noted that the schools in this area of the country range from excellent to poor in achievement level (Khan et al., 2010).

The first high school that was used in this study has 267 students in attendance, and it is the only high school in its district (Mississippi Department of Education Report Card 2015-2016). These students reside in rural communities in Coahoma County, Mississippi where 37.4% of individuals are below the poverty level (U.S. Census, 2015). African-American students make up entire the student population at this particular school (Mississippi Department of Education Report Card, 2015-2016). The total student population of this high school was invited to participate in this study.

The ages of the student population at these schools are between 14 and 18 years old. There are some students who are older than 18 years in the student population of

these schools. Those students may have repeated a grade or started their schooling later than those students between ages of 14 and 18 years. However, I used students between the ages of 14 and 18 years due to this age range were the ages of the norm groups to test the reliability and validity of these instruments (Harter, 2012; Fisher, 2000). Additionally, this age group usually covers the school years of adolescents.

The second high school is 5.3 miles south of the previously mentioned high school. The school district consists of two high schools. The total population for this high school is 486 students (Mississippi Department of Education Report Card, 2015-2016). Ninety percent of the population at this school is African-American (Mississippi Department of Education Report Card, 2015-2016). These students reside in towns of Coahoma County, Mississippi where 37.4% of individuals are below the poverty level (U.S. Census, 2015). The total student population was invited to participate in this study.

The third high school is located in the Mississippi Delta. This high school is 36 miles south of the second previously mentioned high school. The population of this school consists of 621 students (Mississippi Department of Education Report Card, 2015-2016) and 46% of the student population is African-American and 47% of the student population is White (Mississippi Department of Education Report Card, 2015-2016). These students reside in communities of Bolivar County, MS where 34.8% individuals are below poverty level (U.S. Census, 2015). The total student population was invited to this study.

Sampling

In this study, I used convenience sampling. My approach to convenience sampling involves selecting three specific schools in a non-random manner and those students are available to the researcher. This sampling procedure is considered a nonprobability sampling procedure because the probability of selecting a particular student is not by chance but unknown (Gall, et al., 2007). I invited all students from the population to participate and attain the maximum sampling size for this study (Martella, et. al., 2013).

Sample Size. To formulate my sample size, I used Green's rule of thumb procedure. According to Wilson, Voorhis and Morgan (2007), Green (1991) gives a comprehensive overview of the procedures used to define regression sample sizes. They noted that Green suggested that sample size need to be greater than $50 + \text{number of predictors}$ for testing the multiple correlation and the sample size greater than $104 + \text{number}$ for testing individual predictors (Wilson,et al., 2007). Initially, I used the G power software to compute the sample size for this study. It yielded a sample size of 43. This sample size might be found as too small to determine significance (Gall et al., 2007). I used multiple regression to test the correlation between the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance. Therefore, I used Green's rule of thumb to yield a more suitable size to better determine significance and the weight of the predictors. I used the following formula: $N > 104 + 2 \text{ predictors}$. The sample size that was computed for this study was 106.

The sample size for this study is 106. All students at these three high schools in the Mississippi Delta was invited to participate in the study. Currently, there are 268 students at the first high school, 486 students at the second high school, and 621 at the third high school. Therefore, if 7.2% of the total of students from all three high schools respond, the sample of 106 will be met. Nonetheless, I desired at least 7.2% of the total number of students from the three schools population to volunteer for this study, which would meet the required N based on the Green's rules of thumb procedures. Gall et al. (2007) asserted that the investigator needs to consider attrition when determining his or her sample size. They noted that school children who attend schools in low-income neighborhoods tend to leave the school during the course of the year (Gall et al., 2007). If a large number of students leave the school during the course of the year after being selected for the study, I would still have a large enough sample to represent the population with the results from the study.

Data Collection

All students enrolled at all three high schools were invited to participate in this study. I met to talk with the School District Superintendent, School Principal, and School Counselor for each school about my study and my role in conducting the study at their school. I gave them an overview of my study, the questionnaires, informed consent form, and demographic sheet. During this meeting, I answered all their questions and addressed their concerns. Moreover, I personally stayed in contact with the school counselors and was ready to address any issues they may have presented after they have distributed these forms to the students.

The school counselor served as the liaison between the students and me. When the Letter of Cooperation was signed by superintendent, school principal, and school counselor, I created 9 by 12 resealable envelopes packets that contain the following: recruitment letters, informed consent form, the two questionnaires, demographic sheet, and a copy of the informed consent form for parents or legal guardians to keep for their records (Appendences A, B, C) (Gall, et al., 2007). This informed consent form used terms that were age-appropriate, easy to understand, and simple. These envelope packets were addressed: "For Parent or Legal Guardian of student." The researcher's contact information, Institutional Review Board's (IRB) contact information, and the IRB approval number for this study were on each form that is in the envelope in order for the parent or legal guardian and student to directly contact the researcher or IRB concerning these forms or other concerns about this study. Prior to creating my recruiting procedure, the school counselors at these particular schools advised me to send these envelopes home by the students. They found that this method to be the most effective way to disseminate and receive information back from the parents. The school counselor distributed these envelopes to the students. The parent or legal guardian and student advised on the recruitment letter and informed consent form to sign the parent section of the form and the student was asked to sign the assent to participate section of this form. Students were able to complete the instrument and demographic sheet once the informed consent has been reviewed and signed by the student and parent or legal guardian. Students were able to completed the questionnaire and demographic sheet at home or in class during *down time*. *Down time* is a time period in which students are not carrying out

class assignments (personal communication V. Cooper, 10/15/15). Students were instructed to place his student identification (ID) number at the top of the questionnaire and demographic sheet in order that the school counselor in recording each student's GPA to the student ID number. The student placed the signed informed consent, the completed demographic sheet, and completed questionnaires in the envelope, and he or she resealed it to return them to their school. I placed a locked storage container outside the school counselors' office at each school for the students to place the envelope packet inside the locked storage container (J. Sherer, personal communication, August 28, 2015). I collected the envelope packets from each school on a weekly basis until 106 of both instruments, informed consent forms and demographic sheet were collected. If an envelope did not contain all three forms, it was excluded from this study.

A minimum of 106 participants was needed for this study's sample. However, I collected 36 participants' informed consent forms, instruments, and demographic sheets from each school in case of attrition (Gall, et. al., 2007). A packet was voided if it was incomplete or the envelope is missing the required forms. When a sum of 106 of each those forms was collected, I made a list of the students IDs who return all three of those forms and gave a copy of this list to the school counselors of the prospective school to inform them of the students who return their packet to participate in this study. The school counselor used this list of student IDs to record the GPA to the Student ID Number. From this list, the school counselors formulated a list of the Student IDs and their matched GPAs and they gave me a copy of this list. The school counselor was the

only individual involved in this present study who was able to match the student ID with the student's name.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

I used the Harter Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA), Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index, and Demographic sheet to gather data measuring the participant's academic self-perception, the distress of experiencing racial discrimination, and demographic information of the student. According to Hughes, Galbraith, and White (2011), the SPPA was developed by Susan Harter to focus on the perceptions of competence, which the author of SPPA considered to be central to self-perception evaluation. As previously mentioned, Harter (1985) adopted the notion that self-perception is multidimensional. Wichstrom (1995) noted that Harter conceptualized that self-evaluations are established by the ratio between perceived competence and the person's aspirations in any one particular domain of life.

The SPPA is comprised of 45 items that I used to evaluate adolescent's feelings of competency in a particular domain of life. In addition, researchers can measure the general sense of contentment concerning self or global self-worth (Rudasill & Callahan, 2008). It is designed for adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 years old (Harter, 2012). According to Gumus (2010), this instrument is an extension of the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC), which has six sub-dimensions. Harter (2012) added three more sub-dimensions in the SPPA, which has nine sub-dimensions (Job-competence, Close Friendship, and Romantic Appeal) (Gumas, 2010). These added sub-dimensions increased the number of items on this questionnaire to a total of 45 items.

The SPPA has eight specific domains relating to self-perception including scholastic competence, athletic competence, social acceptance, close friendship, romantic appeal, job competence, physical appearance, and behavioral conduct (Harter, 2012). The instrument also has a self-worth domain that measures the adolescent's overall sense of worth. I only used scholastic competence subscale to measure academic self-perception. SPPA uses a *structured alternative format* to deter desirable responses (Hughes et al., 2011). The format presents the items as paired statements designed to distinguish between two types of adolescent traits. Each of the nine domains has five items, which total to 45 items (Harter, 2012). The participant is asked to decide which statement best describes his or her self-perception in a certain domain. The participant would respond to the statement by marking either "Really true for me" or "Sort of true for me" in given answer block.

The scoring for each statement ranges from four (4) representing most adequate self-judgment and one (1) represents the least adequate self-judgment. The question format of the questionnaire was designed to discourage socially desirable responses and to incite honest choices (Harter, 2012). Each scale has two to three items that are worded in such a way that the first part of the statement reflects low competence and the other two or three items are worded in such a way that the first part of the statement reflect high perceptions of competence (Harter, 2012). The scores on the right are arranged 4,3,2,1; whereas, the scores for the items on the left are arranged 1,2,3,4. I transferred these scores from the adolescent's completed questionnaire onto the questionnaire's *data coding sheet* where all the items for a specific subscale was sorted together to calculate

the mean for each subscale. I used the scoring results of the scholastic subscale to determine the adolescent's academic self-perception.

The mean of scores from the four items of that particular domain subscale indicates the reflection of an adolescent's competence in that domain. For example, if the mean is two in the Close Friendship domain, the individual probably feels less competent in making close friends (See Table 1)

Table 1 Example of Domain Subscale Items, Items' Scores and Mean

Domain subscale	Q1 score	Q2 score	Q3 score	Q4 score	Mean
Close Friendship	2	1	4	2	2.2

There is not a composite score. I estimated that the participants spent 10 seconds on each item. Therefore, I estimated the time to complete the Scholastic subscale was 60 seconds. Harter (2012) has granted permission for researchers to administer the questionnaire and make copies of the SPPA 2012 manual and questionnaire for their own use. Moreover the author of SPPA noted that an individual can omit the other domain subscales and use the domain subscale that is relevant to that individual's research question. This permission is documented in the SPPA 2012 manual.

Validity. According to Drummond and Jones (2006), validity is vital for explication and the application of test scores. I reported what researchers have indicated for these three measures of validity concerning this instrument, which are content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity (concurrent or predictive) (Creswell, 2009). Content validity, construct validity and subtypes of construct validity

include convergence validity and discriminant validity. Martella et al. (2013) asserted that content validity refers to the fact that the instrument items represent the range of skills and competencies and highlight specific areas of the skills and competencies according to the significance in purveying evidence of the construct.

Harter and her colleagues (2012) found that SPPA meets the content validity criterion because the questionnaire items directly asked about specific concepts of the domains of self-perception. Harter's intentions were to design this profile in a manner that teachers, school administrators, parents, adolescents, and other clinicians can use to interpret how the students perceive themselves (Harter, 2012). The content validity of this instrument emphasizes certain areas of self-perception, which provides evidence of the construct validity (Martella et al. 2013).

Construct validity refers to whether the instrument items measure the presupposed construct that it is supposed to measure (Martella et al., 2013; Creswell, 2009). Martella et al. (2013) posited that construct validity hinges on the specificity of the construct itself. Drummond and Jones (2006) noted that the term construct is used to define a grouping of variables or behaviors that create observed behavior patterns (e.g. motivation, intelligence, anxiety, self-concept). They explained that an individual's self-concept cannot be measured but the behaviors and variables that form it can be assessed (Drummond & Jones, 2006).

In order to evaluate the construct validity for the SPPA, Harter and her colleagues (2012) developed a model that demonstrates how domain-specific self-concepts and global self-esteem are inserted into a model of the correlates and consequences of global

self-esteem. Harter and colleagues (2012) indicated that this model was created from the historical contributions of the two self-perception theorists, William James (1892) and Charles H. Cooley (1902). Harter and colleagues (2012) documented their contributions and expanded the model that was comprised of correlates and consequences of self-worth as it relates to depression. They included measures of domain-specific self-concepts, their importance, and global self-worth, which illustrated construct validity (Harter, 2012).

Martella et al. (2013) asserted that construct validity has no single way of being demonstrated in a measurement instrument. However, the literature concerning SPPA assessment does not provide any evidence about construct validity (Gumus, 2010; Westen & Rosenthal, 2005; Wichstrom, 1995). According to Martella et al. (2013), researchers occasionally purvey evidence to show they are measuring the construct that they are supposedly measuring. Additionally, they noted that construct validity is to be considered when the definition of the construct is not explicit (Martella et al., 2013). Frankfort-Nachimas and Nachmias (2008) found that researchers establish construct validity if the measuring instrument is related to the theoretical framework within their study to determine whether the instrument is rationally connected to concepts and theoretical assumptions they are applying.

Even though Harter and her colleagues (2012) used their model to verify the construct validity of SPPA, Harter does not indicate the sample they used to implement this model. In this case, factor analysis is needed to verify construct validity in regard to employing it with African-American adolescents (Wichstrom, 1995; Gumus, 2010). Moreover, Gumus (2010) noted that factor analysis studies have offered important

evidence concerning construct validity. Factor analysis is a statistical method that is employed to identify variables that are included in the measurement device (Gall et al., 2007). Thomason and Zand (2002) conducted an exploratory factor analysis study that involved an early adolescent, African-American sample. In their study they found supporting evidence concerning construct validity for the revised version of the SPPA by using the oblique solution procedure (Thomason & Zand, 2002). Oblique solution procedure refers to a procedure in factor analysis that is used to produce factors that by chance are correlated with each other (Gall, et al., 2007). Thomason and Zand's (2002) exploratory factor analysis involved illustrating a set of factors, which are primary constructs (the items that are involved in self-perception) that underlie the general construct (Self-perception).

Although researchers can use factor analysis to verify construct validity for the SPPA, the SPPA should correlate with other data that is relevant to self-perception or other questionnaires that measure the same construct (Drummond & Jones, 2006). Harter (2012) assessed the subtypes of construct validity, which are convergent validity and divergent validity. Convergent validity refers to the sample scores positively correlate with their scores on another measurement device that infers to measure the same construct (Gall, et al., 2007). Yet, Harter (2012) noted that researchers should not treat the SPPA scores as an index of convergent validity. Harter (2012) asserted that she and her colleagues used Marsh (1988, 1990, 1991) Self-Description Questionnaires (SDQ) in order to determine convergent validity. She used subscales that were similar in content. The authors reported on the convergence between four comparable subscales (Harter,

2012). They correlated the SPPA subscales with the Self-Description Questionnaire subscales (Harter,2012). Harter and her colleagues (2012) reported the following: The SPPA Scholastics Subscale scored .60 when it was correlated with SDQ Total Academic Subscale. The SPPA Social Competence Subscale scored at .68 when it was correlated with the SDQ Peer Relations Subscale. The SPPA Physical Competence Subscale scored .69 when it was correlated with the SDQ Physical Attributes Subscale. The SPPA Global Self-Worth scored .56 when it was correlated with SDQ General Self-Concept Subscale. These were relatively high correlations between SPPA subscales and Self-Description Questionnaire subscale (Martella et al., 2013; Gall, et al., 2007). However, Gumus (2010) found that the revised version of the SPPA shows better convergent validity than the original. Discriminant validity shows evidence of the distinction between the specific subscales on SPPA and SDQ (Gall et al., 2007).

Harter (2012) wrote “Discriminant validity applies when scores on given subscales are anticipated to discriminate between groups of adolescents who are expected to differ on particular subscales, due to their group membership (p.21).” Harter and her colleagues examine discriminant validity for both the scholastic competence subscale and the behavioral conduct scale (Harter, 2012). The groups they used to analyze this type of validity were normally-achieving students, learning-disabled students, and behavioral disordered students which she noted that the two latter groups were defined by the State of Colorado criterion for special education students. From their findings, they predicted that the scholastic competence subscale would discriminate between normally-achieving students and learning disabled students (Harter, 2012). The results confirmed their

prediction. The normally-achieving students had a score of 3.02 (consistent with other such samples) learning disabled had a scholastic competence score of 2.45 which they noted that it is significantly lower as expected, illustrating discriminant validity (Harter, 2012). The authors also reported that the behavioral disordered students' scholastic competence score was 2.61, understandably due to their behavioral problems impeding their interest in academic performance (Harter, 2012).

The low correlates of the scholastic competence subscale scores among the three groups of students corroborated the discriminant validity (Gall et al., 2007). However, Harter (2012) elucidated that the findings concerning the behavioral-conduct competence subscale illustrated a difference as well in scores between normally-achieving students and behavioral disordered students. The normally-achieving students had a score of 2.92, which contrast to the behavioral disordered students' score of 2.28. The learning disabled students were not included in this analysis, yet the authors interest compelled them to run analysis on the learning disabled students, and their score for the behavioral-conduct competence subscale was 2.90. Their score were not significantly different from the normally-achieving students. This subscale validated discrimination among the groups of scores. Nonetheless, the validity of the SPPA hinges on its reliability (Martella et al., 2013).

Reliability. Reliability implies that the participant will respond the same way at various times (Efron and Ravid, 2013). However, Gall et al. (2007) noted that the test reliability indicates that at some degree measurement error is absent from the scores generated by the test. They defined measurement error as a distinction between the

participant's actual amount of characteristic measured by the test and the scores that the participant attained on the test over different times and settings (Gall et al., 2007).

However, true scores and measurement error are constructs that are inferred by the researcher through various procedures used to measure reliability (Gall et al., 2007). The three common procedures that researchers used to measure reliability are test-retest reliability, internal consistency, and alternate-form reliability (Martella et al., 2013; Gall et al., 2007).

Gumus (2010) applied test-retest method to the revised SPPA. He used 32 items instead of 45 items from the test and used 128 adolescents who never taken this questionnaire (Gumus, 2010). Out of 128 adolescents, 18 adolescents were omitted from either they were absent for the second administration or did not fill it out correctly. The author inferred the SPPA with the 32 items was re-administered to the same 110 adolescents a month later, and the data collected was used to calculate Pearson moment correlation coefficients (Gumas, 2010). The following coefficient values were the following: .88 for romantic appeal, .70 for athletic competence, .68 for physical appearance, .60 for social acceptance/close friendship, .93 for behavioral conduct/scholastic competence and .79 for job competence.

According to Harter (2012), test-retest method statistics should not be considered as an indicator of test retest. The author of SPPA explained that self-perceptions can change over time due to certain factors such as interventions that bring about change, natural events in an adolescent's life, school transitions, change in family constellations,

and age-related developmental factors (Harter, 2012). Therefore, these factors and other factors must be considered when the time is delayed between test administrations.

Harter (2012) did not compute the coefficient of stability; however, Harter used internal consistency reliability for the primary indicator. Internal consistency reliability is a procedure that involves analyzing individual items of the test to determine how unified they are in a measuring instrument (Martella, et al, 2013). Several methods can be used to determine internal consistency. The Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (K-R 20) was used to compute the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the SPPA (see Table 1). Gall et al. (2007) noted that K-R 20 is most widely used to determine reliability when items are not scored dichotomously (e.g. yes or no). The SPPA response format is similar to the "yes or no" format. Harter (2012) explained that they primarily depended upon internal consistency procedure results to measure reliability for SPPA. They used four samples to carry out this procedure. Table 1 exhibits the subscale internal consistency reliabilities for each sample:

Table 1

Subscale Internal Consistency Reliabilities for Each Sample

	Scholastic	Social	Athletic	Appearance	Job	Romance	Conduct	Close friend	Self-worth
Sample A	.91	.90	.90	.89	.93	.85	Not given	.85	.89
Sample B	.81	.81	.89	.85	(.55)*	.83	(.58)*	.79	.80
Sample C	.77	.77	.86	.84	(.64)	.75	(.60)	.80	.85
Sample D	.81	.78	.92	.86	.74	.80	.78	.83	.88

*Subscale subsequently revised

This chart illustrates the subscales that were answered by the four samples of their study to determine internal consistency reliability among the sample. In addition, it shows the Cronbach's alpha values for each sample and subscale.

Rose's, Hands', and Larkin's (2012) subsample of adolescents who participated in 14 year old follow-up in longitudinal West Australian Pregnancy Cohort Study compared their internal consistency reliabilities to American (Harter, 1988), French Canadian (Bouffard, Seidah, McIntyre, Boivin, Veseau, and Cantin, 2002), Australian (Trent, Russell, and Cooney 1994), and Norwegian (Wichstrom, 1995). They indicated that there were some small variations were evitable, but there were overall consistency across these studies (Rose, et al., 2012). Gumus (2010) reported the following internal consistency coefficients for the Revised SPPA: .78 for romantic appeal .76 for athletic competence, .69 for physical appearance, .68 for social acceptance/close friendship, .56 for behavioral conduct/scholastic competence and .58 for job competence. According to Gall et al. (2007), those scores that are range closer to .80 indicate sufficient reliability. Therefore, the romantic appeal subscale and athletic competence show stronger scores of reliability than other subscales.

Racial discrimination. Participants' experiences with racial discrimination will be measured by using the adolescent discrimination distress index (ADDI). Celia B. Fisher and colleagues created this instrument in 2000. The ADDI is a 15 items self-reporting instrument that assess adolescents distress in response to perceived occurrences of racially provoked discrimination in institutional, educational, and peer contexts (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). The participants are asked to evaluate a statement by telling

whether or not the statement was made *because of their race or ethnicity* and if they had to rate their anger on a 5 point scale ranging from *not at all to extremely angry*. A comprehensive level of discrimination distress is calculated by summing the total items scores for distress with a possible range of 0 to 75 with 0 meaning “No experience of perceived discrimination and 75 meaning affirming all listed instances of perceived discrimination and appraising them at the highest level of distress (Grossman & Liang, 2008). Fisher and colleagues gave me permission to use this instrument for this study.

According to Fisher et al. (2000), the statements used in this measuring instrument were initially developed based on existing literature, reports in the news media, personal experiences of the multiethnic research team and the Racial Discrimination Index design for African-Americans. They noted that these items were revised for clarity, terminology, and face validity after it was reviewed by 28 high school participants who were African-American, Hispanic, East Asian, South Asian, and non-Hispanic white descent (Fisher et al., 2000). The authors asserted that acceptable test-retest reliability for educational and institutional discrimination subscale (Fisher et al., 2000). Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2007) noted that the bivariate correlations between the three subscales in their sample range from .53 to .88 ($p > .001$) and an excellent internal consistency for the composite score was discovered in their study. Grossman and Liang (2008) reported that the Cronbach alpha for their sample of 177 was 0.74.

Demographic. The demographic sheet consisted of five questions that pertain to the student’s personal information. The questions were arranged in multiple-choice format.

These questions will focus on the current state of the student. An example of a question that will be on the demographic sheet is Race: African-American (Black), White (White), Hispanic (Latin American) Native American (American Indian) Other: Specify. Most of the questions on this sheet were one-word questions.

Academic Performance. Participants' academic performance was measured by their GPA of the present nine weeks (Wong, 2003). The GPA was obtained from school records, which the school counselor provided to the researcher. Their GPA is measure on a four (4) point scale (0=F, 1=D, 2=C, 3=B, 4=A).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was reported to understand the population. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), descriptive statistics are statistical techniques that are used by the researcher to analyze and describe data to summarize and organize it in a useful and meaningful way. Additionally, I used inferential statistics to generalize or make inferences about the larger population based on the responses of the participants (Martella et al. 2013). Data collected from the SPPA, ADDI, demographic sheet, and their GPA was imported into IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 21 (SPSS) to complete the statistical calculations. This computer software allowed me to analyze, organize and summarize all the data produced by the SPPA, ADDI, demographic sheet, and GPA (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

The data produced by the SPPA, ADDI, demographic sheet, and the participants' GPA was analyzed using descriptive statistics techniques and inferential statistics techniques. These statistics was used to make inferences concerning the student

population in the rural Mississippi Delta area. Martella et al. (2013) noted that correlation statistics are regarded as descriptive statistics. African-American adolescents' academic self-perception (SPPA scholastic subscale), Adolescents Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI), their academic performance (GPA), and responses from the demographic sheet are the variables involved in this study; therefore, correlation statistics was used to examine the degree of relationship between academic self-perception, experience of discrimination, and student's GPA.

RQ-1 What is the relationship between the combination of self-perception as measured by Self-Perception and experienced racial discrimination as measured by Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and its association with academic performance as measured by GPA among rural African-American adolescents?

The alternative hypothesis for this study is the following:

Ho: $R^1 \neq 0$ There is a relationship between the combination of self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent, Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs.

The null hypotheses for this study is the following:

Ho: $R^1 = 0$ There is no relationship between a combination of self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception

Profile for Adolescent and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs.

I used a multivariate correlation method to test the hypothesis. According to Gall et al. (2007), multivariate correlation methods allow the researcher to examine the other factors (race, year in high school, family structure, etc), both singly and in combination affect on dependent variable (academic performance). The data collected from the SPPA, ADDI, demographic sheet, and the student's GPA was analyzed and the multiple regression was calculated. This statistical procedure was computed the multiple correlation coefficient (R). According to Gall et al. (2007), multiple correlation coefficient (R) is computed when a measure of the extent of the relationship between a criterion and combination of predictor variables.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 software was used to compute the multiple correlation coefficient and generate the correlational statistics and coefficient. The correlational statistics allowed me the researcher to infer the nature of the relationship between the combination of African-American adolescent's academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and its association with academic performance (GPA) (Martella, et al., 2013; Gall, et al., 2007). I ran a correlation analysis between the variable academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination to make sure there is not collinearity (Gall, et al., 2007).

The multiple correlation coefficient ranges from 0.00 to 1.00 (Gall et al. 2007). The coefficient indicated the direction of the relationship by using the value of R (Martella, et al., 2013). According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), a positive

relationship between these variables would be as academic self-perception increases and experience of racial discrimination decrease GPA increases. A negative relationship would be that as academic self-perception increases and experience of racial discrimination decreases GPA decreases (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). Other correlations was analyzed relating to direction of the relationship such as a combination academic self-perception, experienced racial discrimination and global self-worth domains of self-perception and academic performance and a combination of other influencing factors (e.g. race, gender, family structure, and grade level) academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance. The direction of the relationship was illustrated by the use of scattergrams associated with the correlation coefficient (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Threats of Validity

External threats to validity are threats that may occur in this study. Martella, et al. (2013) indicated that some external threats of validity do not apply to correlational research as they may apply to other type research designs. Therefore, I addressed those external threats that are likely to avail in this correlational research study. According to Martella, et al. (2013), there are four external threats of validity that may occur in this study. They are the following: Generalizing from the experimental sample to a defined population, sampling procedure, interaction of history and treatment, interaction of time of measurement and treatment effect. Generalizing from the experimental sample to a defined population that involves the researcher attempting to generalize the findings from a study regarding a certain population that the sample was drawn from to a larger

population (Gall et al., 2007) However, the risk is limited due to I used inferential statistics that allowed me to make inferences based on the sample responses to the student population in the Northwest region of the Mississippi Delta.

I used the convenience sampling procedure for this study, a nonprobability sampling procedure (Martella et al., 2013). Therefore, the researcher does not select the sample by chance but by other means (Gall et al., 2007). This is an external threat to the validity. I addressed this threat by inviting all the students who attend that particular school to participate in the study. I used those students who return a signed informed consent, a completed demographic sheet and a completed SPPA and ADDI in a sealed envelope. All the students have an opportunity to participate in the study; however, I collected only 36 envelopes from each school. I used those envelopes that were completed until I received 36 envelopes. I stored the other completed envelope in a locked container for future study and I destroyed the incomplete envelopes.

Another external threat that may occur in this study would be interaction of history and treatment. This external threat is when the event or situation that occurred before or during the assessment that may affect the participant's response to the assessment (Martella, et al 2013). Harter (2012) noted that the atmosphere of standardized testing can raise students' anxiety level. I addressed this threat by allowing students to take these questionnaires home to complete or complete them during down time in class. They were in a familiar environment that brought comfort and eliminate the anxiety for testing.

Interaction of time of measurement is when a posttest at two or more points in time may result in different findings about treatment effects (Gall et al. 2007). This threat could occur if there is a participant who has to leave after he or she has begun filling out the questionnaire. However, participants can complete these questionnaires at home or during down time in class when they feel that they have had a sufficient amount of rest. They were able to start and stop and start again on the questionnaire until they completed it. According to Martella et al. (2013), the time the participant stop taking the assessment and the time he resumes taking the test will not show an effect on his or her response unless the evidence presents itself.

Internal Threats to Validity. As far as internal threats to validity and mortality anticipate threat to validity for this study (Skidmore, 2008; Gall et al., 2007).

Experimental mortality can be an internal threat to validity for this study. Experimental mortality involves some of the participants dropping out of the study, missing a certain session (pretest session or posttest session) or got expelled from school (Gall, et al., 2007). I addressed this issue by allowing over the number of students needed for this study to volunteer for this study. From this excess of students, I replaced the participant or participants who were expelled from school and they were not able to returned the completed questionnaires before the date the questionnaires are collected by me. I made this replacement only to meet the required number of participants for this study.

However, this particular student would not be identified because he or she participated in this study as an anonymous participant.

Ethical Procedures

I must obtain consent from the school personnel in order to carry out this study at these high schools. In order to obtain permission from the school personnel and administration, I scheduled a meeting with the school district superintendent, school principal, and school counselor to explain the study and present the Informed Consent form that was used to obtain informed consent from the student's parents or legal guardian and assent for participation from the student. Moreover, I returned to each school on a weekly basis to collect students' packets and inform the counselor of the progress of the study and other concerns. However, the counselor could always call me on the telephone regarding their concerns such as questions about the items in the packet. These meetings kept school counselors abreast of what is taking place in stages of the study and ensured them that all processes are carried out in accordance with the approved design.

This study involved the participation of human beings. According to Gall et al. (2007), a research study that involves human participation must be reviewed by an institutional review board (IRB). They asserted that the IRB ensures the rights and privileges of the research participants and protect their confidentiality and freedom (Gall et al., 2007). Before this study is implemented, I gained permission and approval from the Walden University IRB. I obtained an approval number and placed it on the forms inside the envelope that are distributed to the participants. In order to protect participants of this study, I obtained permission from the school authorities and participants' parents before data were collected. I followed the IRB guidelines relating to this study. I consulted with

the IRB and my dissertation committee concerning any ethical issues or concerns that might arise before and after this study is implemented. The participants of this study are high school students who are minors and they require consent from an adult. According to Gall et al. (2007), researchers must obtain the student's assent and a written consent from their parents or legal guardian and school personnel if the research is carried out in the schools.

As a counselor, I followed the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics. I will adhere to ACA (2014) Ethics Code G.2.a to obtain consent that "accurately explains the purpose and procedures to be followed, identifies any procedures that are experimental or relatively untried, describes any attendant discomforts and risks, describes any benefits or changes in individuals or organizations that might be reasonably expected discloses appropriate alternative procedures that would be advantageous for participants, offers to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures, describes any limitations on confidentiality, describes the format and potential target audiences for the dissemination of research findings, and instructs participants that they are free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty"(p.16).

After the IRB has reviewed and approved the design, I was ready to collect data and analyze it. As previously mentioned, the research study included the use the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) questionnaire to collect data pertaining to the participants' academic self-perception, Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI) to collect data pertaining to participants' stress in response to occurrences of perceived

racial discrimination, demographic sheet to collect demographic data, and their GPA was used to measure their academic performance. The scores from the questionnaires, data from the demographic sheet, and participants' GPAs was analyzed to determine the direction of the correlation between the combination of their academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and its association academic performance (participants' GPAs) (Martella et al., 2013).

According to Frankfort –Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), the researcher should not be able to link any information to a particular participant of the study. Moreover, they asserted that the researcher should not request names and means of identifying participants in the study, but they may use identification numbers to ensure anonymity (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). However, I used the participants' correct GPAs to measure their academic performance. In order to receive their actual GPA, I used the identifier, Student ID numbers to match the GPA with the student. I gave the school counselor a list of the students' ID numbers who return his or her envelope to participate in the study. The school counselor used this list to record their correct GPA. The school counselor matched their GPA with the student's identification number. Therefore, the information will not be anonymous but confidential (J. Sherer, personal communication, August 28, 2015).

Confidentiality

As far as confidentiality, the data that was collected for this study was not be willfully publicized. However, there are particular situations that make it inconceivably difficult to maintain confidentiality. The ethical issue that may arise is judicial authorities

subpoena the information used in this study (Gall, et al., 2007). In order to address such an issue, I accurately and clearly explained means and limits of confidentiality in the informed of consent form, and in the meeting with the school counselor and the administration of the school (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In the event that such a situation occurs only the identification numbers that are issued to me regarding the participants will be released (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Gall, et al., 2007). As previously mentioned, only the school counselor was able to connect a certain student to a particular identification number.

Confidentiality is the responsibility of the researcher (Martella, et al. 2013; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; & Gall et al 2007). Therefore, the researcher must be cognizant of how the data is stored and disseminated. Furthermore, the researcher must consider the persons who will have access to the data (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). I was the only person that had access to the data storage. I placed paper documents in a locked file cabinet and I maintained possession of key for the file cabinet. All computerized documents will be saved on a USB flashdrive and backed up on an external hard drives. Both of these computerized storage devices have security codes that only the researcher was able to access. They were also locked in a cabinet.

Storage of the information is an important element for ensuring confidentiality. Nonetheless, the dissemination of the information is another element as it relates to confidentiality that must be contemplated. This study is a requirement for the completion of a doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision that I am pursuing at

Walden University. The study consists of a committee of three persons who are all faculty members of the School of Counseling and hold doctoral degrees as well. They provided me with guidance, research advice, and feedback regarding the content and implementation of this study. Therefore, I shared the content of this study with this committee to ensure that I followed the IRB guidelines, guidelines for completion of this degree and more importantly, ensuring that the study is being carried out in an ethical and proper manner. I informed the school counselor, and school administration of the dissemination of this information to my dissertation committee and the purpose of the dissemination at the outset of the study (Gall et al., 2007). In accordance with the recommendation of Creswell (2009), five years after this study has been completed and approved to meet the requirements for completion of the degree, I will destroy all paper documents that may have any identifying information regarding the site and participants of the study and delete all information in the computerized storage regarding the data, the sample, and the site in five years. However, the data that I planned to use for a future study remained in locked cabinet and on the computerized storage.

One of the sites where this research study was conducted is located on the same campus where I was once was employed. I did not have any interaction with the potential participants of this study. The school counselor and school administration recognized me as a former colleague. According to Gall et al. (2007), researchers who carry out their research at a site where they are known as a friend or colleague makes it easier compared to an outsider with unknown motives. Nevertheless, the issue of power differential might be questionable (Creswell, 2009). If the participants are informed that I was once

employed at that site, they may feel that I may have some influence on some of their teachers. Therefore, they may fear if they do not participate or do not answer the question on the questionnaires correctly that their teacher will penalize them. I addressed this issue by asking the school counselor at those schools to ensure the participants that the researcher does not have access to their class schedules or the names of their teachers (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In addition, I asked the school counselor to ensure them that they have the only access to their identifying information and they were not be penalized if they did not participate in this study. This information will be explained in the informed consent form as well (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Summary

The research method that has been selected for this study is correlational research design. The purpose for using such a design is to determine if rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception along with their measured perception of encounters with racial discrimination have a relationship with their academic performance. Gall et al. (2007) posited that the two purposes for correlational research design are to examine the relationships between variables and to predict scores on one variable from research participants' scores on other variables. This correlation will determine relationship among the variables

The researcher of this study conducted a relational correlational design to explore and illustrate the relationship between the combination of rural African-American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination and

its association with their academic performance (Martella, et al., 2013). According to Gall et al (2007), correlational research design will provide information concerning the degree of the relationship between the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and academic performance; however, it has limitations regarding the causal conclusion. To determine the correlation between these three variables, it involved using the participants' scores from Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index comparing them to the participants' current GPA.

Chapter four purveyed the results and findings from this study.

Chapter 4: Results

Results

The purpose of this study is to examine a potential correlation between a combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents in rural communities specifically in the Mississippi Delta. The research question that guided this study is the following: What is the relationship between the combination of self-perception as measured by Self-Perception and experienced racial discrimination as measured by Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and its association with academic performance as measured by GPA among rural African-American adolescents? The alternative hypothesis for this study is the following: There is a relationship between the combination of self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent, Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs. The null hypothesis is the following: There is no relationship between a combination of self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs. In this chapter, I described the data collection, descriptive statistics, the symmetry of the sample to the actual population, and the analyses of the variables within the statistical research model.

Data Collection

The data collection process took place at the participants' home, teachers' classroom, and the counselors' office at the following schools: Coahoma Early College High School, Coahoma County, and Cleveland Central High School for 1 calendar year. I collected the data between April 30, 2018 and April 30, 2019. The response rate is 77% of 137 students who volunteered for this study. I obtained the academic self-perception scores from the participants' responses on the SPPA Scholastic Competence subscale scores. I extracted the experience of racial discrimination scores from the participants' responses on the ADDI. The school counselors at the data collection sites provided the participants' GPA. I gathered the demographic information such as race, grade level, and family structure from the demographic data sheet that the participants completed. Participants provided their chronological age and gender on the SPPA form.

I deviate from data collection plan presented in Chapter 3 in the following ways: First, in the original data collection plan the students would complete the packets at home and return them in a dropbox outside the school counselor's office. However, some of the students who were 18 years old completed the packets in the school counselor's office in their free period or in the classroom when they received the packets from their teacher. Second, some students start completing the questionnaires at home, but they finished them at school because they had questions about the questionnaires. Third, some of the students returned the packets to the teachers that gave them the packet or they handed it to the school counselors. The teachers who received these packets gave them to the school counselor.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The participants for this sample included 106 African American adolescents who were educated at Coahoma Early College High School (CEHS), Coahoma County High School (CCHS), and Cleveland Central High School (C Central HS) located Northwest Mississippi Delta. There were 53 participants (50%) from CEHS, 33 participants (31.13%) from CCHS, and 20 participants (18.86%) from C Central HS. There were 67 females participants (63.2%) and 39 male participants (36.8%). The age range was 14 to 18 years. There were 69 participants (65.1%) who age ranged between 14 and 17 years old, and 37 participants (34.9%) who were 18 years old. The participants' grade level ranged from ninth grade to 12th grade. There were 26 participants (24.5%) who were in ninth grade, 14 participants (13.2%) were in 10th grade, 27 participants (25.5%) were in 11th grade, and 39 participants (36.8%) were in 12th grade. The majority of the participants were females (63.2%). African American students make up the entire student population at Coahoma Agricultural High School (100%) and the majority of the student population at Coahoma County High School is African American students (90.33%). African American students at Cleveland Central High School make up the minority of the population (46.14%). Participants in the 12th grade represent the highest number of participants by specific grade level (36.8%) and participants in the 10th grade represent the lowest of specific grade level (13.2%) in the sample. The mean for age is 16.4490 years ($SD = 1.42960$). The mean for the grade level is 10.75 ($SD = 1.196$), and the median is 11th grade.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 includes the descriptive statistics for the variables in the analysis, which are academic self-perception, experienced racial discrimination, and GPA. This table is the descriptive statistic for the sample of 106. Academic self-perception response mean is 2.99 ($SD = .649$) The standard deviation for this variable indicate the data points are close to the mean. Experienced racial discrimination response mean 4.23 ($SD = 3.037$). The standard deviation for this variable indicates the data points are distant away from the mean. The mean for GPA is 2.96 ($SD = .476$). The standard deviation for this variable indicates the data points are close to the mean.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academic Self-Perception	2	2	4	2.99	.649
Experienced Racial Discrimination	11	0	11	4.23	3.037
Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.48	1.43	3.91	2.96	.476

Note $N=106$

Table 2 includes the descriptive statistics for the variables in the analysis for the sample of 103 because three cases were dropped. The variables are academic self-perception, experienced racial discrimination, and grade point average (GPA). Academic self-perception mean is 3.00 ($SD = .653$) The standard deviation for this variable indicate the data points are close to the mean. Experienced racial discrimination response mean 4.16 ($SD = 3.031$). The standard deviation for this variable indicates the data points are

distant away from the mean. The mean for GPA is 2.99 ($SD = .424$). The standard deviation for this variable indicates the data points are close to the mean.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academic Self-Perception	2	2	4	3.00	.653
Experienced Racial Discrimination	11	0	11	4.16	3.031
Grade Point Average (GPA)	1.64	2.27	3.91	2.99	.42408

Note: N=103 after dropping three cases.

Assumption Testing and Multiple Regression Analysis

The statistical assumption that is appropriate for this sample is additive and linearity (Fields, 2018). The linear model is the statistical model that was used to represent the data collected for this study. The equation for this model is $GPA_i = (b_0 + b_1 Academic\ Self-Perception_{1i} + b_2 Racial\ Discrimination_{2i}) + error$. The relationship between the predictor variable, which is the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and outcome variable, which is academic performance is described by the previous mentioned model. According the scatterplot, the plots are farther away from the X axis and closer to the regression line and the line of regression falls between the 0 and 1 which indicate a linear relationship.

The assumption for normality is also appropriate for this sample (Fields, 2018). The normality test was run. According to the Shapiro-Wilk test, the dependent variable of GPA was non-normal ($p=.01$) The skewness values and kurtosis values are for the

variables were as follows: GPA skewness $-.160$ z-score $.575$ and kurtosis $.584$ z-score 1.25 , Academic Self Perception skewness $-.236$ z-score $.817$ and kurtosis $-.624$ z-score -3.12 and Experienced Racial Discrimination skewness $.192$ z-score $.817$ and kurtosis $-.743$ z-score $.780$. All six z-scores are within the range of $-/+1.96$. On the basis of skewness and kurtosis, I inferred that GPA is normally distributed. Therefore, I inferred that the data were a slightly skewed and kurtotic for both academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination but they do not differ significantly from normality. However, the previously mentioned information is from the normality assumption test results prior to addressing outliers. I discovered cases 21, 79, and 80 were outliers, which affected the Shapiro-Wilk test $p < .05$. However, I dropped those three cases to test the normality assumption and the Shapiro Wilk test $p = .01$. The skewness and kurtosis values with z scores are as follows: GPA skewness $.456$ z-score 1.91 and the kurtosis $-.662$ z-score 1.40 , Academic Self Perception skewness $-.273$ z-score -0.001 , and Experienced Racial Discrimination skewness $.255$ z score $.1.07$ and kurtosis $-.692$ z-score 1.42 . All six z-scores are within the range of $-/+1.96$. The Shapiro Wilks test for a GPA shows significance $p < .05$. However, Fields (2018) noted that Shapiro Wilks is a test that can show significance even when scores are slightly different from a normal distribution. Moreover, he noted that Shapiro Wilks test needs to be interpret along with histograms, P-P or Q-Q plots and the values of skew and kurtosis. According to the Shapiro Wilk test $p = .01$, a visual examination of the histogram, Q-Q plots, values of skewness, and kurtosis with z scores, I inferred that GPA meet the normality assumption. On the basis of the

skewness and kurtosis z-score values for Academic Self-Perception and Experienced Racial Discrimination, the data are fairly normally distributed.

Homoscedasticity assumption test was run on the data for this to determine the variance of the outcome variable (GPA) is stable at all levels of the independent variables (Academic Self-Perception and Experienced Racial Discrimination) (Fields, 2018). On the basis of the Levene test results show that the data does not meet the homoscedasticity assumption test, which is $p > .05$. However, Fields (2018) noted that this assumption test is important when there is unequal group sizes, which this study have one group size.

Multicollinearity assumption test was run on Academic Self-Perception and Experienced Racial Discrimination to determine if there is a linear correlation between these two variables (Fields, 2018). Fields (2018) noted that visual examination of the correlation matrix, variance inflation factor (VIF), and tolerate statistics are indicators that can determine multicollinearity. According to visual examination of the correlation matrix, the predictors do not have a correlation coefficient of 1. The variance inflation VIF calculation indicates that neither academic self-perception (1.008) nor experienced racial discrimination (1.008) has linear relationship with each other. The tolerance statistic (.992) for both academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination does not indicate a potential problem.

Inferential Statistics

The purpose of this study is to examine a potential correlation between a combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its

association with academic performance among African-American adolescents in rural communities specifically in the Mississippi Delta.

Research Question

The question that guided this research study was: What is the relationship between the combination of academic self-perception as measured by Self-Perception Profile for Adolescent (SPPA) and experienced racial discrimination as measured by Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI) and its association with academic performance as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) among rural African-American adolescents?

The answer to the research question was explained by analyzing the hypotheses results deriving from the enter method regression. More discussion regarding to this analysis will be emphasized in Chapter 5.

Hypotheses Results

The null hypotheses for this study is the following:

$H_0: R^1=0$ There is no correlation between a combination of self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent and Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs.

$H_1: R^1 \neq 0$ There is a relationship between the combination of self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents as measured by Harter's Self Perception Profile for Adolescent, Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index and participants' GPAs.

Table 3 shows the model summary and table 4 shows the analysis of variance. Table 5 is a list of the coefficients of the variables. The null hypothesis, $H_0: R^1=0$ is rejected. According to Table 3 and 4, the multiple regression analysis model fit was significant. A significant regression equation was found $F(2, 100)=5.720$, $p<.05$ with an R^2 of .103. The R^2 result indicates that the two predictors are responsible for 10.3% of the variation in GPA. Participants' GPA increased .188 by academic self-perception score increases by one unit. Participant's GPA decreases -.016 by experienced racial discrimination score increased by one unit. Academic Self-Perception shows to have a greater influence on the academic performance than Experienced Racial Discrimination. On the basis of the number standard deviations that the GPA change when the academic self-perception and experienced changed by one standard deviation, I inferred the following: Academic self-perception standardized $\beta = .288$ indicates that as academic self-perception increases by one standard deviation GPA increases by .288 standard deviations. The standard deviation for GPA is .42408, so this constitutes a change of .12 in GPA. Experienced Racial Discrimination standardized $\beta = -.116$ indicates that as increased by one standard deviation GPA decreases by -.116 standard deviation. The standard deviation for GPA is .42408, so this constitutes a change of -0.04 in GPA. The Academic Self-Perception variable is statistically significant ($p = .003$) whereas Experienced Racial Discrimination is not statistically significant ($p = .225$).

Table 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.320	.103	.085	.40572

c. Predictors: (Constant), Experienced Racial Discrimination Responses Sum Score, Academic Self-Perception Mean=Score

d. Dependent Variable: Grade Point Average

Table 4

ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1.883	2	.942	5.720	.004
Residual	16.461	100	.165		
Total	18.344	102			

c. Dependent Variable: Grade Point Average

d. Predictors: (Constant), Experienced Racial Discrimination Responses Sum Score, Academic Self-Perception Mean =Score

Table 5

Coefficients of Variables

Variables	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.497	.203		12.284	.000
Academic Self-Perception	.188	.062	.288	3.031	.003
Experienced Racial Discrimination	-.016	.013	-.116	-1.222	.225

a. Dependent Variable: Grade Point Average

Summary

The purpose of this study is to examine a potential correlation between a combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination and its association with academic performance among African-American adolescents in rural communities specifically in the Mississippi Delta. The descriptive statistics denote a respectable normal distribution. The inferential statistics, specifically the Enter regression method results accentuate that the combination of academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination has a relationship with academic performance among the sample for this study. However, the multiple regression analysis calculations for academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination predict academic performance results indicate academic self-perception had a greater impact on academic performance than experienced racial discrimination. A discussion regarding the hypothesis results, a detailed answer to the research question predicting academic performance will transpire in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

As aforementioned, Khan et al (2010) noted that the Mississippi Delta is one of the poorest areas in the United States. African American high school students who live in rural Mississippi Delta are faced with challenges that are greater than their urban counterparts (Irvin, 2012). The rural Mississippi Delta has a history of racial discrimination with African Americans living in extreme poverty and segregation (Morris & Monroe, 2009; Seaton & Yip, 2009; Eckes, 2006). These challenges have oppressed many rural African American families who reside in the rural Mississippi Delta. Some rural African American adolescents seemed to be affected by these challenges, and they become hopeless. Campbell et al. (2002) found in their study a correlation between urban African American adolescents' academic self-perception and their academic performance. They encounter racial discrimination and mistreatment in society. They look at their environment and their life experiences and develop a hopeless mindset that causes them to become complacent and content with poverty (Farmer, et al., 2006). This mindset can lead to generations of African Americans living in poverty. Academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination seem to be the factors that help create their hopeless mindset.

Most studies that investigate academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination that predict academic performance are conducted in urban settings (Harter, 2012; Prince & Nurious, 2013; Cokley et al., 2011; Seaton & Yip, 2009; Stringer & Heath, 2008). However, researchers know little about the relationship between the

combination of academic self-perception and racial discrimination and their association with academic performance among rural African American adolescents specifically in the Mississippi Delta. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine a possible relationship between the combination of academic self-perception and racial discrimination and the association with academic performance among rural African American adolescents specifically in the Mississippi Delta. A sample of 106 participants was drawn from the Coahoma Early College High School, Coahoma County High School, and Cleveland Central High School. Using a regression analysis, the combination between African American adolescents' academic self-perception and their experience with racial discrimination were the predictor variables. Academic performance was measured by their GPA, which was the dependent variable.

Interpretation of Findings

After entering data from the questionnaires about academic self-perception and experienced racial discrimination in the regression analysis to predict academic performance as measured by participant's GPA, the model was significant. The model explained 10.3% of the variance in GPA. The findings are consistent with the peer-reviewed literature that is described in Chapter 2 regarding academic self-perception as a significant predictor of academic performance. This means these findings confirmed that academic self-perception has an important impact on academic performance (e.g. Prince & Nurius, 2014; Cokley et al., 2011). There is a significant positive correlation with academic performance whereas experienced racial discrimination was not a significant contribution to the model. This positive correlation of academic self-perception means

that students with a higher academic self-perception had significantly higher GPAs on average than students with lower academic self-perception. Experienced racial discrimination was not an important variable for determining GPA among the students sampled.

Harter's self-perception theory is the notion that students evaluate themselves differently in different domains of their lives. I used this theory as the theoretical framework to explain the relationship between academic self-perception and academic performance. Moreover, Neblett et al.'s (2006) conceptual framework indicates that racial discrimination is related to academic performance. I used this conceptual framework to investigate the relationship between experienced racial discrimination and academic performance. Consistent with Harter self-perception theory, academic self-perception was positively correlated with academic performance. It may be probable that confidence in academic performance among African American participants positively contributes to quantitative measures of academic performance such as GPA. Moreover, the positive correlation for this sample confirms Stringer's and Health's (2008) aforementioned notion that positive perception of competence assists in producing positive outcomes, which includes positively affecting academic performance. On the other hand, regression analysis indicated that experienced racial discrimination was not a significant predictor of academic performance. This conflicts with Neblett et al. The authors contend that a negative relationship could possibly indicate that African American participants who experience racial discrimination develop negative attitudes towards academics, which negatively affects academic performance, but in this sample

this negative correlation was not significant. Moreover, Thompson and Gregory (2011) noted that because of the existence of racial discrimination in schools, community, and peers, it could be that this experience conveys a message that African American adolescents are not competent to achieve academic success, yet the experienced racial discrimination variable for this sample was insignificant for this sample. This finding is probably different due to difference between rural and urban population. The experience of discrimination may be different in different regions of the United States. The measure of experienced discrimination was initially administered to African Americans who attended urban public high schools.

Limitations of the Study

These data cannot be used to infer exhaustive conclusions. However, I hope it will stimulate further research and discussion about how African American academic self-perception affects their academic performance. In addition, I hope it will lead to more research and discussion about how African American adolescents' experience with racial discrimination affects their academic performance. There were a few limitations in this study that need to be addressed in future research. First, the results are correlational; therefore they do not imply cause and effect between variables (Fields, 2018; Martella, 2013). Second, the sample was predominately African American adolescents, which the majority these participants were from schools that are predominately African American. There might have been a stronger association between racial discrimination and academic performance for African American adolescent in more diverse schools.

Recommendations

Future research should use quantitative research method and a nonprobability method that will draw a larger sample than the current study from the schools' population that represents key characteristics of the population. The researchers need to draw their sample from schools that have diversity in the student population. The sample size needs to be larger enough so that participants' scores represent the population scores (Gall et al., 2010). The research needs to consist of a complex investigation that determine the relationship between rural African American adolescents' academic self-performance and their experience with racial discrimination and their association with academic performance controlling for demographic data (e.g. age, gender) in a delta region (e.g. Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana). According to Martella et al (2013) relationships between variables gives researchers an indication of causation relationship, but relationships are not definitely causal. It will be noteworthy to conduct a causal-comparative study to compare rural White adolescents' academic self-perception and academic perception to rural African American adolescents' academic self-perception and academic performance controlling for experienced racial discrimination and demographic data (e.g. age, gender, race)

Implications

The findings in this study have implications for social change. Academic self-perception is a significant predictor for academic performance. This information will help school counselors, school administrators, mental health school-based counselors, parents, and non-school officials recognize that rural African American adolescents have a

perception about themselves and the world around them. A positive academic self-perception is a factor that can keep African American students engaged in school and enjoy academic success. On the other hand, negative academic self-perception is a factor that can lead to mental disengagement from school and poor academic performance. Once students are mentally disengaged from school and display poor academic performance, they become a high risk for school dropout. Consequently, they do not just leave school but some of them enter into a life of crime as a way of survival (Bolland, et al, 2007). Moreover, dropping out of high school and living in poverty can be a trajectory for upcoming generations, which puts a constant strain on society (tax increase for more constructions of jails, public assistances, etc.). Identifying ways to increase academic self-perception is a small step towards a safer and productive society (more college graduates, improvements in the living conditions in impoverished communities, decline in crime rate).

However, the Mississippi Delta has a long history of racial discrimination towards African Americans. African American adolescents who are perceived to be treated unfairly due to their race can be at risk for poor academic performance. This type of discrimination causes them to perceive that they are not competent to learn, which cause some to become hopeless and dropout of high school. Even though, experienced racial discrimination was not significant predictor of academic performance for this sample, I hope that investigating it as a probable predictor sparks awareness of racial discrimination in schools and in communities and create more policies that will enthusiastically monitor and reduce racial discrimination for our students.

Conclusion

Some rural African Americans adolescents who live in impoverished communities in Mississippi Delta face different risk factors that causes them to become hopeless about their future. However, if the people who live in rural communities want to change the educational trajectory of rural African American adolescents, they need to socialize them to believe that education is important and it is a vehicle that can drive them out of poverty instead of relying on crime, athletics, and entertainment. They need to help these students to develop the belief that they have the ability to learn and achieve academic success. School counselors, mental health school-based counselors, school administrators, and local leader can develop strategies that will attend to the education crisis and related societal ills.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to invite you to participate in a research study that will examine the relationship between Self-Perception and Academic Performance. This means the researcher will analyze how you view yourself determine if how you view yourself is connected to your current Grade Point Average (GPA). You have to complete a questionnaire that has 45 questions. It has questions that pertain to how you view yourself. You will be able to complete this questionnaire at home.

If you accept this invitation, you and your parent must read and sign “Informed Consent form. You (Student) will complete the questionnaire and demographic sheet. You will place the informed consent form, demographic sheet, and questionnaire back in the envelope and return it by placing it in the box outside the school counselor’s office.

Thank you in advance

Vincent Tompkins
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B: Informed Consent form

Dear Parent:

Vincent Tompkins, a doctoral student for Counselor Education and Supervision doctorate program at Walden University, is conducting a research study to determine if self-perception has a relationship with the academic performance. Your son or daughter has been invited to take part in this study to see if your child's view of himself or herself is connected to the his or her grades. There will be 43 students involved in this study at three schools in the Mississippi Delta.

Telephone number or email address for students and parents or legal guardian to call for questions: (662) 902-5240 or email address: vincentompkins03@gmail.com

Procedures: If you agree to your son or daughter to be in this study, he or she will ONLY be required to complete the questionnaire titled "What I Am Like" and the Demographic sheet included in this packet with this letter. He or she will place his or her Student Identification number at the "Name" space on the questionnaire. He or she will provide his or her current age in the "Age" space on the questionnaire.

Risks: The researcher does not expect any risks other than he or she feeling uncomfortable answering question about how they view himself or herself. However, he or she will be able to complete this questionnaire at home; therefore, he or she would not have to worry about other student looking onto their questionnaire to see the answer he or she marked on this questionnaire. Completing this questionnaire at home may lessen the discomfort.

Benefits: There may or may not be a direct benefit to you and your son or daughter from these procedures. However, your son or daughter will help in determining a relationship between self-perception and academic performance. This study could possibly be the beginning for future development of interventions that will help students in increase their self-perception and improve their grades.

Extra cost(s): There will be no cost for your son or daughter to participate in this study.

Voluntary nature of participation: Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. You may refuse to give your son or daughter permission to participate in this study. He or she will be able to withdraw at anytime without consequences or loss of benefits. However, your son or daughter may be withdrawn from this study without your permission by the researcher if all the forms in packet is not completed and signed.

Confidentiality: Information that is collected by the researcher will be locked in a file cabinet in a locked room of Vincent Tompkins. The computerized information will be password protected on Vincent Tompkins's password required external hard-drive that

will be locked in a room. Researcher will use students' student identification number to record their grades. This information will be stored on Vincent Tompkins's password required external hard-drive to ensure confidentiality of records. This information will be kept for no more than three years after the end of this study. Due to this research study is a requirement to obtain my doctoral degree, the following may look at my study and the records involved:

Dissertation committee that consist of my Chairperson of the committee, Methodologist member who give the researcher guidance on how to carryout this study University Research Reviewer

Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an independent committee who are members of the Walden University community and staff of the university.

IRB Approval: The Institutional Review Board is for the protection of human participants has reviewed and approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or believe that this research will harm your son or daughter, please call the IRB at (612) 312-1283. If you have a complaint about the researcher, please call the same number.

Copy of consent: A copy of this form is included in the packet for your records.

This form tells you what will happen in this study if you allow your son or daughter to take part. By giving consent for your son or daughter to participate in this study means that this study has been discussed with you, all questions has been answered, you understand the nature and purpose of this study and your son or daughter will be allowed to take part of this study.

Signatures:

Researcher

By signing below I agree to have my son or daughter participate.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Child's Assent

By signing below I agree to participate.

Signature of Child

Date

Appendix C: Demographic Sheet

Demographic Sheet

Student ID# _____ Grade _____

1. Race: Circle the following

Black-African-American

White-White

Hispanic-Latin American

American Indian

Other (Specify) _____

2. I live with my (circle those that apply to you below)

Mother

Father

Grandmother

Other (Specify) _____