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Racial Identity, Africentric Values, and Self-Esteem in Jamaican Children

Maysa Akbar
Saint Louis University

John W. Chambers, Jr.
Florida A & M University

Vetta L. Sanders Thompson
University of Missouri-St. Louis

This study examined the relationship between Black identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem among 161 Jamaican children. The Children’s Africentric Values Scale, the Children’s Racial Identity Scale, the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, and a background questionnaire were administered to participants. It was hypothesized that Black identity would be positively correlated with Africentric values and self-esteem. It was also predicted that the correlation between Black identity and Africentric values would be stronger than the correlation between Black identity and self-esteem. Results indicated that Africentric values, Black identity, and self-esteem were correlated for female adolescents but not for male adolescents. Unexpectedly, self-esteem accounted for more variability in Black female identity, thus serving as a better predictor than Africentric values. The results suggest the need to explore gender differences in racial identity development, in addition to cross-cultural issues.

For researchers to have a comprehensive view of the African American child, they must include children throughout the African Diaspora. This effort must include children from the Caribbean, West Indies, and mainland Africa. The number of immigrants in the United States has increased immensely over the past decades. Currently, there are approximately 150,000
immigrants residing in the United States from the Caribbean and Africa (U.S. Naturalization and Immigration Service, 1999). The study of racial identity and self-esteem in nations that are predominantly Black may provide useful information about the impact that a multiracial society has on African American youths in the United States. Jamaica, one of the most prominent tourist islands in the Caribbean, was the focal point of this study, which addresses racial identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem.

There are a number of ways to operationally define identity, especially when it is specific to race. Harris (1995) defined identity as the following:

An abstract word [which] refers simply to an individual’s sense of uniqueness, of knowing who one is, and who one is not. The development of a stable sense of identity is one of the central processes of childhood and adolescence. Maintaining the integrity of one’s identity is an ongoing struggle throughout adulthood. (p. 1)

Harris (1995) suggested that maintaining one’s racial or ethnic identity is a major challenge in a society that continually devalues Blacks. Black people must be able to affirm their distinctive identity (racial or ethnic identity) to distinguish themselves and to sustain a positive definition of themselves (Harris, 1995).

Self-esteem can be viewed as an overall judgment or perception of one’s values, morals, and attitudes as a person (GoPaul-McNicol, 1988; Roediger, Capaldi, Paris, & Polivy, 1991). The negative stereotypes about Black people held by mainstream society may result in internalized negative self-esteem for many Black children (GoPaul-McNicol, 1988; Pettigrew, 1964). Whaley (1993) investigated the roles that self-esteem, cultural identity, and psychosocial adjustment play in African American children’s development. Results suggested that racial identity and self-esteem were positively associated with psychosocial adjustment.

Tajfel (1981) suggested that racial identity is one of the most essential aspects surrounding the development of self, often providing racial pride and a sense of affiliation with a group. Bagley (1976) suggested that a Black peer group is an important element in attaining an adequate sense of racial identity, which mitigates against low self-esteem caused by negative and demeaning experiences that a child might encounter in all-White environments. In a study assessing individual identity and racial identity of children ages 10 to 11 whose parents were of Jamaican descent, Bagley (1979) indicated that a low level of racial identity and poor self-esteem are often associated with negative attitudes toward the working environment, underachievement, withdrawal from school, and defiance of parents. This suggests the importance of
racial identity development for children of African descent outside of the United States.

The current study investigated racial identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem among Jamaican children who encounter positive images of and messages about themselves as Black people in a predominantly Black environment. There is evidence that people who maintain positive images of themselves, as Black people, may experience more positive outcomes. This study examined identity, self, and racial identity, in Black Jamaican children who had faced little or no discrimination, had Black role models, and were surrounded by Black icons. It was expected that these factors would have a positive influence on an individual’s sense of self.

IDENTITY

Early research about racial identification in children relied on “doll preference” methodology (Clark & Clark, 1939, 1940). Racial preference was assessed via the selection of a Black or White doll. Racial dissonance was interpreted to represent “racial group,” self-hatred, and low self-esteem. During the 1970s and 1980s, the assumption that racial group preference was synonymous with personal identity was challenged (Spencer, 1982, 1984). Spencer (1984) noted these studies’ failure to assess both constructs in the same sample and focused attention on the independence of the constructs. Data indicated that racial dissonance and self-concept were not related. This finding was consistent with the work of Clark (1982). In fact, 87% of a northern sample and 94% of a southern sample reported positive self-concepts, although racial dissonance varied considerably. In addition, data suggested a developmental increase in Africentric preferences in children ages 5 through 9.

Phinney and Chavira (1992) conducted a 3-year longitudinal study that evaluated whether having an achieved (ethnic) identity (searching for and committed to one’s identity) strengthened self-esteem or whether self-esteem led to higher ethnic identity. Self-esteem was significantly correlated with racial identity. However, self-esteem can serve as either the predictor or the outcome variable for the development of ethnic identity (Phinney & Chavira, 1992). Furthermore, the results of this or any other correlational study cannot conclusively determine the direction of cause and effect for self-esteem and ethnic identity. Nonetheless, Phinney and Chavira do note that when Black identity has been fully attained, it can potentially contribute to a person’s self-esteem and can protect him or her against the impact of negative experiences such as racism or discrimination. Parham and Helms (1985) describe how low racial identity is associated with poor self-esteem,
feelings of inferiority, and anxiety. In addition, research with White students has found that ethnic identity is not correlated with self-esteem, probably because race is not a salient issue in the identity development of White people (Phinney, 1992). Thus, the controversy still with exists regard to the cause and effect relationship of racial identity and self-esteem. Nonetheless, researchers assert that if an individual has a positive racial identity, it is likely that they will have higher levels of self-esteem (Parham & Helms, 1985; Phinney & Chavira, 1992).

CULTURE AND CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

The Africentric worldview is thought to be a deeper evaluation of individuals’ knowledge and values as they pertain to race. Burlew and Smith (1991) suggested that attaining an African worldview is the optimal state for individuals of African descent. One of the functions of a worldview is to determine one’s value and belief system; hence, it may serve as a proxy for culture. Nobles (1974) theorized that the basic core of the Black personality is self-concept (esteem), which is derived from the African worldview. Thus, theoretically, there should be a relationship between Africentric values and self-esteem among children of African descent.

Belgrave et al. (1994) examined the relationship between Black identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem. They hypothesized that Africentric values would be significantly correlated with Black identity and self-esteem. The authors used the Children’s Racial Identity Scale to measure Black identity, the Children’s Africentric Values Scale to measure ethnic identity and communal orientation, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (modified) to measure self-esteem. As predicted, Black identity and self-esteem were positively correlated, once again reinforcing the strong relationship that exists between racial identity and self-esteem (Belgrave et al., 1994; Clark, 1985; Parham & Helms, 1985; Phinney & Chavira, 1992). However, there was a negative correlation between Africentric values and self-esteem. A possible reason for this finding was that Africentric values are centered around a communal and collective orientation, whereas the focal point for self-esteem among individuals socialized in the United States is one’s individuality (Belgrave et al., 1994). This suggests a need to examine these issues throughout the African Diaspora, recognizing cultural variations.

Several theorists have considered the impact of racial identity on racial preference and self-esteem within several populations of African descent (GoPaul-McNicol, 1988; Phinney & Onwughalu, 1996). GoPaul-McNicol examined racial preference and identification among Black preschool-aged children in Trinidad and New York. Trinidad was chosen to determine if
racial identification and racial preference would differ among preschoolers who were immersed in a predominantly Black culture, compared with those who have minority status in their country. The Clark Doll study technique (Clark & Clark, 1939, 1940) was used to determine racial preference and identification. The results of the study suggested that preschoolers in Trinidad and New York demonstrated preference for and identification with the White doll. Unexpectedly, even the children with darker complexions chose the White doll as a reflection of themselves. The White dolls were considered the nicer dolls, and the Black dolls were described as “looking bad.” However, the issues raised by Spencer (1984), namely developmental change and construct independence, were not addressed in this research.

Phinney and Onwughalu (1996) conducted a study that examined the impact of racial diversity and salience in African Americans and continental African college students. Both groups were compared in terms of racial identity, self-esteem, and American ideals. For African Americans, racial identity was positively correlated to self-esteem. Phinney and Onwughalu implied that those who had a positive racial identity and Black pride had higher self-esteem. The results indicated that self-esteem for the continental African students was unrelated to racial identity. The authors suggested that the African students were raised in an atmosphere in which race was not salient and, therefore, specific attitudes concerning race were not pertinent to the development of a positive self-esteem. The rationale proposed for the unrelated results between self-esteem and racial identity in the African students was that individuals from societies that have not faced racially based prejudices are likely to have a less salient racial identity. The belief is that individuals socialized in a society in which race is not salient are not forced to repeatedly and consciously affirm their racial identity. In short, if you live in a society in which being Black and celebrating Black customs is the norm, there is no reason to consciously strive to be oneself, racially and culturally. The authors also observed that the longer African students remained in the United States, the more racially aware they became. In contrast to the African students, racial identity was significantly correlated with self-esteem for African American students. These findings are consistent with the notion that those groups that have been threatened by discrimination, stereotypes, and racism must deliberately affirm their racial identity and positive feelings of self-worth to survive. This conclusion may be warranted for the older adolescents studied but may be inappropriate or different for younger children.

Although current studies allow us to speculate on the relationship between self-esteem and racial identity among children in the African Diaspora, there are few studies that address culture. Belgrave et al. (1994) presented the only data to date that examine cultural attitudes, racial identity, and self-esteem.
These data were completed on a United States sample, which limits the generalizability of the data for children in the African Diaspora. Jamaica was one of the first islands to be colonized by the British in the late 1400s. British customs were forced on Jamaican society and have since been adopted by the native population. Since that time, white in Jamaica has become synonymous with prestige and wealth (P. Y. Thompson, personal communication, July 1, 1997). Color bias became doctrine in Jamaican society. As a result, light skin is associated with wealth and prosperity whereas darker skin is linked to poverty and lower class status. Nancy Foner (cited in Bagley & Young, 1988) asserted that

Black skin has long been devalued in Jamaica. This stems from Jamaica’s history as a plantation colony based on African slavery. . . . I would argue that it is mainly because being Black stands for being poor in Jamaica . . . many Jamaicans place a negative value on Black skin. (p. 49)

The memory of slavery is still a source of extreme pain for most Jamaicans. However, in recent years, Jamaican society has become more aware of its African roots and views its culture in a more positive light. P. Y. Thompson (personal communication, July 1, 1997) stated that the celebration of independence from British rule and emancipation from slavery has made Jamaican people more conscious of their rich heritage.

Bagley and Young (1988) examined ethnic identity and self-evaluation in children (4 to 7 years old) across Jamaica, Ghana, Canada, and England. Rural Jamaican children tended to have higher pro-White bias because of their exposure to pro-White norms. Furthermore, children of Jamaican descent who were in the London sample exhibited less pro-White bias than did children in rural Jamaica, and a positive correlation between age and ethnic identity was reported. Black children of African parents from the English and Canadian samples had less pro-White bias and higher self-esteem than did the Jamaican children. The authors suggested that negative beliefs about color and ethnicity have been transmitted for generations, since the colonization of Jamaica. The greater contact with Whites in the London and Canadian samples may have resulted in less pro-White bias.

In contrast to the Jamaican group, children from Ghana expressed more pro-Black preference and had higher self-esteem. It has been suggested that this preference may be a direct influence of the Blackness that is inherent in African countries (Bagley & Young, 1988). There is no emphasis on the awareness of Black culture in West Africa because the concept of Blackness is so widely accepted that it rarely needs emphasis. This may suggest that to foster a healthy identity development, it is imperative that the wrongs of
slavery are corrected by instilling a secure, deeply rooted Black culture in Black children (Bagley & Young, 1988).

**DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES**

Age has been associated with racial and ethnic identity. Spencer (1982, 1984) and Bagley and Young (1988) noted that racial identity and Africentric preferences increase with age. Of note, gender differences in children’s racial identity development have not been carefully examined. Given cultural differences in gender roles, this would seem to be an important area to address.

This study was designed to obtain an understanding of the relationship that exists between racial identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem in Black children in an all-Black nation. Can Jamaican children have high self-esteem and simultaneously be disconnected from the Black community (not have Africentric values or Black identity)? The likelihood of this occurring in a multiracial society is much greater than in a predominantly Black community such as Jamaica. Data from previous studies suggested three hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* Africentric values, self-esteem, and Black identity would be correlated in a predominantly Black country.

*Hypothesis 2:* Africentric values would be a stronger predictor of Black identity than would self-esteem.

*Hypothesis 3:* Black identity would increase with age.

Given cultural differences, it seemed inappropriate to make specific hypotheses with regard to gender but important to examine gender differences.

**METHOD**

**PARTICIPANTS**

The participants consisted of 161 Black Jamaican children (73 male and 87 female adolescents, 1 participant did not indicate his or her gender) residing in Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies. The participants were recruited from four summer camps in the Kingston area: the YMCA, YWCA, Junior Centre, and the Library Summer Camp. All participants were born and raised in Jamaica and were from middle to low social and economic backgrounds.

Participants ranged from age 8 to 13 years. The mean age was 10.9 years, with a mean age of 10.8 years for male adolescents, and 11.1 for female
adolescents. Of the participants, 43% of the children lived with their mothers, 33% lived with their grandmothers or guardians, 11% lived with both parents, 3% lived with their fathers, and 3% had other living arrangements.

INSTRUMENTS

The survey contained three measures and a demographic information survey that assessed the attitudes and behaviors surrounding identity, self-esteem, and communal orientation. Racial identity was measured by using the Children’s Racial (Black) Identity Scale (Belgrave, 1993b), which is made up of nine items. The racial identity scale taps into one’s affiliation to one’s racial group and the evaluation of oneself and members of the racial group. The scale measures affective (e.g., I feel good about being a Black Jamaican), cognitive (e.g., Black Jamaicans have many good qualities), behavioral (e.g., Black Jamaicans should learn to live and act more like White Americans), and physical aspects (e.g., Jamaicans with lighter skin and straight hair are more attractive than Jamaicans with darker skin and hair not so straight) of racial identity. Using a 3-point scale, the participants were asked to respond by circling the items agree, disagree, or not sure (Belgrave, 1993b). This instrument was revised to fit the Jamaican culture and dialect. For example, the usage of African American as a racial category was changed to Black Jamaican. As will be discussed later, some of the wording was also changed to make it comprehensible to Jamaican children. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale has been reported as .67 (Belgrave, 1993b).

The Africentric Values Scale for Children (Belgrave, 1993a) was designed to assess the Africentric values of African American children. However, for the purpose of this study, it was modified to assess the Africentric values of Jamaican children. The measure was developed according to the seven principles of Nguzo Saba (Karenga, 1965). Those seven principles are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. During development, the original measure was factor analyzed. Only three of the seven principles appeared adequately represented by the items included on the scale. Items representing these principles attained adequate inter-item and item-to-factor correlations. Items representing other principles were deleted (Belgrave, 1993a). An example of “collective work and responsibility” is the belief that families, schools, and the Black community should work together to better themselves. “Black people should create more jobs for Black Jamaicans by starting their own businesses” is an example of an item representing “cooperative economics.” “Self-determination” was assessed by items such as “Black
Jamaicans must decide what is best for their own people.” These were the principles represented in the evaluation of Africentric values in the children.

Participants responded to the 13 items using a 3-point scale: agree, disagree, and not sure. The performance score was determined by summing the responses to the 13 questions; the higher the score, the higher the Africentric values. The Africentric Values Scale has a reported reliability coefficient of .64 (Belgrave, 1993a).

The Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS) was used to measure self-esteem (Piers, 1984). This scale includes 80 items that the participants were instructed to respond to in a “yes” or “no” format. The questionnaire is self-administered, and the time of administration is approximately 30 minutes. A composite score is derived from summing the items with higher scores, which reflects high self-esteem. There are six factors or subscales: behavioral (I behave badly at home), intellectual and school status (I am good in my school work), physical appearance and attributes (I have a pleasant face), anxiety (I get worried when my teacher calls on me), popularity (I am among the last to be chosen for games), and happiness and satisfaction (I am cheerful) (Piers, 1984). The PHCSCS has been used reliably in the past to measure the self-esteem of people of color (Belgrave, 1993b). The Cronbach’s alpha for the measure has been reported as .90 (Piers, 1984).

The researchers developed a background questionnaire that inquired about the participant’s age, which was coded as follows: 8 to 9 (coded as 9), 10, 11, 12, and 13. Inquiries about gender (male/female) and race (Black or Negro) were included. Black and Negro were included on the questionnaire to accommodate social preferences. In Jamaica, Black is sometimes considered a derogatory term among less-educated individuals whereas Negro is acceptable. The reverse is sometimes observed among better-educated Jamaicans. In Jamaica, individuals do not typically categorize themselves by race; race, in Jamaica, is not a salient issue. If called for, Jamaicans are more likely to categorize themselves by nationality. There are foreigners who reside in Jamaica; however, if they speak the English dialect of Patios, they are easily considered honorary Jamaicans. Children were asked questions concerning their parents’ marital status and living arrangement. Jamaicans are very connected to extended family, and in most cases, children live with multiple family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts/uncles, other relatives, and close family friends). Religious affiliation was also included in the survey; however, many of the children were unaware of their religion and left the question blank.
PROCEDURE

All camps were sent a written letter, directed to the headmaster or mistress, that explained the study and asked permission to distribute the questionnaire among the participants. In Jamaica, parents are not required to complete consent forms as long as the camps are aware of the study the researcher is conducting. After obtaining permission from the Institute of Jamaica and the headmaster/mistress of each summer camp, the researchers were able to collect the data. The surveys were administered to the participants in groups of 6 to 10. The investigator and an intern from the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute conducted administration. Participants were told that involvement in the study was voluntary. They were given a brief introduction, and the measures were distributed. The sample’s literacy level is approximately 65%; therefore, the children who could not read had the survey read to them. Approximately 20% of the participants were unable to read the questionnaires; the measures were read to them in small groups of no more than four. The questionnaires were administered in the following order: demographic questionnaire, Children’s Racial Identity Scale, Children’s Africentric Values Scale, and the PHCSCS. To maintain anonymity, the participants were told to write the name of their summer camp, but not their names, on the measures. Upon completion of the survey, participants were rewarded with treats (i.e., candy and chocolate imported from the United States).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics ($M$ and $SD$) for the Children’s Racial Identity Scale, the Children’s Africentric Values Scale, and the PHCSCS are presented in Table 1. The scores for self-esteem, Black identity, and Africentric values indicated that this sample had relatively high levels of self-esteem, racial identity, and Africentric values, as indicated by the skewed means. The mean scores for male adolescents and female adolescents were similar (see Table 1). The self-esteem scores ranged from 33 to 78 for male adolescents and 29 to 94 for female adolescents.

To examine Hypothesis 1, a Pearson product moment correlation matrix was computed between Black identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem. Table 2 contains the correlation matrices for the overall sample, and separately for male adolescents and female adolescents. In the overall sample, Africentric values were positively correlated with Black identity, $r(161) = .180, p < .05$, and self-esteem, $r(161) = .166, p < .05$. Correlations were also
computed by gender. For female adolescents, self-esteem was positively correlated with Black identity, $r(85) = .249$, $p = .010$, and Africentric values, $r(85) = .181$, $p = .047$. Africentric values and Black identity were also posi-

## TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Africentric Values Scale, the Black Identity Scale, and the Piers-Harris Self-Esteem Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male adolescents ($N = 73$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africentric values</td>
<td>34.95</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black identity</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>58.01</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>33-78</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female adolescents ($N = 87$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africentric values</td>
<td>34.77</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>24-39</td>
<td>.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black identity</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2-9</td>
<td>.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>61.68</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>29-94</td>
<td>.905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## TABLE 2

Correlations Between Age, Africentric Values, Black Identity, and Self-Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample ($N = 161$)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Africentric Values</th>
<th>Black Identity</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>.226**</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Africentric values</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.180*</td>
<td>.166*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Black identity</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-esteem</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female adolescents ($n = 87$)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Africentric Values</th>
<th>Black Identity</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td>.267*</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Africentric values</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>.182*</td>
<td>.181*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Black identity</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-esteem</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male adolescents ($n = 73$)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Africentric Values</th>
<th>Black Identity</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.1739</td>
<td>.176</td>
<td>-.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Africentric values</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Black identity</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-esteem</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: One of the participants did not identify their gender.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. 
tively correlated: \( r(85) = .182, p = .046 \). However, for male adolescents, there was no significant correlation between Black identity, self-esteem, or Africentric values.

To test Hypothesis 2, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was computed to examine self-esteem and Africentric values as predictors of racial identity. This analysis was only carried out for female participants because the variables were not correlated for the male participants. For female adolescents, on the variable racial identity, self-esteem entered into the equation whereas Africentric values did not, \( F(1, 85) = 5.6034, p < .05 \). Self-esteem accounted for 6% of the variance, whereas Africentric values were not considered significant predictors of racial identity, and thus, it was not an independent predictor of racial identity (see Table 3).

A two-way ANOVA was performed on racial identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem to test Hypothesis 3—that racial identity would increase with age. The analysis indicated that, for racial identity, there was a main effect for age, \( F(4, 159) = 2.40, p < .05 \). The main effect for gender, \( F(1, 159) = .226 \), and the Gender \( \times \) Age Interaction, \( F(4, 159) = .939 \), were not significant. Because Levene’s test of equality of error variance was nonsignificant, \( F(9, 150) = .900, p = ns \), post hoc analyses for age were performed using Dunnett’s C. Results indicated that the mean difference between each age group was significant \( (p < .05) \), with the exception of the mean difference between the scores for the groups aged 11 and 12, and 12 and 13 years. There was a gradual increase in the racial identity scores across age groups, 9 to 13 years (see Table 4).

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africentric Values</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>1.702</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female adolescents \((n = 87)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africentric Values</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-Square</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-Square</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>1.551</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: For female adolescents, Africentric values had no predictor variables in the equation.
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Black identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem among Black children in Jamaica, a predominantly Black nation. The data provided partial support for Hypothesis 1. Black identity and Africentric values, and Black identity and self-esteem were positively correlated for female adolescents but not for male adolescents. However, male adolescents, \( r(73) = .182 \), and female adolescents, \( r(87) = .181 \), had comparable correlation coefficients, suggesting that the lack of correlation may have been due to sample size. The results seem to indicate that the level of Africentric values (communal orientation) is related to one’s racial identity. The correlation, however, is small. Belgrave et al. (1994) reported similar results, in that Africentric values and Black identity were positively correlated among Black children in Washington, DC. Therefore, attaining a sense of responsibility toward one’s community may lead to, or at least be associated with, a greater appreciation of one’s Black identity.

The results did not support Hypothesis 2. In fact, neither Africentric values nor self-esteem was significantly correlated with male Black identity. Thus, neither Africentric values nor self-esteem was a predictor of male Black identity. The implications of these results will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Unexpectedly, self-esteem explained more of the variance in female Black identity than did Africentric values. The results indicated that self-esteem predicted female Black identity whereas Africentric values did not. Thus, Africentric values and self-esteem were not independent predictors of female Black identity. Self-esteem appears to be more integrated into female participants’ sense of Black identity than were Africentric values. The identity and

### TABLE 4
Means and Standard Deviations for Black Identity by Age (\( N = 160 \))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pride of being Black is more strongly associated with self-esteem in female than in male adolescents.

The data supported Hypothesis 3. Consistent with previous findings (Bagley & Young, 1988; Spencer, 1984), as age increased so did racial identity. This supports the perspective that regardless of culture, racial identity is a developmental process.

The findings of Phinney and Onwughalu (1996) are consistent with the gender differences noted in the relationship between racial identity and self-esteem in the present study. Their results were similar in that racial identity and self-esteem were unrelated for male adolescents who live in a racially homogeneous culture, such as the one in Jamaica. Perhaps race is not a salient issue for identity formation in male adolescents. In addition, the integration of the individual and extended self may not contribute to a positive self-esteem.

It appears that female participants possess an integrated attitude toward their individual self (self-esteem) and their extended self (Black identity). This may explain the gender difference noted in the correlation between Black identity and self-esteem among Jamaican children. Many studies have validated a moderate to strong relationship between Black identity and self-esteem (Belgrave et al., 1994; Clark, 1985; Parham & Helms, 1985; Phinney & Chavira, 1992). For example, the research conducted by Phinney and Chavira on minority adolescents suggested that if Black identity is fully attained, there is a strong likelihood that it may contribute to an individual’s self-esteem. In addition, Parham and Helms conducted a study with Black college students that focused on racial identity and self-esteem. The study concluded that if an individual has a positive racial identity, it is probable that he or she will have higher levels of self-esteem (Parham & Helms, 1985). However, none of the latter studies reported gender differences. This discrepancy may be because most of these studies have been performed using adolescents or young adults, and developmental issues may have led to discrepancies in the findings.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The positive correlations between Black identity and Africentric values reported in this study are consistent with the proposed theory of Africentric values and the study that examined this variable (Belgrave et al., 1994). Belgrave suggested that Africentric values have a direct influence on racial identity. Therefore, positive behaviors and attitudes toward the community may also result in high individual self-esteem and feeling good about being Black.
Thus, the results suggest that there may be interconnectedness between female adolescents’ sense of self-worth, racial pride, and communalism. The limited research with Jamaican children is not sufficient to fully explain these relationships. However, three explanations can be proposed to account for these results. First, female Jamaican adolescents have high self-esteem, which may account for the interconnected relationship between self-esteem, Africentric values, and Black identity. Second, female Jamaican adolescents may be developmentally more mature, thus they may have begun to integrate all of these constructs into their ideology or worldview. If this were true, then, we would expect a similar pattern in older, more mature male Jamaican teenagers. The third explanation would examine the life experiences of Jamaican male adolescents to compare them with those of Jamaican female adolescents, as this comparison might reveal a different course of development. Additional research is needed to further examine these gender differences in Jamaican children relative to racial identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem.

For male adolescents, there were no significant correlations between Black identity, Africentric values, and self-esteem; nonetheless, the correlation coefficients for Africentric values and Black identity, and Africentric values and self-esteem were actually higher than those for female adolescents. Although Black identity and self-esteem are not correlated, they may be derived from different components of Africentric values. For male adolescents, knowledge of their heritage, culture, and ethnic background may have little to do with how good they feel about themselves as individuals. This phenomenon may be directly related to the role male Jamaicans hold in Jamaica’s patriarchal society. Male Jamaicans are usually respected, revered, and seen as the heads of the household and the decision makers in the community. A plausible explanation for the lack of relationship between Black identity and self-esteem in the male participants is that race is not the salient issue, it is gender. Male Jamaicans have learned that they must be an integral part of their community and proud of being Jamaican. Although male pride is not linked to racial identity, racial identity is important for female Jamaicans’ development of self-esteem. In this case, self-esteem or a lack thereof is not a factor that male Jamaicans view as significant to becoming a man in Jamaican society.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The instruments used in the study composed one of its limitations. The Children’s Black Identity Scale and the Children’s Africentric Values Scale were originally developed for Black children in the United States, and some
of the questions were not culturally appropriate for the Jamaican children. The instruments were revised to assess Black identity and Africentric values of Jamaican children. It was difficult, however, to assure that all issues were addressed because children were involved, and developmental data on their understanding and experience of issues were not readily available. There may have been ideas and concepts that were not applicable for this population. The sample size was large, but representativeness may have been an issue. Rural children were not represented, the age range was truncated, and upper-income children were not included. Another limitation was that the study only examined Jamaican children. Therefore, these results cannot be generalized to Black children in other countries.

CONCLUSION

More research is needed in this area. It is essential that researchers begin to investigate phenomena related to development of racial identity, communal orientation, and self-esteem for Black children in Jamaica and in other countries. There are numerous factors that may influence attitudes toward racial identity. However, the existing limited research does not provide adequate explanations for some children’s ability to attain racial identity with ease whereas others experience complications. It would be useful to observe the differences that exist in the variables relative to children who are socialized in a Black nation in which race is not salient and those in a nation that practices racial discrimination against Blacks (African Americans).

Finally, researchers should devote themselves to finding alternative teaching methods or interventions for those children who have low racial identity, low self-esteem, and a low sense of communalism. Appropriate educational methods for Black children, and alternative solutions in dealing with those who have low racial identity and self-esteem, should be made available to agencies (i.e., schools, day care centers, community centers, etc.) that serve Black children.

REFERENCES


