

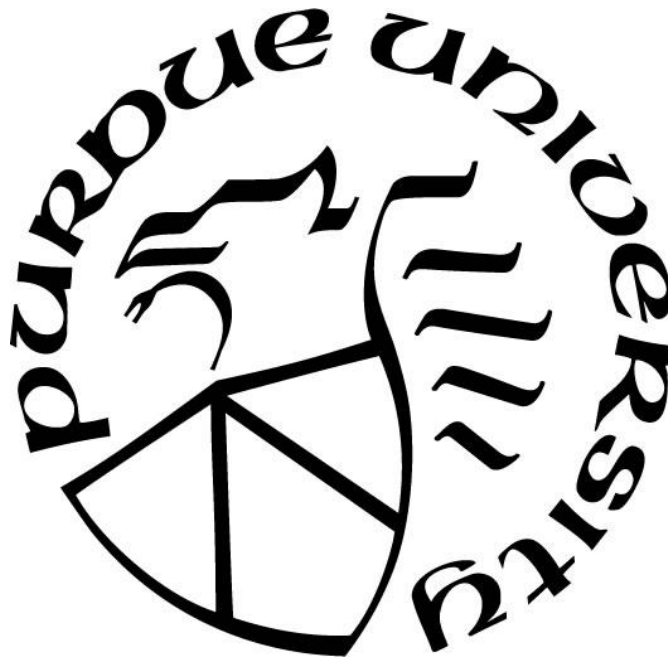
**UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK COLLEGE
STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT ERA**

by
Ife Sinclair

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THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi, Chair

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Eric Deemer

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Xiang Zhou

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Joseph Roberts

Carlow University

Approved by:

Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi

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ABSTRACT

Mental health concerns of college students are important due to their developmental and life stages and adjustment challenges they must navigate in a new and difficult environment. Compared to students of other ethnicities, Black college students in the United States have historically reported poorer mental health outcomes with higher risk for depression and anxiety than their non-Black counterparts (McClain et al., 2016; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019). The African American activism work done by Black college students has become increasingly visible and influential since the creation of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and student protests aimed at improving university climates for minority students. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a framework, this study investigated the roles of racial identity attitudes and sociopolitical attitudes on the relationships between race-related stress and mental health, and race-related stress and African American activism for Black college students in the U.S. The results indicated that increased race-related stress was associated with worsened mental health outcomes but increased engagement in activism, negative sociopolitical attitudes were related to poorer mental health, positive sociopolitical attitudes were related to decreased activism, and the six racial identity attitudes varied in their associations to mental health and activism based on racial centrality. The Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive racial identity attitude was found to moderate the relationship between race-related stress and an indicator of mental health, and the Internalization Afrocentricity identity attitude strengthened the relationship between race-related stress and activism. The discussion addresses implications for future counseling psychology research and practice.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Traditional college students are not only in the prime period for development of many mental health disorders (Auerbach et al., 2018); they are also navigating the normative life-stage of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). This period between adolescence and adulthood includes challenges of identity exploration, feeling in-between, instability, and self-focus (Sussman & Arnett, 2014). Combined with adjustment to the new social and academic environment of college life, it is not surprising that mental health concerns (especially depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders) are prevalent on college campuses. Black students tend to report high levels of distress due to a number of additional factors related to racial and ethnic minority status (McClain et al., 2016).

Numerous studies have shown that experiencing racial discrimination is related to various psychiatric symptoms and psychosocial concerns (e.g., depression, helplessness, problem drinking, values confusion, sleep disturbance, suicide risk, academic performance anxiety; Banks, 2010; Chao, Mallinckrodt, & Wei, 2012; Madubata, Odafe, Talavera, Hong, & Walker, 2018), barriers to college enrollment (Dobson, 2019; O'Hara, Gibbons, Weng, & Simons, 2012), and college attrition (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2016; Grier-Reid & Wilson, 2016; O'Hara et al., 2012; Thomas Jr., Wolters, Horn, & Kennedy, 2013) for Black college students. Indeed, racial discrimination is consistently associated with poorer psychological functioning, depressive symptoms, perceived stress, and worsened general psychological well-being (Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006).

Black students must also deal with major stressors like cyberbullying, loneliness, socioeconomic difficulties, and acculturation, which can contribute to poorer mental well-being (Primm, 2018). Studies have suggested that compared to other minority groups (e.g., Latinx, East

Asian), Black college students report the least favorable campus climate experiences, higher levels of race-related discrimination, and higher levels of psychological distress (McClain et al. 2016; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Considering that other minority groups may experience similar stress and intersectional oppression, this unusual effect may be explained by the deeper historical context of African American oppression in the United States. However, data regarding students of color who participated in the large, multi-campus Healthy Minds Study (from 2012 to 2015) indicated that African American college students reported mental health problems at a lower prevalence than other racial and/or ethnic minority students and tended to score higher on a measure of flourishing and social-psychological functioning than their racial and/or ethnic minority counterparts (Lipson et al., 2018). Regardless, to the effect that exposure to stress contributes to the development of certain mental illnesses (Monroe & Simons, 1991), it is important to recognize that Black students may be at risk for lower psychological well-being and poorer mental health outcomes.

The African American activism work done by Black college students has become increasingly more visible since the creation of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the disturbingly frequent and well-publicized killings of Black men by law enforcement (Hargons et al., 2017). Studies have indicated that race-related stressors are related to increased African American activism as a way to cope with race-related stress, resist unfavorable evaluation, and fight for social change (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). Poor campus climate has also been found to be a factor that motivates Black students to become involved in activism related to Black and Brown issues (Logan, Lightfoot, & Contreras, 2017).

Although political activism and engagement is a protective factor for racial discrimination experiences for minority students, for Black students, increased activism may lead

to greater stress, anxiety, discrimination experiences, and feelings of helplessness (Hope, Velez, Offidani-Bertrand, Keels, & Durkee, 2018). It is likely that initial or low-frequency activism experiences are protective for Black students as they build camaraderie and community with fellow students and develop agency and self-efficacy in their political lives. However, increased and persistent exposure to the negative race-based experiences (e.g., racist counter-protesters) and unjust, depressing images and messages (e.g., abundance of unarmed Black men being murdered by law enforcement with impunity) inherent in Black activism may tend to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of these students, leading to burnout and poor mental health outcomes. It appears that activism can be a protective factor to a point, but the risks and burdensome effects of cumulative exposure to injustice may eventually outweigh the rewards.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that stipulates that problems be placed in historical, political, and social context with a focus on privilege, power, oppression, and racism (Daftary, 2018). When using (CRT) to guide research design, Johnson-Ahorlu (2017) suggests that the research should (1) be based on the premise that race and racism (in conjunction with other forms of oppression) are fundamental to the experiences and outcomes of students of color; (2) incorporate relevant interdisciplinary concepts to understand how race and racism function; (3) challenge dominant discourses that frame students of color as being deficient or inferior; (4) recognize and include personal experiences and opinions as legitimate and valuable ways of how race and racism function; (5) be designed, analyzed, written, and used for the promotion of social justice.

The present study meets those criteria through its attention to the roles of racism and oppression on the outcome variables of mental health and activism for Black students. The CRT framework will be used to identify factors that may contribute to the mental health and activism

experiences of Black college students. Taking an interdisciplinary and person-environment approach to the function of racism in the outcome variables points toward issues of race-related stress (stemming from experiences of racism and racial discrimination), Black racial identity attitudes (considering the crucial developmental phase of college students), and sociopolitical attitudes (related to historic racism, systemic injustices, and the sociopolitical zeitgeist perpetuated by the Trump administration) as being salient predictor variables. Centering the study variables on the perpetual racism embedded in U.S. society and institutions eliminates any notion of deficiency or blaming Black college students for any negative outcomes they may experience. Including attitude-related variables honors the unique knowledges, interpersonal worlds, and opinions regarding their racial, social, and political experiences. And finally, this study seeks to understand factors that increase African American activism and social changes that benefit marginalized populations in the United States. In addition to promoting tangible actions of social justice, the very act of studying an underserved group with the intent of improving their well-being is rooted in the values of counseling psychology.

Racism is chronic, and cumulative; its effects are painful and unavoidable in the lives of Black Americans (Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996). With the experience of either overt (e.g., being called racial slurs) or covert (e.g., microaggressions) racism, Black Americans experience constant, daily race-related stress as they work to function within the inherently racist structure of American culture and society. The added taxing burdens of racial discrimination, racial microaggressions, racial stereotypes, and racial prejudice contribute to race-related stress, which has in turn been implicated in the devastating health (physical and mental) outcomes in African Americans (Miller et al., 2018; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996). The deleterious effects of race-related stress have also gained attention in the field of public health such that in the early 2000s, the

Surgeon General's Office called on scholars to create interventions and techniques to buffer the effects of racism (Miller et al., 2018). In fact, racial trauma (a type of severe race-related stress), caused from continual exposure and re-exposure to direct or vicarious experiences of racism can lead to symptoms similar to those of post-traumatic stress disorder (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Black college students are subject to incredible amounts of race-related stress and the negative physical and psychological after-effects. However, studies have acknowledged the positive contributions of race-related stress in Black activism and empowerment (Leath & Chavous, 2017; Szymanski, 2012) and furthering racial identity exploration (Fuller-Rowell, Burrow, & Ong, 2011)—a process that tends to lead to improved subjective well-being in the face of race-related stress (Sellers et al., 2006).

Racial identity development represents the importance that people place on their racial heritage and the degree to which they perceive themselves to be a part of their racial group (Anglin & Wade, 2007). Cross's (1991) Nigrescence model of racial identity and esteem describes five stages of development or racial identity attitudes (i.e., *pre-encounter*, *encounter*, *immersion-emersion*, *internalization*, and *internalization and commitment*) going from internalized self-hatred to an *encounter* experience which challenges a person to re-evaluate their anti-Black views to internalized acceptance of self and other multicultural groups. The revised and expanded Nigrescence model contains three *pre-encounter* stages (i.e., *pre-encounter assimilation*, *pre-encounter self-hatred*, and *pre-encounter miseducation*), one *immersion-emersion anti-White* (immediately post-encounter) stage, and two *internalization* stages (i.e., *internalization Afrocentricity* and *internalization multiculturalist inclusive*) which celebrate Black culture and the cultures of other multicultural and marginalized groups (Worrell, Vandiver, & Cross Jr., 2004).

Racial identity attitudes are an important factor in understanding Black students' experiences of and responses to racial discrimination. Studies have suggested that Black racial identity attitudes were related to perceptions of discrimination, such that holding a certain racial identity (i.e., encounter and immersion-emersion) made one more aware of daily incidents of microaggressions and overt racism (Sanchez & Awad, 2016). Racial identity has also been considered as a contributor to well-being, a buffer against discrimination, and a means to build self-esteem (Ajibade, Hook, Utsey, Davis, & Van Tongeren, 2016). As college students are still developing aspects of their identities (Arnett, 2000), it is important to consider how racial identities are constructed and change in the context of campus-based discrimination in the current sociopolitical era.

As universities become more diverse, and in the sociopolitical context fostered by the election of President Trump, campus climates have worsened (Ndemanu, 2017). Hate-motivated incidents against minority students (e.g., hostile vandalism with racist symbols like nooses and swastikas, White supremacist activity, racist harassment, intimidation, threats and attacks over social media) have increased vastly since the 2016 election (e.g., nearly 900 reports on campuses in 10 days following Donald Trump's election) and continue to occur with disturbing frequency (Dreid & Najmabadi, 2016; Douglas & Shockley, 2017; Reynolds & Mayweather, 2016). Undoubtedly, the 45th president's endorsement of xenophobic and White supremacist ideals has emboldened his followers to openly express their harmfully ethnocentric views (Simon & Sidner, 2019).

Black students do not only deal with racial discrimination on campus, they must also contend with negative interpersonal experiences in the wider world, hostile activity on the internet and social media, openly racist political officials, lacking representation in movies and

TV, and horrifying events in the news (e.g., murder of unarmed Black men by police officers). The increasingly explicit and violent intolerance in the United States (hereafter, U.S.) has largely been catalyzed by President Trump (Simon & Sidner, 2019) and permeates the lives of minorities in the country. As such, the issue of Black college students' health cannot be considered in a vacuum; the historical, social, and political contexts must be considered, along with issues of power, oppression, and privilege (Daftary, 2018).

In order to understand the mental health outcomes and activism experiences of Black students through a CRT lens, it is imperative that the role of racism is explored in context of the current social and political status quo. National political data collection questions such as The American National Election Studies and The Pew Research Center provide a database for accessing methodologically sound questions that address attitudes and opinions about the state of the country. Through that exploration and using the CRT lens, four concepts emerged as a way to conceptualize and evaluate sociopolitical attitudes related to the Trump administration: emotions about the state of the country, feelings about the actions of President Donald Trump, confidence in authorities, and feelings about the American sociopolitical sphere.

While existing literature has identified various factors that affect Black students' experiences and responses to racial discrimination (Banks, 2010; Chao et al., 2012; Madubata et al., 2018), few have examined how the specific malaise of the sociopolitical atmosphere developed in the wake of the election of Donald Trump has contributed to those factors for Black college students (Cole, 2018; Trimbur, 2019). More studies are warranted to examine and highlight the effects of the 45th U.S. president on the mental health and personal development of Black students. Given the sociopolitical landscape and worsening campus climates for Black students, more research is needed to understand their experiences and responses to increased

racial discrimination. This study will work toward eliminating gaps in the literature by using the CRT framework to understand how race-related stress, racial identity attitudes, and sociopolitical attitudes influence the mental health and African American activism of Black college students.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the study is to explore the mental health outcomes and activism work of Black American college students in the sociopolitical environment during the end of President Trump's term in office. Critical Race Theory (CRT) will be used to understand what factors contribute to those outcomes by attending to issues of historic and contemporary racism, societal inequality, and Afrocentric perspectives. More specifically, this study will address whether the three predictor variables of race-related stress (stemming from repeated experiences of racism; independent variable), racial identity attitudes (using Cross's Nigrescence Theory; moderating variable), and sociopolitical attitudes (resulting from effects of the Trump administration; moderating variable) can be explained through the lens of CRT as contributors to mental health outcomes (dependent variable) and African American activism (dependent variable).

Importance of Study

This study will be a critical contribution to the comparatively underdeveloped knowledge-base of the mental health of Black college students in recent times. Only with a better understanding of the needs and experiences of Black students can effective mental health treatments, outreach, and campus support initiatives be developed and implemented. This is especially important since Black students are less likely than their counterparts from other ethnic groups to seek or utilize psychological services from professional mental health resources (Masuda, Anderson, & Edmonds, 2012). Additionally, since college students are in the period of

emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), navigating issues of identity as related to racism experiences are important for Black students, especially in our racially tense society.

This study is also timely and novel in its examination of the Trump administration and its negative effects on a vulnerable population. The study may be an important catalyst for clinicians of color and White clinicians (e.g., Bodnar, 2018) to process the ways in which the Trumpian sociopolitical climate has influenced the counseling environment and their work with diverse and marginalized clients. There is also a focus on social justice in exploring the internal consequences of the advocacy work taken up by Black students and people of color in our current society. The study fills an important role by providing rich consideration to the experiences and inner worlds of a marginalized group.

While previous literature and research have guided the development of this study, there are still many questions to be answered and theories to be explored in the field of Black psychology. According to McGee and Stovall (2015), Critical Race Theory has rarely been used to conceptualize the fatigue of race-related stress or racial trauma and how it affects mental health outcomes of Black college students. This study seeks to fill that gap by evaluating the role of race-related stress on mental health using a CRT lens. The study will also provide further information about racial identity development in college students, particularly regarding the ways in which experiences, beliefs, behaviors, and psychological outcomes may differ based on the stages of Black racial identity development.

Relevance to Counseling Psychology

This study is relevant to the field of counseling psychology in several ways. First, the work of counseling psychologists is organized around three roles—remedial, preventive, and developmental roles (Gelso & Fretz, 2001; Gelso, Nutt Williams, & Fretz, 2014). This research

will assist counseling psychologists fulfill these three roles in their work with Black college students through a deeper understanding of racial experiences of Black students. For example, clinicians will be able to better assist Black students presenting with mental health concerns through improved understanding of the interpersonal and environmental factors that influence mental health outcomes in the population. Clinicians will also be better equipped to help empower students into the appropriate types of activism to help foster social agency, develop community, and restore feelings of control. With this research clinicians will be able to better verbalize and validate the race-related stress students encounter on campus and in their communities. They will also be better able to help students understand and navigate their racial identity development, and use this as a tool to improve mental health outcomes and promote civic engagement and activism.

Regarding the preventive role, clinicians will be better able to identify at-risk students and intervene before problems occur. This might include screenings for levels of race-related stress culturally appropriate coping mechanisms, connecting students with activism groups or activities, and assessing frustrations and apprehensions related to the current sociopolitical malaise. This research will facilitate the developmental (or educational) role of counseling psychology work by guiding the developmental and implementation of workshops and/or outreach tailored for Black students and their relevant issues (e.g., managing race-related stress, navigating code-switching and unfamiliar aspects of academic culture, getting involved in activism)

Second, this study is congruent with the five unifying themes used to distinguish counseling psychology from other specialties (Gelso & Fretz, 2001; Gelso et al., 2014). The themes are: (1) a focus on intact, as opposed to profoundly disturbed personalities; (2) a focus on

people' assets, strengths, and positive mental health regardless of disturbance; (3) a focus on relatively brief interventions; (4) a focus on person-environment interactions; and (5) a focus on education and career development. Recently, a focus on multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice has emerged as a sixth theme. This current study endorses each of these themes in the following ways: While college student populations will contain individuals who meet criteria for clinical diagnoses, the majority of Black students in the population will be dealing with normative adjustment difficulties, challenges of emerging adulthood, and the pervasive effects of race-related stress. This study does not conceptualize Black students from a perspective of psychopathology.

The study is designed from a strengths-based perspective, particularly with the selection of the Mental Health Inventory-18 measure which focuses on positive and holistic well-being rather than disturbance or deficit, consistent with the strengths-based approaches inherent in Black American psychological practice (Whittaker & Neville, 2010). This study can lend itself to support of brief interventions since work with college students tends to be time-limited. Additionally, clinicians will help Black students become empowered through encouraging racial identity exploration and involvement in activism, both of which relate to tasks that students eventually begin to undertake on their own. The use of Critical Race Theory in conceptualizing the study variables is closely aligned with a focus on person-environment interactions: This study is based on the framework that external societal forces (e.g., historic and institutional racism, the sociopolitical environment) are likely significant contributors to the issues being faced by Black students. Although less directly related to education and career development, there is evidence that Black students who experience more race-related stress are at greater risk for dropping out before graduation (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2016; Grier-Reid & Wilson, 2016; O'

Hara et al., 2012; Thomas Jr. et al., 2013). Helping students manage race-related stress and thrive on campus may lead to higher graduation rates. Finally, this study is anchored in exploration of issues of multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice. Black college students are a marginalized and underserved group; centering research on their issues disrupts the status quo of White-majority populations as the norm in college student research. The study continually addresses social justice in its consideration of the differential disadvantages and stress faced by Black students based on race, Black activism and social change, the horrors and dangers to minorities of an intolerant government, and ways to disrupt an unjust sociopolitical environment and improve conditions on campus for Black students.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, first, I will provide a review of the Black students' mental health outcomes and Black activism efforts on college campuses. Next, I will describe Critical Race Theory (CRT), the theoretical framework, and explain its fundamental role in understanding what factors contribute to the presentation of those dependent variables. With CRT as the guiding rationale, I will then discuss race-related stress, racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude as contributing factors to the study outcomes. This discussion will include theoretical and empirical evidence for the variables. Racial identity will be conceptualized using Cross's (1991) Nigrescence model of racial identity development. The section on sociopolitical attitude will incorporate discourse on the current sociopolitical environment and the role of the Trump presidential administration in the resulting hostile atmosphere for marginalized populations. Connections among variables will be explored based on existing literature and the CRT framework. Finally, I will provide my research summary, research questions, and hypotheses.

Mental Health Outcomes

Concerns of mental health (e.g., symptoms and risk factors for mental health disorders) are pervasive on college campuses in the United States (Bourdon, Moore, Long, Kendler, & Dick, 2018). Excluding personality disorders, the three most common issues among college students are anxiety, depression, and alcohol use disorder (Bourdon et al., 2018; Salami & Walker, 2014). Although approximately 25-30% of college students report suffering from those mental issues (i.e., depression, anxiety, and alcohol use disorder) and seeing a professional for treatment, the rates of subclinical symptomology tend to be even higher for those conditions

(Bourdon et al., 2018; Bravo, Villarosa-Hurlocker, Pearson, & Protective Strategies Study Team, 2018).

The college years are a prime time-period for the onset of many mental health disorders (especially mood, anxiety, and substance use disorders; Auerbach et al. 2018; de Girolamo, Dagani, Purcell, Cocchi, & McGorry, 2012). As college students enter emerging adulthood (ages 18-29 years) and navigate the developmental period between adolescence and young adulthood, they must deal with the challenges of identity exploration, feeling in-between, entertaining possibilities, self-focus, and instability (Auerbach et al., 2018; Sussman & Arnett, 2014). Difficulties with those five dimensions may contribute to mental health issues, particularly when combined with the stressful life events, novelty and uncertainty of college, experimentation, and shifts in social roles characteristic of this stage of life (Auerbach et al., 2018; Bourdon et al., 2018; Sussman & Arnett, 2014). There is evidence that the emerging adulthood period is disrupted for Black youth as a result of race-related stress from institutional and interpersonal discrimination (Hope, Hoggard, & Thomas, 2015).

In 2016, African American or Black¹ domestic college students made up approximately 14% of the United States college student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2019), and about 65% of recent Black high school graduates attend either two- or four-year colleges (Casselman, 2014). However, Black college students report higher levels of psychological and emotional distress than other students, largely due to the added scourge of discrimination and racism (McClain et al., 2016; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019). Black students also contend with other major stressors, such as acculturation, microaggressions, isolation and loneliness,

¹ The terms African American and Black will be used interchangeably for the purposes of this paper. Distinctions regarding nationality or ethnic group will be made as necessary and appropriate (e.g., “domestic” to indicate U.S. born, naturalized, or permanent resident Black students).

unwelcoming campus climates, undereducation or self-perceived unpreparedness, cyberbullying, and socioeconomic status which have a negative effect on mental well-being and make them more susceptible to experiencing mental illness (Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019; Primm, 2018; Salami & Walker, 2014).

There is established evidence that racial discrimination is positively associated with depressive and other psychiatric symptoms, problem drinking, and generally poor mental and physical health, and negatively associated with life satisfaction (Banks, 2010; Boynton, O'Hara, Covault, Scott, & Tennen, 2014; Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2015; O'Hara, Armeli, Scott, Covault, & Tennen, 2015; Prellow, Mosher, & Bowman, 2006; Sue et al., 2019). A meta-analysis focusing on racism as a determinant of health found that racism was associated with poorer mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, psychological stress) and worsened physical health (Paradies et al., 2015). For Black students, racial discrimination has also been shown to be connected to psychosocial concerns, such as, values confusion, sleep disturbance, suicide risk, and academic performance anxiety (Chao et al., 2012; Fuller-Rowell et al., 2016).

Black students may also experience psychological distress when they try to associate more with White cultural norms on campus. Durkee and Williams (2015) found that Black students who were frequently accused of acting White (e.g., style of dress, style of speech, ethnic composition of friend groups, preferred music and dance, academic achievement) by their peers, experienced more severe mental health symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety, emotional stress). Regarding language, to avoid these accusations of violating group-specific norms, Black students may selectively code-switch, or change their spoken English from African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to Standard English in order to conform to dominant White culture (Durkee & Williams, 2015). However, while code-switching may be beneficial for avoiding ridicule or

appearing more intelligent in academic settings, the process can be exhausting, emotionally taxing, and detrimental to mental health (e.g., anxiety, self-image and self-esteem, shame, imposter syndromes; Bernard, Lige, Willis, Sosoo, & Neblett, 2017; Retta, 2019).

Unfortunately, Black students are less likely than their peers to report mental health difficulties or seek treatment (Cokley et al., 2013; Masuda et al., 2012; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019). Among the barriers to seeking treatment (e.g., cultural values, institutional distrust, lack of resources, few appropriate providers, religiosity) are messages regarding John Henryism and grit (Brasher, 2015; Cokley et al., 2013; Primm, 2018). John Henryism refers to a high-effort coping mechanism through which African Americans habitually overwork themselves in order to align their identities with dominant White American values (Hudson, Neighbors, Geronimus, & Jackson, 2016). For college students this includes working hard at academics without “complaining” about the toll on their mental health in the face of psychosocial stressors. Grit is implicated in weathering the long-term psychological, mental, physical, and emotional effects of living in a society characterized by White dominance and racism (McGee & Stovall, 2015). That is, as these students suffer in silence and work to fit in and succeed in this White ethnocentric environment, they are at high risk for developing psychological (e.g., stress, depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety) and physical disorders (e.g., hair loss, heart disease, diabetes; Brasher, 2015). In fact, a study by Hudson et al. (2016) indicated that greater levels of John Henryism were correlated with higher odds of depression in African American adults.

An important component of identity development for Black emerging adults is racial/ethnic identity development. Racial identity development encompasses involvement in, social integration with, commitment to, and positive thoughts and attitudes regarding one’s racial

group (Ajibade et al., 2016). Racial identity has been found to be connected to psychological well-being (Ajibade et al., 2016; Sanchez & Awad, 2016). In support of this, studies have found that Black people (including college students) with stronger and thus more developed racial/ethnic identities tend to report less psychological distress and better mental health (Ajibade et al., 2016; Neville & Lily, 2000; Whittaker & Neville, 2010).

Models of the development of mental health disorders have identified exposure to stress as a significant contributor to psychopathogenesis (Hudson et al., 2016; Monroe & Simons, 1991). It is important to recognize that Black students experience high levels of stress and adversity (much of it due to race, i.e., race-related stress) which undoubtedly affects their mental health. While research on college student mental health has grown vastly, there are still relatively few studies exploring the mental health of Black students (McClain et al., 2016). Fewer still examine Black mental health outcomes from a positive conceptualization. McClain and her co-authors (2016) also noted that most prior research on the contributing factors to Black student mental health have focused mainly on issues of racial and ethnic identity without examining other sociocultural and environmental factors. For these reasons, this study will examine Black college student mental health (rather than deficits and poor functioning) using a lens of critical race theory (CRT) to identify salient predictor variables that account for sociopolitical and environmental factors along with the important constructs of racial/ethnic identity and racial discrimination.

African American Activism

African Americans have a long and deep history of activism as a part of collective efforts to escape racial oppression since slavery (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). African American activism (or Black activism) is “intentional action aimed at fostering social and/or political

change and often includes engaging in behaviors aimed at reducing and/or eliminating racism and its negative effects and proactive behaviors to enhance the everyday lives of African American persons and the African American community as a whole” (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015, p. 171). It covers a wide range of formal and informal activities, such as, protests, strikes, sit-ins, boycotts or support of certain organizations, informed voting, rallies, community organizing, writing letters to politicians or news media, joining community groups, donating money or time to causes, staying informed about issues that affect Black communities, providing education about social inequalities, and mentoring, among others (Szymanski, 2012). Studies have found involvement in Black activism to be one of the main responses to racism for African American adults (Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Szymanski, 2012). On a national scale, Black activism continues to be tremendously important to dismantling racist systems and ideologies and fostering positive changes in the Black American community (Thomas, 2001).

As noted by Auerbach et al. (2018), “college students are a key population segment for determining the economic growth and success of a country” (p. 625). Data from the 2018 midterm elections showed that (a) Generation Z (eligible voters aged 18 to 21 years), Millennials (ages 22 to 37 years), and Generation X (38 to 53 years) individuals combined outvoted the Baby Boomers (ages 54 to 72 years) and older generations, and (b) the voting population was the most racially and ethnically diverse for a midterm, with “historic jumps” in voter turnout for non-White racial and ethnic groups (Cilluffo & Fry, 2019; Krogstad, Noe-Bustamante, & Flores, 2019). Emerging adults of color are becoming more engaged in political activism as a result of the unpredictable, unconventional, and unpleasant actions undertaken by the Trump administration (Bui, Miller, & Quealy, 2017). College-level activism by Black students has grown in scope and visibility over the past decade, mainly due to sociopolitical changes and

rising racial tension in the country (McElderry & Rivera, 2017). Notably, within the last five years, Black students from over eighty universities (including Duke, Yale, Harvard, University of Missouri) have formally demanded that the institutions acknowledge their oppressive histories and improve policies, practices, and their treatment of people from marginalized backgrounds (with an emphasis on Black students; Anderson & Span, 2016; Jones & Reddick, 2017). Therefore, it is increasingly important to understand Black students' current activism engagement to improve the future of political engagement in a turbulent sociopolitical sphere (Samayoa, Stolzenberg, Zimmerman, & Gasman, 2018).

Research has implicated several factors in the development of activist tendencies in Black populations. Szymanski (2012) found that exposure to racist events or perceived discrimination was significantly and positively associated with African American activism, particularly for college students with more reflective coping styles. Leath and Chavous (2017) described the tendency of Black students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) to take social action by protesting as a response to institutional and interpersonal experiences of racism on campus. In a study about the resurgence of Black activism in the African American community in light of the Trump administration, Livingston et al. (2017) found racial centrality (i.e., more developed and Afro-centric racial identities) and psychological empowerment to be significant influences on activist behavior. Results from Szymanski and Lewis (2015) suggested that cultural race-related stress as well as more-developed racial identities (i.e., Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive) were positive predictors of African American activism in undergraduate students. Based on racial identity theory, individuals who have progressed to more developed and afro-centric racial identities (typically through significant exposure to race-related stress) are fully aware of the

existence and effects of racial oppression and ready and prepared to work to redress racial inequalities.

Cultural factors, such as visual arts, music, and social media also play a role in Black individuals' exposure to and feelings regarding issues of race in American society. More specifically, music has long been a major means for the oppressed to build community, develop resistance, and enact resistance (e.g., songs sung by slaves, the role of Bob Marley's music in the liberation of much of colonial Africa; Sanger, 1995; Shaban, 2019). American Hip-Hop culture has historically been a driving influence in emerging African American adults' foray into activism through lyrics that focused on structural inequalities, poverty, and race and class struggles (e.g., GrandMaster Flash, Russell Simmons, Furious Five; Ellis-Williams, 2007). While Hip-Hop lyrics have exhibited a decline from Civil Rights-related content (Ellis-Williams, 2007), there has been a recent resurgence of social justice-oriented Black artists producing "conscious" Hip-Hop (e.g., Common, the late Nipsey Hustle, YG, Nas, Kendrick Lamar, Public Enemy, The Roots; JayQuan, 2018). This movement has largely been influenced by the contemporary sociopolitical environment (e.g., Black Lives Matter movement, racist messages and actions from President Trump, deaths of Black men at the hands of police officers; JayQuan, 2018), and college-aged Black students, as the target audience, are through music, becoming increasingly attuned to and prepared to fight systemic sociopolitical inequalities.

A qualitative study by Ellis-Williams (2007) found that Black college students distinguished their campus activism work from their community activism work, and found it easier to navigate issues, be heard, and make a difference on campus. Considering that activism is related to social agency and a sense of power and control (i.e., through taking meaningful actions and decreasing feelings of disempowerment), it seems a fair assumption that as college

students face higher incidences of race-related discrimination, they may become more involved in African American activism on campus (Ellis-Williams, 2007; Samayoa et al., 2018). These efforts are by no means insignificant or localized; several institutions have enacted changes because of Black student activism and this has not gone unnoticed by the media. During the 2015-2016 academic year, Black students at the University of Missouri at Columbia objected to the university's weak and noncommittal responses to a series of serious discriminatory events. Through protests, sit-ins, hunger strikes, athletic strikes their list of demands were accepted by the university and resulted in the resignation of the President and Chancellor (Anderson & Span, 2016). This inspired many other grassroots student activism groups to demand improved campus climates for communities of color (McElderry & Rivera, 2017). More recently, students at George Mason University who researched the eponymous university founder's history of slaveholding have successfully pushed campus leaders to acknowledge the contributions of the enslaved men, women, and children who worked to enrich Mason; in 2021, the university will build an interactive memorial in their honor (Lumpkin, 2019).

Activism, particularly political activism, may be a useful coping strategy for racial/ethnic minority students navigating the transition to college life because it provides a defense against feelings of isolation, environmental stress, experiences of discrimination, and other hassles of being underrepresented on campus and increases feelings of pride, fortitude, and courage (Douglas, Pinto, Arnold, & Willis, 2017; Hope et al., 2018). Political activism is a protective factor for racial and ethnic discrimination experiences that lead to stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms in minority students (Hope et al., 2018). For example, the BLM movement raises awareness of systemic racism and fosters resilience in Black communities (Hargons et al., 2017).

However, for Black students, higher levels of political activism may lead to increased experiences of racial and ethnic microaggressions, and greater stress and anxiety, likely due to the prolonged exposure to race-related stress, injustice, and negative race-related experiences (Hope et al., 2018). Regardless, as students continue to persist in activist engagement in the current sociopolitical era, including and following the election of President Trump, it is critical to learn more about how Black students become involved in, carry out, and respond to activism, as well as what factors are related to Black activism and mental health. A review of the literature revealed relatively few studies concerning activism by Black college students, particularly with this current sociopolitical zeitgeist as the context in which activism emerges. In considering it a response to or coping mechanism for experiences of racist events, this study will use the lens of critical race theory to understand what factors contribute to African American students as they navigate personal development on predominantly White college campuses.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated as scholarly work in the legal system in the early 1980s by Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams (Bell, 1995). These founders sought to battle racism and inequity as they were insidiously built into, reified, and institutionalized by law (Bell, 1995; Dixon, 2018). In contemporary social sciences research, it is a theoretical framework that stipulates that problems be placed in historical, political, and social context, while demanding consideration of privilege, power, oppression, and racism (Daftary, 2018). As such, CRT has been found to be a uniquely relevant lens for guiding research on inequities, oppression, and varying social issues with historically disenfranchised and marginalized populations (Daftary, 2018). According to Johnson-Ahorlu (2017), CRT is “a set of ideas that explain what racism is, how it functions in

our society, the emotional and psychological experiences of being subjected to racism, and the factors that contribute to the manifestation of racism” (p. 730). This encapsulates the goals of this research. The action component and commitment to social justice work inherent in CRT also fits well with the values of counseling psychology and the goals of this study (Daftary, 2018).

CRT provides a foundation for understanding issues of racism against Black people in the U.S. by emphasizing that contemporary racist oppression comes from a longer and more storied narrative that must acknowledge the role of White supremacy in all American institutions (e.g., cultural, political, social, health, and legal organizations). In order to understand contemporary social injustice, discussions of racial oppression must be placed in the context of historical events like slavery and the subsequent centuries of unequal treatment and discrimination (Aymer, 2016). CRT functions to examine, expose, and challenge the social, political, and institutional constructs that perpetuate the status quo of racial oppression and inequalities (Milner IV, 2017). However, CRT does not simply document disparities; it must advocate for meaningful changes that address racial inequality (Dixson & Anderson, 2018).

Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, and Crenshaw (1993) organized six domains or tenets of CRT:

(1) CRT recognizes that racism is endemic to American life; (2) CRT expresses skepticism about the dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy; (3) CRT challenges ahistorism and insists on a contextual historical analysis of the law; (4) CRT insists on the recognizing of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society; (5) CRT is interdisciplinary and eclectic; and (6) CRT works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of eliminating oppression in general. (as cited in Aymer, 2016, p. 368)

These domains guided the conceptualization of this study of how the mental health outcomes and activism efforts of Black college students can be studied and understood through the lenses of the sociopolitical structures and climate in American society and the cultural identity and race-

related experiences of Black people. CRT was integral in guiding interest in the dependent variables (mental health outcomes and activism of Black college students) as well as selection of the predictor variables (race-related stress, Black racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude) in the current study (See Figure 1).

As it relates to this study, the first tenet was crucial to identifying the independent (race-related stress) and moderating (racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude) variables as potential contributing factors to the dependent variables (mental health outcomes and African American activism); while other factors certainly influence the lives of Black college students, their experiences with racism cannot be separated from their development, psychological states, or civic engagement. Recognition of racial inequality and a healthy skepticism about the concepts given in the second tenet of CRT informs the emphasis on the unequal circumstances Blacks students are faced with by virtue of their race; Black students are treated differently and report more negative college experiences compared to White students. The third tenet necessitates a meaningful exploration and understanding of Black American history as the context to be able to explain contemporary predicaments. This study acknowledges that as deeply-rooted as racism and oppression are in Black history, so too are Black activism, Black identity, and Black culture. In addition, the current sociopolitical environment cannot be ignored as the backdrop and driving force in the experiences of marginalized populations.

The fourth domain of CRT is represented in the centering of all study variables in the subjective experiences, knowledge, actions, and opinions of Black students and the consideration of Black identity as an important factor. There were interdisciplinary and eclectic influences at play in using an environmental systems approach and pulling from history, psychology, education, sociology, feminist theory, social justice work, politics, and ethnic studies to attempt a

more comprehensive analysis of the mental health and activism of Black college students.

Finally, one goal of this study is to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life for Black students through better understanding of what factors affect their mental health and what drives involvement in the activism that empowers them and makes positive changes on campus and in the country. It is also noteworthy that adding to the body of literature on Black psychology and Black college student issues battles oppression by switching the narrative to that of a typically understudied and underrepresented group.

The current study's use of the CRT domains as a framework is consistent with Johnson-Ahorlu's (2017) explanation that such research should be based on the premise that race and racism (in conjunction with other forms of oppression) are fundamental to the experiences and outcomes of students of color; incorporate relevant interdisciplinary concepts to understand how race and racism function; challenge dominant discourses that frame students of color as being deficient or inferior; recognize and include personal experiences and opinions as legitimate and valuable ways of how race and racism function; and be designed, analyzed, written, and used for the promotion of social justice.

CRT has been used by other researchers to select, explain, and ground variables and phenomena of interest, much like the current study. Reynolds and Mayweather (2017) provide an example of good use of the framework in a study to combat hate crimes on a PWI campus in the fall of 2016 following the U.S. presidential election. Their qualitative study examined the activism- and social justice-based responses of Black students in order to cope with racial epithets and threats of violence toward African American students at a PWI in the Midwest (Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017). The students took action using sit-ins, walkouts, and social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat) to create their own narratives and affirm their

humanity while university officials dawdled in their responses (Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017). In article by Dixon (2018), CRT is used to guide the analysis of how youth- and young-adult-led activism, conducted mainly through social media, reflects a failure of mainstream discussions on race and education systems in teaching and contextualizing the historical movements for racial justice and equality.

Since race is a historical social construction and racism is embedded in the society and institutions of the U.S., the framework of CRT has been used to guide the selection of variables (e.g., sociopolitical attitudes, race-related stress, Black racial identity) which have been indicated as associated with the discrimination and activism experiences of Black college students (Leath & Chavous, 2017). Being Black in White spaces is unavoidably political, and thriving is an act of defiance in the face of daily oppression. Consideration of any issues related to Black college students has to be political, particularly when sociopolitical factors (e.g., police brutality and extrajudicial killing of Black people by law enforcement, increases in brazen acts of White supremacy, various actions of the Trump administration) are such a stark and salient influence in America at present.

Recent National Attitudes Regarding CRT

Unfortunately, though perhaps unsurprisingly, in mid-2021, opponents of CRT in the United States have publicly, politically, and legally challenged the rhetoric and the goals of the concept. Significant debate has emerged about how, when, and whether CRT should be taught in academic curricula, particularly at the K-12 levels. Nine Republican-controlled states (e.g., Florida, Arkansas, Idaho, Oklahoma) have instituted laws or other stipulations that ban the teaching of CRT, with some lawmakers referring to the concept as “toxic,” “divisive,” and responsible for making some (presumably White) students feel “guilt and anguish” based on

their race (Dutton, 2021; Zurcher, 2021). This manufactured controversy appears to lie in whether people believe CRT is a framework for understanding how racism has molded American institutions and culture or is instead a divisive narrative that permanently sets people of color against White people (Sawchuk, 2021). It is important to note that the differences in thought are not representative of a perfect split between Democrat and Republican ideologies, with some liberal public figures criticizing CRT as “illiberal” (Zurcher, 2021). Rather, there appears to be a fundamental misunderstanding of the meaning and underpinnings of CRT, with it often being conflated with other related topics of discomfort in the U.S. (e.g., anti-racism, social justice, discrimination) and painted as an “elitist” “academic” concept (Sawchuk, 2021; Zurcher, 2021). Regardless of the reasons for disagreement with CRT (e.g., insufficient knowledge/grasp of the theory, sensationalizing and conservative punditry, White fragility), this attempt to ignore unpleasant aspects of the history of the U.S. and gaslight and deny the experiences of Black people in the country further underscores its importance and the necessity of scholarly work that demonstrates and elucidates CRT.

Race-Related Stress

Drawing from the CRT framework to define race, it is important to state unequivocally that race is a social, physical, contextual, legal, and historical construct (Milner IV, 2017). Race is developed and given meaning by human society, not by genetics or scientific laws. Milner IV (2017) provides a comprehensive description of the construction of race, as summarized below: Humans use societal messages and information (e.g., the values and worldviews of different groups, how they perform, what their preferences are) to socially construct and categorize themselves and others: race is among these types of social constructs. In societies, people create belief systems, judgments, characteristics, and identities about themselves and other based on

skin phenotype and concentration of melanin. Genetic and biological similarities vastly outnumber differences among humans; thus race is physically constructed. Regardless of the distinctions or inaccuracies of the construction of race, it is still a salient factor in societies across the world. Race is contextually constructed since different locations and sociopolitical contexts affect how race is constructed, discussed, and acted upon. In the U.S. race is legally constructed given that societal constructions have a basis in laws and history. For example, many legal cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, have played an integral role in defining and constructing race in the country. And finally, the historical construct of race can be understood since the historical treatment and outcomes of groups in society (e.g., the Three-Fifths rule designating Black slaves as 3/5 of a person) affects how they are currently perceived and treated (Nguyen, 2004).

Racism is different from racial stereotypes, racial discrimination, prejudice, and microaggressions—racism is a historical system of disparity and injustice, the context that creates and perpetuates those concepts. To deal in semantics, stereotypes are simplistic and inaccurate generalizations used to categorize groups; discrimination refers to unfair treatment of a person or thing on account of (real or imagined) membership in a particular group; prejudice describes preconceived negative judgments, opinions, and attitudes about a particular group; and microaggressions are “subtle statements and behaviors that unconsciously communicate denigrating messages to people of color” (Nadal, 2011, p. 470). Racism is defined by Harrell (2000) as:

A system of dominance, power, and privilege based on racial-group designations; rooted in the historical oppression of a group defined or perceived by dominant-group members as inferior, deviant, or undesirable; and occurring in circumstances where members of the dominant group create or accept their societal privilege by maintaining structures, ideology, values, and behavior that have the intent or effect of leaving nondominant-group members relatively

excluded from power, esteem, status, and/or equal access to societal resources. (p. 43)

By this definition and CRT lens, racism is inescapable in the lives of Black Americans. Racism can occur on the individual level (personal experiences), the institutional level (experiences due to racism being embedded in policies), the cultural level (when the values and practices of one group are treated as superior compared to others), and collective level (when non-Blacks actively seek to restrict the rights of Blacks; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996).

The complex definition of racism, the multifaceted nature of its presentation and effects, the components (e.g., discrimination, microaggressions) that result from its expression, and its complete influence in the lives of Black Americans make racism a difficult concept to operationalize. Utsey (1999) proposed using the concept of race-related stress to represent the physical, emotional, psychological, and mental toll exerted on Black Americans as a result of chronic exposure to racism, racial prejudice, racial discrimination, microaggressions, and racial stereotypes. Race-related stress can be defined as “the race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism, and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being” (Harrell, 2000, p. 44).

Recalling Johnson-Ahorlu’s (2017) definition of CRT as “a set of ideas that explain what racism is, how it functions in our society, the emotional and psychological experiences of being subjected to racism, and the factors that contribute to the manifestation of racism” (p. 730), this study will conceptualize race-related stress as the psychological distress experienced by Black Americans from cumulative and persistent experience and effects of racism, racial prejudice, racial discrimination, racial stereotypes, and microaggressions. These concepts will be used not

interchangeably, but with the understanding that they may overlap in presentation, and they all stem from racism and eventually contribute to race-related stress.

Additional support for this umbrella conceptualization can be found in Comas-Díaz, Hall, and Neville's (2019) and Anderson and Stevenson's (2019) descriptions of racial trauma as a form of race-related stress which develops as a reaction to continuous exposure to real or perceived and direct or vicarious experiences of racial discrimination. A similar phenomenon has been documented whenever videos of Black people dying at the hands of law enforcement go viral on the internet. The vicarious trauma of viewing those graphic images combined with personal experiences of racial discrimination combine to produce racial trauma (Downs, 2016). Exposure to stereotypes can be just as pernicious: In a study of Black undergraduate and graduate women, Jerald, Cole, Ward, and Avery (2017) discovered that awareness that others hold negative stereotypes about them was predictive of hostility, depression, and anxiety.

Despite social and political changes over the past few decades (e.g., civil rights movement, the election of Barrack Obama for two presidential terms), it is an unfortunate fact that African Americans still experience discrimination and racial prejudice in their daily lives. This is no different on college campuses, although Black students attending predominantly White universities (PWIs) experience more race-related stress than their counterparts who attend historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs; Banks, 2010). A study undertaken on a predominantly European American college campus found that 89% of domestic Black students overheard negative remarks about African Americans and 59% reported experiencing verbal abuses at least once (Prellow et al., 2006). An additional study by Prellow et al. (2006) found that 98.5% of African American students on a Northeastern college campus had experienced at least one discriminatory event in the past year.

As universities seek to increase the racial diversity of their student populations, they must consider that Black students will face, in addition to the typical adjustments, stressors, and hassles of college life, overt as well as more covert racial discrimination on- and off-campus (Banks, 2010). These instances of covert racial discrimination occur in daily interpersonal activities and include being overlooked or ignored, treated as though inferior, treated with less courtesy than others, being assumed to be “someone who serves others,” and experiencing verbal microaggressions (Banks, 2010, p. 24; Henson, Derlega, Pearson, Ferrer, & Holmes, 2013). Regarding social adjustment to predominantly White campuses, African American students tend to feel underrepresented, to perceive direct racism, are not comfortable approaching faculty, and find it difficult to become familiar with faculty or establish mentoring relationships with them (Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). African American students also have a more negative perception of the racial atmosphere on college campuses than do European American and Asian American students (Chao et al., 2012). Chao et al. (2012) also reported that for 1,555 domestic Black clients at seven predominantly White universities in the Midwest, the main presenting concerns (e.g., depression, romantic relationship concerns, values confusion, suicide risk, academic performance anxiety, adjustment to university, perfectionism) were all associated with perceived racial discrimination and race-related stress.

Studies have been conducted to examine the ways in which African American college students perceive and experience racial discrimination, the role of stress and coping strategies (e.g., alcohol and substance use, rumination, confrontation, avoidance), and psychosocial and academic outcomes (DeFreitas, 2012; Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012; O’Hara et al., 2015). Not surprisingly, results generally tend to indicate that regardless of the presentation of racism and race-related stress—covert, blatant, interpersonal, systemic, vicarious, or direct—the effect on

the mental health of people of color is tremendously negative (Miller et al., 2018). Indeed, the stress caused by racial discrimination is a contributor to depressive symptoms and increased odds of developing depression for African Americans (Hudson, et al., 2016). Similarly, negative effects on the physical and psychological health of Black and Latinx emerging adults has been found to be associated with experiences of racial discrimination (Hope et al., 2018).

Racism is a social construction, making it important to consider how the manifestations of race-related stress (e.g., microaggressions, overt racial discrimination) evolve in tandem with societal attitudes toward race: the current sociopolitical climate has given way to more hostile, blatant, and explicit acts of racism (Miller et al., 2018). However, it is important to note that not all reported effects of race-related stress are entirely negative. Race-related stress has been implicated as a contributor to Black activism (Leath & Chavous, 2017; Prosper, 2018; Szymanski, 2012), but apparently only up to a point before students become overwhelmed and disillusioned (Hope et al., 2018).

Black Racial Identity Development

Racial identity encapsulates the importance that people place on their racial heritage and the degree to which they perceive themselves to be a part of their racial group (Anglin & Wade, 2007). There are several models of racial identity development that can be applied to minority populations. These identity development models are used to describe the process through which individuals develop a sense of self, or ego, including interactions with the larger societal context (Sanchez, 2013). One of the most prominent models of racial identity in Black individuals has been Cross's (Cross Jr., 1971) Nigrescence model of racial identity and esteem (Schmidt, 2006; Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross Jr., & Worrell, 2001). The five stages of the model describe a developmental progression from internalized self-hatred to self-acceptance.

In the first stage, *pre-encounter*, a Black person creates a worldview and self-image through the lens of the dominant White American culture. These individuals tend to think or act in ways which devalue being Black and idealize being White. The second stage, *encounter*, is defined by the experience of and subsequent internalization of challenging or significant experience which forces a reevaluation of the values and views established in the pre-encounter stage. In the third stage, or *immersion/emersion*, a reversal occurs wherein the individual focuses primarily on being Black and becoming immersed in Black culture, to the exclusion of other racial and cultural groups, particularly the White culture. A person in this stage feels a strong connection to other Black people and may endorse anger or hostility toward the dominant culture (Schmidt, 2006). The fourth stage of this model is *internalization*, and it represents the developmental milestone of feeling positive and secure about Black identity but also exhibiting acceptance of other cultural groups. This stage shows maturity and resolution of the negative feelings from previous stages; more value is placed on “Blackness” and greater confidence and acceptance are exhibited (Schmidt, 2006). The fifth and final stage, *internalization and commitment*, is characterized by an understanding of the negative effects of racism, as well as a long-term commitment to opposing racism and oppression in other forms and circumstances.

The Nigrescence model was revised and expanded by Cross (Cross Jr., 1991) in order to shift the conceptualization from a developmental stage model to a more complete theory based on attitudes, social identities, and shifts in thinking (Vandiver et al., 2001; Worrell, Vandiver, & Cross Jr., 2004; Worrell, Vandiver, Schaefer, Cross Jr., & Fhagen-Smith, 2006). The updated model enacted changes in the number of stages and differentiated amongst several specific racial identities in each stage. Specifically, stages four and five from above, *internalization* and *internalization and commitment*, are combined under the label *internalization* (Worrell et al.,

2004). Additionally, six racial identities are described as follows. For the first stage, the *pre-encounter* stage, three racial identities were newly distilled: Assimilation (PA; a denial or low focus on membership of racial minority), Miseducation (PM; believing and endorsing negative stereotypes about Black people), and Self-Hatred (PSH; having negative feelings about being Black). The *encounter* stage is the only Nigrescence concept without distinct attitudes (Worrell et al., 2004). There is one *immersion-emersion* racial identity: Anti-White (IEAW; endorsing strong negative feelings toward White people). *Internalization* has two racial identities, Afrocentricity (IA; having a deep connection to and positive focus exclusively on Black heritage and culture) and Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI; embracing a Black identity but also respecting and celebrating the cultural identities of other groups).

A study by Forsyth, Hall, and Carter (2015) has suggested that racial identity differences may explain differences in mental health (e.g., incidence of stress, rates of psychotic disorders, rates of increase in mental illness) and coping (e.g., age of development of protective coping strategies for racial discrimination, differences in usage of mental health services, perceived satisfaction with and usefulness of these services) between Black West Indians and African Americans. This may indicate that the different perspectives and worldviews associated with the six racial identity development attitudes (i.e., PA, PM, PSH, IEAW, IA, IMCI) affect how an individual perceives and copes with racial discrimination, presumably with certain attitudes being more (e.g., IEAW, IA) or less (e.g., PA, PM) vigilant and sensitive to discriminatory experiences and associated changes in psychological well-being (Livingston, 2004). In line with this, Sanchez and Awad (2016) found evidence that some racial identity attitudes (i.e., encounter and immersion-emersion) are related to perceptions of discrimination. Individuals with high

endorsement of those identities tend to be more aware of and consciously affected by discrimination and other forms of race-related stress.

College students are in an important developmental period. Based on increased industrialization, shifts in demographics, and a general delaying of adult commitments and responsibilities, Arnett (2000) proposed a developmental phase called emerging adulthood. In emerging adulthood, young adults between ages 18 and 25 experience an extended period of identity exploration, self-focus, instability, possibilities, and feelings of being in-between adolescence and adulthood.

It is noteworthy that Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial developmental tasks that traditional college-aged students complete during their college years includes establishing identity. While there is no expected racial identity development trend among college students (since identity development depends on individual experiences, culture, exposure, and worldviews), Fuller-Rowell et al. (2011) found that after the 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama, Black college students were likely to have experienced the encounter stage of racial identity development. The encounter stage is characterized by negative racial experience that leads to awareness of racial injustices and reversal of pro-White and anti-Black sentiments. It is likely that President Obama's election increased visibility to issues of racism, and implicit and explicit bias, thus increasing likelihood that Black students will have had an encounter-type experience with non-Black individuals with less than favorable views. Also, due to the importance and unavoidability of news that a man of African descent and visible Black identity was in such a position of power, students were probably more likely to have experiences which caused them to fully acknowledge their Blackness, typically through negative race-related experiences with others. Fuller-Rowell et al. (2011) also indicated that the election led to

increased identity exploration in students with higher racial centrality (e.g., IA stage), and that the election had an “immediate and long-term” (p.1610) on racial identity in these students. It is reasonable to assume that increased hate-crimes across American campuses following the election of Trump (Dreid & Najmabadi, 2016; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019; Ndemanu, 2017) may also have served as “encounter” events and triggered racial identity exploration in Black college students.

There is also some evidence that racial identity plays a role in Black students’ activism efforts. A study by Szymanski and Lewis (2015) suggested that race-related stress as well as more-developed racial identities (i.e., Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive) were positive predictors of African American activism in undergraduate students. The forces of race-related stress (again, some but not too much) and strong pro-Black identities appear to promote civic engagement in issues of racial justice for Black students.

Sociopolitical Attitudes

The term sociopolitical attitudes refers to emotions or feelings regarding facts or the state of the unique combination of social and political factors in an environment (Chaiklin, 2011). This can include beliefs about gender equality, what responsibilities governments should undertake, adherence to various social norms that affect citizens, support for various civil liberties, inclination to participate in political activity or activism, and perspectives about maintaining order (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016; Nugent et al., 2016). Sociopolitical attitudes are affected by political orientation and ideology, knowledge of politics, generational and other demographic factors, structure of political beliefs, moral preferences and beliefs, and nature of tertiary education (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016; Furnham, 1985; Haidt, 2012; Proch et al., 2019;

Tansey & Kindsvatter, 2020). Political ideology, including conservatism and liberalism, is an important contributor the attitudes individuals hold about their sociopolitical environment (Kivikangas et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2020). However, it is important to note that there are cultural and subcultural differences in how political ideology, moral foundations, and sociopolitical attitudes are related. In a cross-cultural meta-analysis, Kivikangas and colleagues (2021) also found that for research on political ideology, moral values, and attitudes, results were smaller in samples that did not consist of individuals who are White, American, and politically interested. Further research on political ideology and sociopolitical attitudes of Black American populations is needed. With these factors in consideration, this study will examine the sociopolitical environment during the Trump administration and how these events may affect the emotional reactions or attitudes of Black college students regarding the state of the country.

Recent Sociopolitical Climate and Attitudes

There has been significant pre- and post-election anxiety due to then Presidential candidate Trump's political campaign and the resulting unpredictable sociopolitical environment; groups targeted by Trump during his campaign may experience his election as presidency as a trauma (Panning, 2017; Teng, 2017). The Trump administration's intolerance, isolationism, and discrimination have had a negative effect on mental health of certain minority groups (e.g., LGBT, immigrants) due to stigma and is likely to have long-term implications for help-seeking (Bialer & McIntosh, 2017). The so-called zero-tolerance policy enacted by the Trump administration in 2018 to separate minors from adults at the U.S.-Mexico border has had a significant detrimental effect on the mental health of the children, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological distress, symptoms of depression and anxiety, and withdrawal (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018a; APA, 2018b; APA, 2018c;

Stringer, 2018). According to a report from the Department of Health and Human Services, these children are exhibiting more symptoms of PTSD, fear, and feelings of abandonment compared to children who were not separated from their families (Long, Mendoza, & Burke, 2019).

While former President Trump verbally denied that he is racist, his actions in office, tweets, behavior on the campaign trail, and other rhetoric has undoubtedly made it more acceptable for other intolerant and hateful groups (e.g., White nationalists, Neo-Nazis) to be open with their racism (Miller et al., 2018). The numbers of active hate groups in the country increased from 892 in 2015 to 917 in 2016 and in 2017, 58.5% of the hate crimes reported by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program were race-related (Miller et. al, 2018; Ndemanu, 2017). When multiple mass-murdering shooters and open White nationalists cite President Trump as both inspiration and justification for their actions (Simon & Sidner, 2019), it is not difficult to grasp the sociopolitical turmoil that ensues when the most powerful leader in the country holds racist beliefs and supports White supremacist ideologies.

Other actions from President Trump that are likely to have a negative effect on Black Americans include his disparagement of certain Black-majority nations as “s—tholes” (Rand, 2019) and the constant gaslighting of the public (Azarian, 2018). In 2019, his encouragement (which he denied) of his rallying supporters' chants of “send her back” with regard to Minnesota U.S. House Representative Ilhan Omar gained much publicity in the media. In response, then-president of the APA, Rosie Phillips Davis, PhD, provided a thoughtful but direct statement explaining that such racist statements (e.g., “send her back” and “go back where you came from”) can be extremely harmful to the mental health of people of color, causing symptoms similar to trauma, negative cognitive and behavioral effects, avoidance, self-defeating thoughts, depression, and anxiety (APA, 2019).

The spike in the numbers of hate groups in the country is positively correlated with hate crimes in society, particularly on college campuses (Ndemanu, 2017). As discussed earlier, Black students report the least favorable campus climate experiences, difficulty connecting with faculty or developing mentoring relationships, and higher levels of race-related discrimination (Chao et al., 2012; McClain et al., 2016; Schwitzer et al., 1999). In addition to daily, commonplace incidences of racial discrimination and microaggressions, racial- and ethnic-bias hate crimes are more likely to be reported on PWIs, particularly those with large Greek-life engagement (Van Dyke & Tester, 2014). Frighteningly, campus climates have worsened for minority students since the 2016 election, with more hate-motivated incidents being perpetrated against them since that political milestone—according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, there were nearly 900 reports of racial- and ethnic-bias hate incidents on campuses in the 10 days following Trump’s election to the office of president of the United States (Dreid & Najmabadi, 2016). Other news media agencies have consistently reported the surge of racist events intended to terrorize and intimidate minority students, not limited to vandalism, physical assaults, swastikas and other emblems of hate, threatening messages, and menacing posters, occurring on campuses across the country (Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019; Ndemanu, 2017). Thelamour, Mwangi, and Ezeofor (2019) found that while having same-ethnicity friends and peers increased feelings of campus belongingness, African American students with more developed racial identities (e.g., IA, IMCI) tended to feel less connected to their college campuses, likely due to their increased awareness of systemic injustices, interpersonal racism, and the lack of adequate solutions.

In order to understand the mental health outcomes and activism experiences through a CRT lens, it is imperative that the role of racism in context of the current social and political

zeitgeist be examined. In addition to the previously discussed effects of the increased blatant White supremacy and dangerous precedent being established by President Trump and his administration, Black students' perceptions and attitudes about the sociopolitical environment also play a role in their mental health outcomes, institutional experiences, and decisions and drive to engage in activism for social change. Leath and Chavous (2017) investigated the roles of certain sociopolitical worldviews, campus racial climate, and political self-efficacy on Black college student's civic engagement. They found that for politically self-efficacious men, just world sociopolitical beliefs (i.e., the world is generally fair and people get what they deserve) were associated with more civic engagement; and for politically self-efficacious women, perceptions of negative racial climate (particularly mistrust and racial tension) was related to increased civic engagement.

The Leath and Chavous (2017) study is among very few studies to consider Black students' sociopolitical worldviews, but it does not specifically address the impact of President Trump on students' sociopolitical attitudes, trust, and emotional experience. This study attempts to fill that gap by considering President Trump and his administration's influence on American society by conceptualizing sociopolitical attitudes through concepts drawn from recent questionnaires administered by two national studies that evaluate public political attitudes and participation.

First, the Pew Research Center is a "nonpartisan fact tank" that conducts public opinion polling, empirical social science research, demographic research, and media content analysis regarding global "issues, attitudes, and trends" (Pew Research Center, 2018). The Pew Research Center (2018) American Trends Panel questions were designed to collect a large volume of information about political attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors from adults living in the United

States (e.g., state of the country today, confidence in authorities, feelings about Donald Trump's performance as president, attitudes regarding the sociopolitical climate of the country). These concepts are relevant and consistent with previous literature and relate to the specific goals of the current study to investigate the role of Black students' attitudes toward the Trump era and their confidence in their ability to trust authorities to act in the best interests of American citizens.

Second, The American National Election Studies (ANES) is a collaboration between University of Michigan and Stanford University, and it receives funding from the National Science Foundation under grant numbers SES 1444721, 2014-2017 (ANES, www.electionstudies.org). They create surveys relating to political participation, voting, and public opinion and collect data "to serve the research needs of social scientists, teachers, students, policy makers, and journalists" (The American National Election Studies, 2018a). Among its large net of questions, the ANES questionnaire assessed two concepts relevant to the current study: emotions about President Trump and sociopolitical climate of the country today. Taken together, the ANES and the Pew Research Center American Trends Panel provided a way to conceptualize and evaluate sociopolitical attitudes related to the Trump era consistent with a CRT framework: (a) global emotions about the state of the country, (b) thoughts and feelings about the actions of President Donald Trump, (c) confidence in authorities and institutions, and (d) feelings about the American sociopolitical atmosphere.

Sociopolitical Context of 2020

Public attention to systemic inequalities and anti-Black racism, as evinced by the all-too-common lack of justice following the killing of Black Americans, has sharply increased over the past decade. However, several important events during 2020 have had significant impacts on the sociopolitical context of the country, with regards to racial injustice and Black activism. First,

the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine highlighted disparities in wealth, employment, socioeconomics, and access to health care in its disproportionate devastation of Black and other marginalized communities. The largely inadequate response by the Trump administration also proved to be devastating for these communities. In addition, college student's lives were drastically affected by the lock-downs and quarantines which ended in-person instruction and curtailed and modified semesters.

Second, the murders of Breonna Taylor in March and George Floyd in May continued the seemingly never-ending string of fatal violence by law enforcement and acted as catalysts for resurgence in the organization, protests, and activism of the Black Lives Matter movement. Large scale protests across the country (and worldwide) erupted as a result, and strong shows of force by law enforcement to protesters was widely documented.

Third, as a national election year, issues of race, social justice, and other aspects of tension in the country were magnified and politicized as divisions in American culture worsened by President Trump and his administration reached critical levels. The 45th president's impeachment by the House (and subsequent acquittal by the Senate) will also have contributed to more vocal discourse around his role in the fraught sociopolitical environment.

Current Study

Black college students have long been an understudied population in the social sciences. Most studies that have examined their campus experiences have indicated poor psychological well-being and mental health (Lipson, et al., 2018; McClain et al. 2016; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). These differences are related to experiences of race-related stress (Banks, 2010; Chao et al., 2012; Fuller-Rowell et al., 2016). In the wake of the presidential campaign and election of Donald Trump, campus climates have worsened for

minority students (Dreid & Najmabadi, 2016; Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019; Ndemanu, 2017). However, Black students have organized to take action leading to a resurgence in Black activism in the face of civil wrongs and societal injustice (Anderson & Span, 2016; Leath & Chavous, 2017; McElderry & Rivera, 2017). Given the tumultuous contemporary sociopolitical environment, the purpose of this study is to investigate moderators of race-related stress and the two outcome variables of mental health and African American activism of Black college students using Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Deeper examination using CRT as the framework reveals additional considerations such as the historic racism and oppression of Black Americans, current sociopolitical context, unique knowledge and experiences of Black populations, multidisciplinary and environmental influences, and actions in the service of social justice (Daftary, 2018; Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017; Aymer, 2016). With CRT guiding the research conceptualization, race-related stress, racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude will be considered as salient predictor variables. Race-related stress is defined as psychological distress experienced by Black people by virtue of continual exposure to overt or vicarious effects of racism, such as discrimination, microaggressions, stereotypes, and prejudice (Harrell, 2000; Utsey, 1999). Studies indicate that race-related stress is associated with physical and psychological well-being (Chao et al., 2012; Hudson et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2018), African American activism (Hope et al., 2018; Leath & Chavous, 2017; Prosper, 2018; Szymanski, 2012), and racial identity attitude (Forsyth et al., 2015).

Racial identity attitude refers to the importance that people place on their racial heritage and the degree to which they perceive themselves to be a part of their racial group (Anglin & Wade, 2007). The revised Nigrescence model identifies six stages of progressive awareness of

and connection to one's Blackness and Black culture. Research has shown that subjective perceptions of racial identity attitude are related to experiences of and susceptibility to race-related stress (Forsyth et al., 2015), involvement in Black activism (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015), and mental health outcomes (Livingston, 2004).

The current sociopolitical environment has been particularly influenced by the actions of the Trump administration. For marginalized populations, the results have been largely negative (Bialer & McIntosh, 2017; Miller et. al, 2018; Ndemanu, 2017). According to CRT, the actions and systems of the government and other institutions are inherently racist and thus affect Black students negatively. This framework also calls for attention to the subjective knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of Black people within their environmental contexts. Since thorough literature reviews did not reveal any discourse or measures addressing the specific contextual role of the 45th president and current sociopolitical climate in the experiences of Black students, two national political research survey questionnaires (i.e., The American National Election Studies and The Pew Research Center American Trends Panel) will be used to more closely conceptualize contemporary sociopolitical views within the CRT framework.

Review of existing research provided interesting insight into connections among the study variables and informed the research questions of this study. Generally, regardless of the presentation of racism—covert, blatant, interpersonal, systemic, vicarious, or direct—the effect on the mental health of people of color is overwhelmingly negative (Miller et al., 2018). Racial discrimination appeared to be consistently associated with poorer psychological functioning, depressive symptoms, perceived stress, and worsened general psychological well-being, particularly for individuals who endorse less developed Black racial identity attitudes (Forsyth & Carter, 2012; McClain et al., 2016; Sellers et al., 2006). There was some evidence that

individuals who endorse more developed Black racial identity attitudes and positive views about Black culture (e.g., Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive) tended to endorse better psychological functioning (Sellers et al., 2006), but a study by Lee and Ahn (2013) found increased psychological distress to be associated with Pre-Encounter Assimilation, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, and Afrocentricity racial identity attitudes. Another somewhat conflicting result comes from the McClain et al. (2016) study in which racial centrality (or more developed racial identity attitudes) was found to be a negative, if nonsignificant, predictor of Black mental health outcomes. While these studies provide support for various associations and a place from which to hypothesize, the relationships among the variables are not clear. A goal of the current research is to evaluate the relationships among those variables from a different perspective in order to learn more about the previously reported discrepancies.

Szymanski and Lewis (2015) indicated that race-related stress and more developed Black racial identities (i.e., Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive) were positive predictors of African American activism. While Black students tended to become more involved in activism as a response to institutional and interpersonal racism, recent research indicated that for Black men with high political self-efficacy, just world sociopolitical attitudes were related to increased involvement in activism (Leath & Chavous, 2017). The result that individuals with the attitude that, things are generally good and alright with the world, would be more inclined to take up activism work for social change seems counterintuitive given the body of literature. However, that was one of very few studies that even examined sociopolitical attitudes as a predictor of activism. One goal of the

current study is to add to the literature around sociopolitical attitudes and Black activism and gain a better understanding of the ways those variables may be related.

In light of the results and gaps of previous research and my conceptualization of the variables of interest through the CRT lens, I am suggesting the following potential model and subsequent research questions and hypotheses.

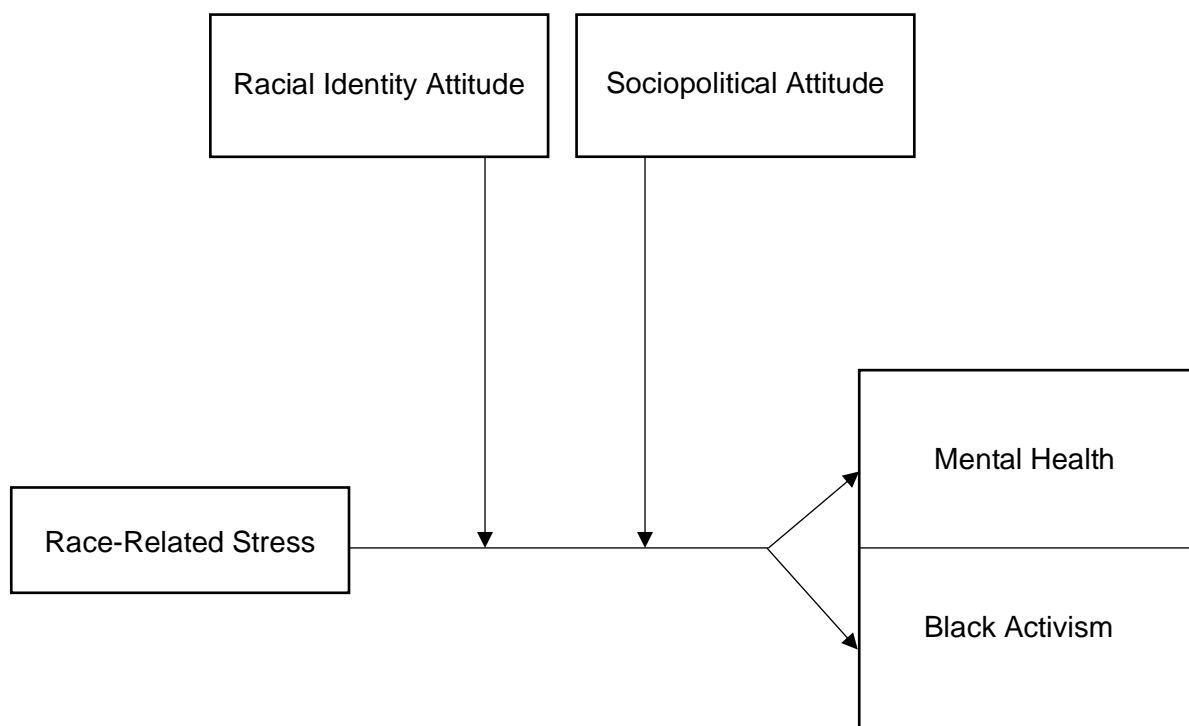


Figure 1. The hypothesized model of the current study

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the Critical Race Theory framework and available empirical evidence, I have developed two research questions and ten related hypotheses.

RQ1: To what extent are race-related stress, racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude related to mental health outcomes and Black activism in Black college students?

H1a: Race-related stress will be negatively associated with mental health outcomes.

H1b: Race-related stress will be positively associated with Black activism.

H1c: Sociopolitical attitude will be positively associated with mental health outcomes.

H1d: Sociopolitical attitude will be negatively associated with Black activism.

H1e: Endorsement of more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, and IMCI) will be negatively associated with mental health outcomes; endorsement of less developed racial identity attitudes will be positively associated with mental health outcomes.

H1f: Endorsement of more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, and IMCI) will be positively associated with Black activism; endorsement of less developed racial identity attitudes will be negatively associated with Black activism.

RQ2: To what degree do racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude moderate the relationship between race-related stress and mental health outcomes, and race-related stress and Black activism for Black college students?

H2a: The relationship between race-related stress and mental health outcomes will vary as a function of racial identity attitude. That is, race-related stress will be associated with poorer mental health outcomes, especially for students endorsing more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, and IMCI).

H2b: The relationship between race-related stress and Black activism will vary as a function of racial identity attitude. That is, race-related stress will be associated with greater

endorsement of Black activism, especially for students endorsing more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, IMCI).

H2c: The association between race-related stress and mental health outcomes will vary as a function of sociopolitical attitude. That is, race-related stress will be associated with poorer mental health outcomes, especially for students endorsing negative sociopolitical attitudes.

H2d: The association between race-related stress and Black activism will vary as a function of sociopolitical attitude. That is, the more positive the sociopolitical attitude, the weaker the association between race-related stress and Black activism.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study is to examine how theoretically selected moderating variables of racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude function in the relationship between race-related stress and two outcome variables (i.e., mental health outcomes and African American activism) for Black college students. This research is observational and quantitative; data was collected via an on-line survey. This chapter discusses the participants, sampling procedures, measurement, and statistical analysis.

Participants

Participants in this study were college and university students, aged 18 and older, currently studying at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the United States, who self-identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora. Participants identifying as biracial or multiracial were also eligible, provided they met all the other criteria required for this study. Eligibility criteria included: a) self-identifying as self-identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora; b) living in the U.S. and pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree; c) being at least 18 years old; d) studying at a predominantly White institution (PWI); e) being at least 2nd generation U.S. citizen or DREAMer; and f) speaking English as a primary language. Students who did not meet these requirements were excluded from the analyses of the study.

In total, there were 83 eligible participants in the sample obtained for this study. Respondents described their racial identities as follows: 44 as Black (53.0%), 22 as African American (26.5%), 4 as African (4.8%), 2 as Afro-Caribbean (2.4%), 3 as Biracial (3.6%; e.g., White and Black), 6 as self-identified (7.2%; e.g., Black American), and 2 (2.4%) participants

declined to provide an answer. Regarding gender identity, two individuals (2.4%) did not respond and the rest of the sample identified as cisgender women ($N = 56$, 67.5%), cisgender men ($N = 17$, 20.5%), non-binary ($N = 2$, 2.4%), trans women ($N = 1$, 1.2%), or supplied their own descriptions ($N = 5$, 6.0%; e.g., demi-girl). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 53 years ($M = 25$, $SD = 7$). Of 83 responses, there were 41 undergraduate (49.4%), 38 graduate (45.8%), and 2 professional (2.4%) students in the sample. Two individuals (2.4%) provided no answer. Regarding geographical region, the 83 participants reported their institutions as being in the West ($N = 1$, 1.2%), Southwest ($N = 5$, 6.0%), Midwest ($N = 68$, 81.9%), Northeast ($N = 5$, 6.0%), and Southeast ($N = 2$, 2.4%). Two participants (2.4%) did not provide a response. Political ideologies were endorsed as follows: 4 Conservative (4.8%), 33 Liberal (39.8%), 17 Progressive (20.5%), 1 Libertarian (1.2%), 10 Democratic Socialist (12.0%), 16 self-reported (19.3%; e.g. Moderate), and 2 (2.4%) participants provided no answer.

Sampling Procedures

The sampling procedures utilized purposive and snowballing techniques. After initially obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Purdue University (Appendix A), amended approval (Appendix A) was obtained in order to include an open-ended question addressing experiences of the ongoing anti-Black racism and COVID-19 pandemics. Following this new approval, I contacted the university's Institutional Data Analytics and Assessment office to request a list of email addresses of students who meet the study criteria. Upon receiving this list, I distributed the initial recruitment email (Appendix B) and a follow-up email (Appendix C) to the students on the list. The recruitment email included information about the study, inclusion criteria, a link to the online survey, information about winning a small incentive

(e.g., gift card) for participation, and the snowballing request for the recruitment materials to be forwarded to other Black students who may be eligible to participate.

While approval was granted for distribution over social media, this recruitment method (Appendix D) was not employed for the study. The online survey first provided an informed consent form (Appendix E) with information regarding confidentiality and privacy, the voluntary nature of the study, and anticipated risks. After agreeing to continue, participants were presented with the survey instruments (Appendices F-J) followed by a demographic/background questionnaire (Appendix K). Upon completion, participants were given the option of redirecting to a new survey to enter the random drawing for the incentive. Data were collected between December 2020 and February 2021, following the election of President Biden, and ending shortly after the departure of former President Trump from office.

Measurement

In total, the survey to which participants responded consisted of: a) the demographic information questionnaire (Appendix K), b) The Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version (IRRS-B; Utsey, 1999; Appendix F), c) The Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale (SAS; Appendix G), d) The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Vandiver et al., 2002; Appendix H), e) The Mental Health Inventory-18 (MHI-18; Veit & Ware, 1983; Appendix I), and The Involvement in African American Activism Scale (IAAAS; Szymanski, 2012; Appendix J).

Demographics

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which contained items regarding their gender identity, age, racial and ethnic self-identification, region of academic institution of enrollment, U.S. immigration status, English proficiency, academic level, political ideology, and

an open-ended qualitative prompt inviting them to share any reflections about their experiences as Black individuals in the U.S. amidst concurrent anti-Black racism and COVID-19 pandemics.

Qualitative Question on Concurrent Pandemics

The open-ended prompt presented to participants asked, *“In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and increased national attention to racial injustices and anti-Black racism in the United States, is there anything that you would like to add or comment about your experiences amid these events? Feel free to include any information that you think is relevant or that you would like us to know.”* The content of the narrative answers was analyzed, and related and recurring themes were grouped and summarized.

Index of Race Related Stress-Brief Version (IRRS-B)

The Index of Race Related Stress-Brief Version (IRRS-B; Utsey, 1999) is a multidimensional self-report measure designed to assess the stress (perceived and encountered) experienced by Black individuals when they face racism. It is a shortened form of the Index of Race Related Stress (IRRS; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1999) and contains 22 items. The IRRS-B has three subscales: Cultural Racism (where one’s culture is vilified or degraded; 10 items), Institutional Racism (due to systemic racism inherent in institutional policies or customs; 6 items), and Individual Racism (interpersonal experience of racism; 6 items; Utsey, 1999). The total score represents a measure of Global Racism.

Sample items include, *“You notice that when Black people are killed by the police, the media informs the public of the victim’s criminal record or negative information in their background, suggesting they got what they deserved”* (cultural racism); *“You have been subjected to racist jokes by Whites/non-Blacks in positions of authority and you did not protest*

for fear they might have held it against you” (institutional racism); and “White people or other non-Blacks have treated you as if you were unintelligent and needed things explained to you slowly or numerous times” (individual racism).

Items are scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*This never happened to me*) to 4 (*This event happened and I was extremely upset*). Mean scores are calculated, and higher scores are indicative of more experiences of cultural, institutional, individual race-related stress as well as global racism (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). Utsey (1999) reported Cronbach’s alphas for IRRS-B subscales as .78 (Cultural Racism subscale), .69 (Institutional Racism subscale), and .78 (Individual Racism subscale; Utsey, 1999). Convergent validity was found with other similar measures of racism and psychological distress for African Americans. The measure has also been found to discriminate between the racism-related experiences of Black Americans and White Americans (Utsey, 1999).

Only the total score, Global Racism, was used in these analyses, with internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha of .89 in the current study. This was due to two reasons. First, reliability analyses of the subscales revealed low Cronbach’s alpha for the Institutional Racism subscale (.57). And second, the Institutional Racism and Individual Racism subscales presented with high multicollinearity (.66). As further support for this decision, in a study examining the item functioning and structural performance of the IRRS-B through item response and confirmatory factor analyses, Chapman-Hilliard and colleagues (2020) indicated that the Institutional Racism subscales has often been found in the “questionable” (i.e., Cronbach’s alpha of .60 to .69; p. 556) range of internal consistency in numerous studies. They also reported that the three-factor structure did provide a good model fit and a one-factor solution was the “most parsimonious” fit.

Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale (SAS)

The items in this questionnaire were adapted from two large, national datasets which were publicly available on the internet, The Pew Research Center American Trends Panel (Pew Research Center, 2018) and the American National Election Studies (ANES; The American National Election Studies, 2018b), to facilitate data collection on participants' sociopolitical attitudes in the absence of any existing scales. The Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale (SAS) was created by selecting the questions from the Pew Research Center American Trends Panel and the ANES that were related to my study variables (e.g., Black college students' attitudes regarding the U.S. sociopolitical climate fostered by President Trump). The questions administered in the SAS measure participants' positive emotions regarding the state of the country, negative emotions regarding the state of the country, and emotions related to the actions of Donald Trump and his administration.

The Pew Research Center American Trends Panel contained 143 questions from which four were selected as resources for the SAS. The ANES contained 46 questions from which two were selected as resources for the SAS. These questions were chosen such that when both source questionnaires asked similar questions, content was selected to avoid redundancy and preserve relevant concepts. For example, both sources asked a question in which participants were expected to indicate their endorsement of certain feelings with regard to the state of the country. I created the associated question on the SAS by including feelings that were present on both lists (e.g., happy), as well as any feelings present on just a single list but relevant to the study concepts (e.g., satisfied). This method was used to shorten the number of items on the SAS (i.e., from 50 to 17) and ensure that the items were relevant to the study variables.

Since the SAS has not been empirically validated, I ran a principal components analysis to establish reliability of the scale items. One item (of the 17) was removed from the scale during this process due to psychometric unsuitability (see below for further discussion).

Factor Analysis for Sociopolitical Attitude Scale (SAS)

A principal components analysis (PCA) was run on this 17-item questionnaire that was created to measure sociopolitical attitudes (SAS). The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Field (2013) suggests that for PCA to be appropriate, correlation coefficients of each variable should equal or exceed .4, the determinant of the correlation matrix should exceed 0.00001, and anti-image correlations for each variable should be well above the minimum of .5. If these conditions are not sufficiently met, it is recommended that variables which contribute to violation of these parameters be eliminated from the measure and analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables but one (i.e., item #12: “I trust the elected government officials in the United States”) had at least one correlation coefficient greater than .4. With this variable included, the determinant of the correlation matrix was 0.000012. Also, with inclusion of this variable, the overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .77; however, the anti-image correlation (individual KMO measure) of the variable in question was only .54. When an initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor/component in the data, four components had eigenvalues greater than one. However, visual inspection of the scree plot indicated that three components should be retained (Cattell, 1966). In addition, using the interpretability criterion of simple structure, only three components loaded strongly (i.e., greater than .4) on at least three variables. Of note, the fourth (and insufficient) component loaded most strongly onto the questionable variable (i.e., item #12), and this variable was not associated with any of the three successfully loaded components.

When the PCA was run on the remaining 16 items of the SAS, the KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, overall KMO = .79, a classification of “middling” to “meritorious” according to Kaiser (1974). KMO values for individual items ranged from .64 to .89, exceeding the acceptable limit of .5. Additionally, the determinant of the correlation matrix was .00002. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the data was likely factorizable.

PCA revealed three components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 37.93%, 14.58%, and 12.28% of the total variance, respectively. Visual inspection of the scree plot indicated that three components should be retained (Cattell, 1966). As such, three components were retained. The three-component solution explained 64.79% of the total variance. Given the theoretical presumption of correlation between the factors, a direct oblimin oblique rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The interpretation of the data was consistent with the sociopolitical attitudes that the questionnaire was designed to measure with strong loadings of positive attitudes about the state of the country on Component 1; attitudes toward Donald Trump, his administration, and their effects on Black Americans on Component 2; and negative attitudes about the state of the country on Component 3. Component loadings and communalities of the rotated solution are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor Loadings from PCA with Direct Oblimin Rotation for a Three Factor Solution for the Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale (SAS) Questionnaire

SAS Item	Factor Loading			Communality
	1	2	3	
Factor 1: Positive Attitudes about the State of the Country				
6. I feel happy about the way things are going in the country these days.	.85	.04	-.10	.81
4. I feel proud about the way things are going in the country these days.	.82	.14	.15	.66
11. I feel satisfied about the way things are going in the country these days.	.80	-.03	-.12	.71
8. I feel relieved about the way things are going in the country these days.	.76	-.10	-.03	.57
1. I feel hopeful about the way things are going in the country these days.	.66	-.05	-.03	.43
16. Presently, the rights and freedoms of all people are respected in this country.	.43	.33	-.06	.40
Factor 2: Attitudes toward Trump Administration				
15. President Trump supports White supremacist agendas. (R)	-.09	.95	.05	.84
14. President Trump is racist. (R)	-.11	.93	-.03	.84
17. The Trump administration has been helpful to Black people in this country.	.06	.80	-.13	.75
13. In this country, everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.	.28	.69	-.01	.65
Factor 3: Negative Attitudes about the State of the Country				
3. I feel afraid about the way things are going in the country these days.	.13	-.09	.85	.71
10. I feel sad about the way things are going in the country these days.	-.08	.14	.80	.64
9. I feel depressed about the way things are going in the country these days.	.12	-.05	.76	.54
5. I feel bitter about the way things are going in the country these days.	-.09	.04	.75	.60
2. I feel angry about the way things are going in the country these days.	-.06	-.13	.75	.67
7. I feel worried about the way things are going in the country these days.	-.27	-.02	.60	.56
Eigenvalues	6.07	2.33	1.97	
% of Variance	37.93	14.58	12.28	

Note. $N = 83$. The extraction method was principal component analysis with an oblique (Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization) rotation. Factor loadings above .4 are bolded. Reverse-scored items are denoted with an (R).

SAS in the Current Study

The 16 SAS scale items are scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*). Three subscales are derived from the SAS: Positive Attitudes about the State of the Country (six items), Negative Attitudes about the State of the Country (six items), and Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration (four items). Mean scores are calculated for each subscale with higher scores indicating more positive general sociopolitical attitudes, more negative general sociopolitical attitudes, and more positive attitudes toward President Trump and the Trump Administration, respectively. Sample items include, “*I feel happy about the way things are going in the country these days*” (Positive Attitudes about the State of the Country); “*I feel angry about the way things are going in the country these days*” (Negative Attitudes about the State of the Country); and “*The Trump administration has been helpful the Black people in this country*” (Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration). For this study, internal consistencies were .84 for Positive Attitudes about the State of the Country, .86 for Negative Attitudes about the State of the Country, and .89 for Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump administration. Of note, data were collected following the November 2020 election of President Biden up until shortly after his inauguration into office. As such, administered SAS test items refer to “President Trump” rather than “former President Trump.”

Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS)

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Vandiver, Cross Jr., Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure Black racial identity attitudes based on the Nigrescence model proposed by Cross Jr. (1971, 1991, 1995). On the CRIS, 40 items make up six subscales which are not combined into a global CRIS score. The six subscales represent six distinct racial identities: Pre-encounter Assimilation (PA), Pre-encounter Miseducation (PM), Pre-encounter Self-Hatred (PSH), Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (IEAW), Internalization Afrocentricity (IA), and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI). Each subscale consists of five items scored on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The five item scores are then averaged and scores for each subscale range from 1-7, and higher scores signify higher endorsement of attitudes consistent with a given subscale. Of the 40 items, there are 10 filler statements included on the questionnaire.

Sample items and their respective subscale attitudes include: “*I think of myself primarily as an American, and seldom as a member of a racial group*” (PA); “*Too many Blacks ‘glamorize’ the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don’t involve crime*” (PM); “*I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black*” (PSH); “*I hate the White community and all that it represents*” (IEAW); “*I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective*” (IA); and “*I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian-Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.)*” (IMCI).

Subscales scores (representative of each racial identity attitude) will be used in the analyses of the current study. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have provided support for the construct validity and factor structure of the CRIS (Vandiver et al., 2002;

Worrell, Vandiver, Cross, & Fhagen-Smith, 2004; Worrell & Watson, 2008). Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency reliability estimates have been found as follows: Pre-encounter Assimilation = .85, Pre-encounter Miseducation = .78, Pre-encounter Self-Hatred = .89, Immersion-Emersion Anti-White = .89, Internalization Afrocentricity = .83, and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive = .82. In the current study, alpha coefficients were .87, .86, .94, .94, .84, and .81, respectively.

Mental Health Inventory-18 (MHI-18)

The Mental Health Inventory-18 (MHI-18) is a shortened version of the 38-item Mental Health Inventory (MHI; Veit & Ware, 1983). This version is highly correlated with the full MHI and is a widely-used measure of emotional functioning (Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers Health Services Research Subcommittee, 1997). The MHI-18 is a self-report measure designed to evaluate mental health in general populations (Cokley et al., 2013). It contains four subscales of anxiety, depression, behavioral/emotional control (i.e., perceptions of emotional stability and control of thoughts, feelings, and behavior), and positive affect, and measures both positive and negative mental health outcomes, rather than only psychopathology (Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers Health Services Research Subcommittee, 1997; Veit & Ware, 1983). There is one item (#3) which does not fit into any of the four subscales and can be considered as an additional subscale called emotional ties (Berwick et al., 1981, Whittaker & Neville, 2010).

Respondents are asked how much of the time during the past four weeks they have felt a particular way. Examples include, “*have you been a very nervous person?*” (Anxiety subscale; MHA), “*have you felt downhearted and blue?*” (Depression subscale; MHD), “*have you felt emotionally stable?*” (Behavioral/Emotional Control subscale; MHC), “*have you felt cheerful,*

light-hearted?” (Positive Affect subscale; MHP), and “*have you felt loved and wanted?*” (Emotional ties subscale; MHE). Answers are on a 6-point scale from 1 (*all of the time*) to 6 (*none of the time*), and for each subscale and the global scale a mean score (1-6) and a transformed total score (0-100) can be calculated. Several items are reverse coded so that greater scores are indicative of better mental health. For example, higher scores on the MHA and MHD represent lower depression and anxiety and higher scores on the MHC and MHP represent better emotional stability and mood.

Convergent validity has been established through correlation to other measures of affect, life satisfaction, social support, and stressful life events (Cokley et al., 2013; Whittaker & Neville, 2010). High internal consistency coefficients have been reported for the four main subscales: MHA, $\alpha = .85-.90$; MHD, $\alpha = .85-.91$; MHC, $\alpha = .80-.90$; and MHP, $\alpha = .86-.91$ (Cokley et al., 2013). In a study with Black college students, Whittaker and Neville (2010) found the total score alpha coefficient to be .87. For this study, internal consistency coefficients were as follows: MHA, $\alpha = .87$; MHD, $\alpha = .89$; MHC, $\alpha = .83$; and MHP, $\alpha = .88$.

Involvement in African American Activism Scale (IAAAS)

The Involvement in African American Activism Scale (IAAAS) was developed by Szymanski (2012) by modifying the Involvement in Feminist Activism Scale (IFAS; Szymanski, 2004). This modified IAAAS contains 17 items and assesses participant involvement in a variety of relevant activities, e.g., participating in African American demonstrations, boycotts, rallies, and/or marches; being involved in antiracism activities; being a member of an African American group or organization (Szymanski, 2012). Participants are asked to describe their involvement in various activities on a 7-point Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (*very untrue of me*) to 7 (*very*

true of me). Mean scores are calculated; higher scores represent greater involvement in African American activism. Sample items include, “*I donate money to African American groups or causes,*” “*I vote for political candidates that support African American issues,*” and “*I attend African American organizational, political, social, community, and/or academic activities and events.*” Exploratory factor analyses indicated a one factor solution and internal consistency for total scores on the IAAAS was .95. In this study, Cronbach alpha for the IAAAS was .91.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

In this chapter, I will present the results of the current study. First, I will present the data cleaning process and then share the results of the preliminary analyses. These include the testing of statistical assumptions, descriptive analysis of variables, and correlations among primary variables. In the primary analysis, I will present the results of testing of the hypothesized model and research questions using SPSS 27.0, including the *PROCESS* custom dialog box (Hayes, 2012). Finally, I will briefly summarize the qualitative answers to the single open-ended question on the survey.

Data Screening and Preliminary Analyses

Prior the primary data analyses, I conducted data screening and preliminary analyses. First, I checked the accuracy of the data entry by examining the SPSS file obtained from the Purdue Qualtrics website. A total of 130 participants responded to the survey and four participants were removed for failing to meet the inclusion criteria. Specifically, four participants were deleted for not indicating an age (and also not having completed any measures). Following this initial screening, I evaluated the missing data. To begin, 15 participants were removed on account of dropping out of the survey immediately after the demographic questionnaire (no measures completed). A further 28 respondents were deleted for failing to complete one or more entire measure. The remaining 83 participants fully completed all measures; there were no missing data.

Second, I inspected the data for univariate and multivariate outliers. Univariate outliers were assessed by generating z-scores for all continuous variables and examining cases that

exceeded the absolute value of 3.29 standard deviations from the mean (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Using this method, two cases were identified as outliers on the Cultural Racism subscale of the IRRS-B, one case was identified as an outlier on the Positive Attitudes subscale of the SAS, three cases were identified as outliers on the Attitudes Toward President Trump and Trump Administration subscale of the SAS, and one case was identified as a potential outlier on the Pre-encounter Assimilation subscale of the CRIS. There was also one outlier on the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS, and one item was found to be an outlier on the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS. Since the scores fell within the possible range of scale scores for these measures, winsorizing was used to change each outlier score to the next closest non-outlier score (e.g., changing the score from a 7 to a 6) in order to retain the datum as an extreme score but not a univariate outlier (Field, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Mahalanobis distance statistics were calculated on all variables and no multivariate outliers were identified. As such, the final sample size was 83 participants.

Following the data screening, I evaluated the statistical assumptions required for moderation analysis and conducted a descriptive analysis of all primary variables. First, independence of observations was confirmed, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.62 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Second, nonlinearity and heteroscedasticity were examined visually by generating linear probability plots and scatterplots for all the continuous variables, and visual inspections indicated sufficient linearity and homoscedasticity for regression analyses. Third, I checked for multicollinearity by generating a bivariate correlation matrix among the independent variables and collinearity statistics within a multiple regression. All correlations were below $r = .70$, all tolerance statistics were greater than 0.20, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) was below three for all variables (i.e., highest VIF = 2.27), and well below the

acceptable cut-off value of 10, indicative of a low probability of multicollinearity (Field. 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Finally, I assessed for normality. Visual inspection of histograms, P-P Plots, and Normal Q-Q Plots indicated normal distribution. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients did not exceed the values of +/- 2.00, indicating adequately normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). All variables showed appropriate reliabilities, Cronbach's alpha ranging from .81 to .94, suggesting that the measurements are reliable to use in analysis with the dataset in the current study.

Primary Analyses

In this section, I present the main results and moderation analyses to address the research questions and test the hypotheses of the current study. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: To what extent are race-related stress, racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude related to mental health outcomes and Black activism in Black college students?

RQ2: To what degree do racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude moderate the relationship between race-related stress and mental health outcomes, and race-related stress and Black activism for Black college students?

To answer the research questions, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1a: Race-related stress will be negatively associated with mental health outcomes.

H1b: Race-related stress will be positively associated with Black activism.

H1c: Sociopolitical attitude will be positively associated with mental health outcomes.

H1d: Sociopolitical attitude will be negatively associated with Black activism.

H1e: Endorsement of more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, and IMCI) will be negatively associated with mental health outcomes; endorsement of less developed racial identity attitudes will be positively associated with mental health outcomes.

H1f: Endorsement of more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, and IMCI) will be positively associated with Black activism; endorsement of less developed racial identity attitudes will be negatively associated with Black activism.

H2a: The relationship between race-related stress and mental health outcomes will vary as a function of racial identity attitude. That is, race-related stress will be associated with poorer mental health outcomes, especially for students endorsing more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, and IMCI).

H2b: The relationship between race-related stress and Black activism will vary as a function of racial identity attitude. That is, race-related stress will be associated with greater endorsement of Black activism, especially for students endorsing more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, IMCI).

H2c: The association between race-related stress and mental health outcomes will vary as a function of sociopolitical attitude. That is, race-related stress will be associated with poorer mental health outcomes, especially for students endorsing negative sociopolitical attitudes.

H2d: The association between race-related stress and Black activism will vary as a function of sociopolitical attitude. That is, the more positive the sociopolitical attitude, the weaker the association between race-related stress and Black activism.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by Black college students in the sample on the measures of race-related stress, sociopolitical attitude, racial identity, and African American activism. Race-related stress was measured by the Global Racism score on the Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version (IRRS-B), on which scores range from zero (no experiences of racism) to four (more frequent and upsetting experiences of racism). In general, participants in the sample indicated experiencing a moderate amount of racism and being “slightly upset” by it ($M = 2.09$, $SD = .74$). Sociopolitical attitude was operationalized through the three subscales of the Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale, on which scores ranged from one to seven. For the Positive Attitudes subscale, higher scores are indicative of more positive attitudes regarding the state of the country, and participants tended to have less positive attitudes ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .99$). For the Negative Attitudes subscale, higher scores are indicative of more negative attitudes about the state of the country; participants generally reported more negative attitudes ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.24$). On the Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration subscale, higher scores were indicative of more favorable attitudes. Participants tended to endorse unfavorable attitudes toward President Trump and his administration ($M = 1.62$, $SD = .87$).

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) represents six racial identity attitudes, and scores range from one (low endorsement) to seven (high endorsement). In general, participants in the sample tended to strongly endorse the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive racial identity ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.03$). Participants also moderately endorsed the Internalization Afrocentricity racial identity ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.14$). There was mild endorsement of the Pre-encounter

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Primary Variables and Normality of Distribution

Scales	Scale Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's α
IRRS-B Global	0-4	2.09	.74	-.29	.05	.89
SAS Positive Attitudes	1-7	2.15	.99	.85	.43	.84
SAS Negative Attitudes	1-7	5.19	1.24	-.73	.24	.86
SAS ATA	1-7	1.62	.87	1.57	1.51	.89
CRIS PA	1-7	2.16	1.24	1.42	1.58	.87
CRIS PM	1-7	2.24	1.18	1.09	.53	.86
CRIS PSH	1-7	2.78	1.83	.81	-.49	.94
CRIS IEAW	1-7	2.28	1.41	1.02	.06	.94
CRIS IA	1-7	3.65	1.14	-.26	-.35	.84
CRIS IMCI	1-7	5.87	1.03	-.82	.32	.81
MHI-18 Anxiety	1-6	3.63	1.15	-.06	-.78	.87
MHI-18 Depression	1-6	4.02	1.29	-.37	-.87	.89
MHI-18 BEC	1-6	4.38	1.26	-.72	-.34	.83
MHI-18 Positive Affect	1-6	3.67	1.09	.05	-.98	.88
IAAAS	1-7	4.01	1.40	.02	-.81	.91

Note. *N* = 83. IRRS-B = Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version; SAS = Sociopolitical

Attitudes Scale; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration; CRIS =

Cross Racial Identity Scale; PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter

Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA

= Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive; MHI-18 =

Mental Health Inventory-18; BEC = Behavioral/Emotional Control; IAAAS = Involvement in

African American Activism Scale.

Assimilation ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.24$), Pre-encounter Miseducation ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.18$), Pre-encounter Self-Hatred ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.83$), and Immersion-Emersion Anti-White ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.41$) racial identities.

Mental health outcomes were measured through the four subscales of the Mental Health Inventory-18 (MHI-18), with scores ranging from one to six and higher scores representing better mental health. On average, the sample reported experiencing difficulty with Anxiety a good bit of the time ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.15$), Depression some of the time ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.29$), Behavioral/Emotional Control some of the time ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.26$), and Positive Affect a good bit of the time ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.09$) over the past four weeks. Participants in the sample also indicated feeling generally unsure about their involvement in activities of African American activism ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.40$).

Correlation Analyses

To test the hypotheses about the extent to which race-related stress, racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude are related to mental health outcomes and Black activism in Black college students, correlation analyses were used. Table 3 shows the correlations of the study variables. Results of the Pearson correlations indicated that there were significant, small, negative associations between race-related stress and anxiety ($r = -.31$, $p < .01$), depression ($r = -.35$, $p < .01$), behavioral and emotional control ($r = -.33$, $p < .01$), and positive affect ($r = -.23$, $p < .05$). This provides support for hypothesis 1a, that higher levels of race-related stress would be associated with worsened mental health outcomes. In support of hypothesis 1b, race-related stress showed a significant, moderate, positive relationship with Black activism ($r = .48$, $p < .01$);

Table 3. Correlations of Primary Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. IRRSB-Global	—														
2. SAS Positive Attitudes	-.24*	—													
3. SAS Negative Attitudes	.41**	-.44**	—												
4. SAS ATA	-.49**	.39*	-.37**	—											
5. CRIS PA	-.43**	.37**	-.19	.44**	—										
6. CRIS PM	-.36**	.24**	-.07	.34**	.56**	—									
7. CRIS PSH	-.01	-.02	.39**	-.10	.00	.09	—								
8. CRIS IEAW	.35**	-.18	.18	-.18	-.31**	-.23*	-.04	—							
9. CRIS IA	.18	-.26*	.21	-.13	-.38**	.05	-.13	.38**	—						
10. CRIS IMCI	.24*	-.05	.43**	-.41**	-.17	-.03	.26*	-.16	.10	—					
11. MHI-18 Anxiety	-.31**	.06	-.42**	.35**	.19	.15	-.40**	-.30**	-.10	-.21	—				
12. MHI-18 Depression	-.35**	.15	-.32**	.29**	.19	.17	-.36**	-.16	.00	-.11	.73**	—			

Table 3 continued

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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13. MHI-18 BEC	-.33**	.10	-.34**	.26**	.20	.08	-.49**	-.18	.02	-.07	.72**	.82**	—		
14. MHI-18 Positive Affect	-.23*	.11	-.24**	.39**	.20	.23*	-.38**	-.18	.03	-.01	.68**	.69**	.70**	—	
15. IAAAS	.48**	-.22*	.04	-.34**	-.36**	-.32**	-.28*	.34**	.32**	.09	-.07	-.10	-.03	-.13	—

Note. $N = 83$. IRRS-B = Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version; SAS = Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration; CRIS = Cross Racial Identity Scale; PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA = Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive; MHI-18 = Mental Health Inventory-18; BEC = Behavioral/Emotional Control; IAAAS = Involvement in African American Activism Scale. Coefficients in bold represent significant relationships between predictor variables and outcomes variables only.

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

increases in reported race-related stress were associated with greater participation in activism activities.

Regarding sociopolitical attitudes, negative attitudes about the state of the country were shown to have significant, small to moderate, negative associations with anxiety ($r = -.42, p < .01$), depression ($r = -.32, p < .01$), behavioral and emotional control ($r = -.34, p < .01$), and positive affect ($r = -.24, p < .01$). That is, increases in participants' negative feelings about the country were correlated with decreases in mental health. There were no significant associations between positive feelings about the state of the country and mental health outcomes. However, participants' feelings about President Trump and his administration showed significant, small, positive associations with anxiety ($r = .35, p < .01$), depression ($r = .29, p < .01$), behavioral and emotional control ($r = .26, p < .01$), and positive affect ($r = .39, p < .01$). More favorable attitudes toward the president were related to better mental health outcomes. These results offer partial support to hypothesis 1c such that more positive and favorable sociopolitical attitudes were associated with better reported mental health.

Hypothesis 1d was partially supported. More positive attitudes about the state of the country and more favorable appraisals of the president and his administration had significant, small, negative relationships to Black activism ($r = -.22, p < .05$; $r = -.34, p < .01$, respectively). Students with favorable sociopolitical attitudes reported being less likely to participate in activism activities. There was some support for hypothesis 1e: Endorsing the Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (IEAW) racial identity attitude, characterized as a more developed racial identity, was shown to have a significant, small, negative association with anxiety ($r = -.30, p < .01$) and endorsement of Pre-encounter Miseducation (PM), described as a less developed racial identity, had a significant, small, positive association with positive affect ($r = .23, p < .05$).

However, there was also evidence that endorsing a less developed racial identity development attitude, Pre-encounter Self-Hatred (PSH) was significantly and moderately associated with poorer mental health outcomes of anxiety ($r = -.40, p < .01$), depression ($r = -.36, p < .01$), behavioral and emotional control ($r = -.49, p < .01$), and positive affect ($r = -.38, p < .01$).

Regarding the relationships between racial identity attitudes and Black activism, hypothesis 1f was partially supported. There were significant, small, positive associations between endorsement of activism activities and the more developed IEAW ($r = .34, p < .01$) and Internalization Afrocentricity (IA; $r = .32, p < .01$) identities. There was also evidence that less engagement in Black activism was associated with more endorsement of the less developed racial identity attitudes of Pre-encounter Assimilation (PA; $r = -.36, p < .01$), PM ($r = -.32, p < .01$), and PSH ($r = -.28, p < .01$).

Regression and Moderation Analyses

Regression analyses were used to assess for a main effect for the independent variable, race-related stress, on both outcome variables (i.e., mental health outcomes and Black activism; Table 4). For the mental health outcome of anxiety, the results indicated that the model was significant and race-related stress explained 10% of the variance in anxiety ($R^2 = .10, F(1,81) = 8.52, p = .005$). Race-related stress made a significant negative contribution to anxiety, $\beta = -.31, t(82) = -2.92, p = .005$. For the mental health outcome of depression, the model was significant with race-related stress explaining 12% of the variance in depression ($R^2 = .12, F(1,81) = 11.31, p = .001$) and producing a significant negative contribution to depression, $\beta = -.35, t(82) = -3.36, p = .001$. The model for behavioral and emotional control was also significant. Race-related

Table 4. Multiple Regression: Race-Related Stress Predicting Mental Health Outcomes and Activism

Mental Health Index 18-Anxiety					
Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	4.63	.36		12.79	<.001
IRRSB-Global	-.48	.16	-.31	-2.92	.005
Mental Health Index 18-Depression					
Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	5.30	.42		13.18	< .001
IRRSB-Global	-.61	.18	-.35	-3.63	.001
Mental Health Index 18-Behavioral/Emotional Control					
Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	5.54	.40		14.03	<.001
IIRSB-Global	-.55	.18	-.33	-3.10	.003
Mental Health Index 18-Positive Affect					
Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	4.49	.35		12.92	<.001
IRRSB-Global	-.39	.16	-.27	-2.49	.015
Involvement in African American Activism					
Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	2.10	.41		5.15	<.001
IRRSB-Global	.91	.18	.48	4.96	<.001

Note. IRRS-B = Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version.

stress explained 11% of the variance in behavioral and emotional control ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1,81) = 9.62$, $p = .003$) and made a significant negative contribution, $\beta = -.33$, $t(82) = -3.10$, $p = .003$.

The positive affect model was significant with race-related stress explaining 7% of the variance ($R^2 = .07$, $F(1,81) = 6.20$, $p = .015$) and making a negative contribution to positive affect, $\beta = -.27$, $t(82) = -2.49$, $p = .015$. For the measure of Black activism, results showed the

model to be significant, with race-related stress explaining 23% of the variance in activism ($R^2 = .23$, $F(1,81) = 24.61$, $p < .001$) as well being a positive predictor, $\beta = .48$, $t(82) = 4.96$, $p < .001$. As students endorse more experiences of race-related stress, they tend to experience worsened anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and affect, and engage in more Black activism activities.

To examine the degree to which racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude moderate the relationship between race-related stress and mental health outcomes, and race-related stress and Black activism for Black college students, I performed moderation analyses using PROCESS (See Tables 5-14).

Moderation Analyses for Mental Health Outcomes

Each of the four mental health outcomes (i.e., anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect) was considered separately. For each of the four mental health outcome variables, along with the single predictor variable of race-related stress, nine moderation analyses were conducted using the six CRIS racial identity attitudes and three SAS sociopolitical attitudes as individual moderators. There was one significant moderation model, $R^2 = .12$, $F(3, 79) = 6.85$, $p = .0004$.

Table 5. Moderation Effect of Racial Identity Attitudes (CRIS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Anxiety

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.60	.12	29.13	>.0001	3.53	3.84
CRIS PA (centered)	.02	.11	.18	.86	-.20	.24
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.39	.18	-2.11	.04	-.76	-.02
CRIS PA x IRRSB-Global	-.09	.08	-1.10	.27	-.25	.07
(Constant)	3.60	.12	29.10	>.0001	3.35	3.84
CRIS PM (centered)	.01	.10	.07	.94	-.20	.21
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.44	.18	-2.49	.01	-.78	-.09
CRIS PM x IRRSB-Global	-.11	.10	-1.10	.28	-.32	.10
(Constant)	3.63	.11	33.64	>.0001	3.42	3.85
CRIS PSH (centered)	-.25	.06	-4.30	>.0001	-.37	-.13
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.47	.15	-3.17	.002	-.77	-.18
CRIS PSH x IRRSB-Global	.01	.09	.14	.89	-.18	.20
(Constant)	3.56	.13	27.08	>.0001	3.30	3.83
CRIS IEAW (centered)	-.22	.11	-1.94	.06	-.45	.01
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.31	.18	-1.74	.09	-.67	.04
CRIS IEAW x IRRSB-Global	.18	.11	1.68	.10	-.03	.40
(Constant)	3.62	.12	29.88	>.0001	3.38	3.86
CRIS IA (centered)	-.03	.10	-.36	.72	-.24	.17
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.43	.17	-2.59	.01	-.76	-.10
CRIS IA x IRRSB-Global	.06	.10	.67	.51	-.13	.26
(Constant)	3.61	.12	30.18	>.0001	3.37	3.85
CRIS IMCI (centered)	-.14	.12	-1.11	.27	-.39	.11
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.38	.18	-2.11	.04	-.74	-.02
CRIS IMCI x IRRSB-Global	.10	.14	.72	.47	-.18	.38

Note. *N* = 83. PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA = Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 6. Moderation Effect of Racial Identity Attitudes (CRIS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Depression

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	4.05	.13	30.40	>.0001	3.78	4.31
CRIS PA (centered)	.08	.12	.72	.47	-.15	.32
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.59	.20	-2.92	.005	-1.00	-.19
CRIS PA x IRRSB-Global	.06	.09	.60	.55	-.13	.24
(Constant)	4.05	.13	30.53	>.0001	3.79	4.32
CRIS PM (centered)	.09	.13	.68	.50	-.17	.35
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.59	.20	-3.00	.004	-.98	-.20
CRIS PM x IRRSB-Global	.10	.13	.76	.45	-.16	.35
(Constant)	4.03	.12	33.33	>.0001	3.79	4.27
CRIS PSH (centered)	-.25	.07	-3.75	.0003	-.38	-.12
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.55	.18	-3.08	.003	-.91	-.20
CRIS PSH x IRRSB-Global	.14	.11	1.33	.19	-.07	.36
(Constant)	4.00	.14	28.32	>.0001	3.72	4.28
CRIS IEAW (centered)	-.05	.11	-.45	.66	-.27	.17
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.57	.20	-2.86	.01	-.97	-.17
CRIS IEAW x IRRSB-Global	.06	.12	.48	.63	-.19	.30
(Constant)	4.04	.13	31.01	>.0001	3.78	4.30
CRIS IA (centered)	.06	.12	.48	.63	-.18	.30
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.68	.19	-3.63	.0005	-1.05	-.31
CRIS IA x IRRSB-Global	-.10	.14	-.71	.48	-.38	.18
(Constant)	3.99	.14	28.92	>.0001	3.72	4.27
CRIS IMCI (centered)	-.001	.15	-.01	.99	-.31	.30
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.53	.21	-2.50	.01	-.94	-.11
CRIS IMCI x IRRSB-Global	.18	.15	1.14	.26	-.13	.48

Note. *N* = 83. PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA = Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 7. Moderation Effect of Racial Identity Attitudes (CRIS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Behavioral/Emotional Control

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	4.42	.14	32.23	>.0001	4.14	4.69
CRIS PA (centered)	.13	.13	.97	.33	-.13	-.39
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.53	.18	-3.01	.004	-.88	-.18
CRIS PA x IRRSB-Global	.09	.09	.98	.33	-.09	.27
(Constant)	4.38	.13	32.96	>.0001	4.11	4.64
CRIS PM (centered)	-.05	.11	-.44	.66	-.27	.17
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.57	.16	-3.51	.0008	-.90	-.25
CRIS PM x IRRSB-Global	-.01	.10	-.13	.90	-.22	.19
(Constant)	4.38	.11	39.93	>.0001	4.16	4.60
CRIS PSH (centered)	-.34	.06	-5.97	>.0001	-.45	-.23
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.52	.15	-3.42	.001	-.82	-.22
CRIS PSH x IRRSB-Global	.09	.08	1.13	.26	-.07	.24
(Constant)	4.37	.14	30.19	>.0001	4.08	4.66
CRIS IEAW (centered)	-.08	.11	-.67	.51	-.30	.15
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.50	.18	-2.76	.01	-.86	-.14
CRIS IEAW x IRRSB-Global	.04	.11	.32	.75	-.19	.26
(Constant)	4.40	.13	33.58	>.0001	4.14	4.66
CRIS IA (centered)	.07	.13	.51	.61	-.20	.34
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.63	.16	-3.89	.0002	-.94	-.31
CRIS IA x IRRSB-Global	-.10	.13	-.82	.42	-.36	.15
(Constant)	4.34	.13	35.01	>.0001	4.08	4.60
CRIS IMCI (centered)	.06	.14	.40	.69	-.22	.33
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.46	.18	-2.54	.01	-.83	-.10
CRIS IMCI x IRRSB-Global	.22	.14	1.63	.11	-.05	.50

Note. *N* = 83. PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA = Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 8. Moderation Effect of Racial Identity Attitudes (CRIS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Positive Affect

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.65	.12	31.32	>.0001	3.42	3.89
CRIS PA (centered)	.07	.11	.62	.54	-.14	.28
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.30	.15	-2.05	.04	-.60	.01
CRIS PA x IRRSB-Global	-.05	.06	-.78	.44	-.19	.08
(Constant)	3.65	.12	31.35	>.0001	3.42	3.88
CRIS PM (centered)	.13	.10	1.29	.20	-.07	.32
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.29	.15	-2.00	.05	-.59	-.002
CRIS PM x IRRSB-Global	-.08	.08	-1.02	.31	-.23	.07
(Constant)	3.68	.10	35.25	>.0001	3.47	3.88
CRIS PSH (centered)	-.22	.05	-4.47	>.0001	-.32	-.12
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.35	.12	-2.95	.004	-.59	-.11
CRIS PSH x IRRSB-Global	.11	.06	1.72	.09	-.02	.23
(Constant)	3.66	.13	28.73	>.0000	3.40	3.91
CRIS IEAW (centered)	-.09	.12	-.78	.44	-.32	.14
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.33	.16	-2.04	.04	-.65	-.01
CRIS IEAW x IRRSB-Global	.05	.11	.41	.68	-.18	.27
(Constant)	3.68	.11	32.15	>.0000	3.45	3.90
CRIS IA (centered)	.08	.11	.68	.50	-.15	.30
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.42	.15	-2.79	.01	-.71	-.12
CRIS IA x IRRSB-Global	-.01	.10	-.09	.93	-.21	.20
(Constant)	3.62	.11	31.23	>.0001	3.39	3.85
CRIS IMCI (centered)	.11	.14	.82	.41	-.16	.39
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.29	.15	-1.93	.06	-.59	.01
CRIS IMCI x IRRSB-Global	.29	.11	2.68	.01	.07	.50

Note. *N* = 83. PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA = Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 9. Moderation Effect of Racial Identity Attitudes (CRIS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Black Activism

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.92	.13	29.74	>.0001	3.67	4.19
CRIS PA (centered)	-.32	.13	-2.44	.02	-.58	-.06
IRRSB-Global (centered)	.84	.21	3.89	.0002	.41	1.26
CRIS PA x IRRSB-Global	-.20	.11	-1.87	.07	-.41	.01
(Constant)	3.98	.13	29.70	>.0001	3.71	4.24
CRIS PM (centered)	-.22	.13	-1.70	.09	-.48	.04
IRRSB-Global (centered)	.81	.19	4.28	.0001	.44	1.19
CRIS PM x IRRSB-Global	-.10	.16	-.58	.56	-.42	.23
(Constant)	4.01	.13	31.52	>.0001	3.75	4.26
CRIS PSH (centered)	-.21	.07	-3.16	.002	-.35	-.08
IRRSB-Global (centered)	.91	.17	5.34	>.0001	.57	1.25
CRIS PSH x IRRSB-Global	.01	.09	.15	.88	-.17	.19
(Constant)	4.02	.14	28.55	>.0001	3.74	4.29
CRIS IEAW (centered)	.20	.10	2.11	.04	.01	.40
IRRSB-Global (centered)	.77	.20	3.87	.0002	.38	1.17
CRIS IEAW x IRRSB-Global	-.03	.11	-.23	.82	-.25	.20
(Constant)	3.95	.13	30.74	>.0001	3.70	4.21
CRIS IA (centered)	.35	.13	2.81	.006	.10	.60
IRRSB-Global (centered)	1.01	.17	6.07	>.0001	.68	1.34
CRIS IA x IRRSB-Global	.36	.13	2.87	.005	.11	.61
(Constant)	3.97	.14	28.14	>.0001	3.69	4.25
CRIS IMCI (centered)	.01	.15	.06	.95	-.28	.30
IRRSB-Global (centered)	1.00	.19	5.26	>.0001	.62	1.38
CRIS IMCI x IRRSB-Global						

Note. *N* = 83. PA = Pre-encounter Assimilation; PM = Pre-encounter Miseducation; PSH = Pre-encounter Self-Hatred; IEAW = Immersion Emersion Anti-White; IA = Internalization Afrocentricity; IMCI = Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 10. Moderation Effect of Sociopolitical Attitudes (SAS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Anxiety

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.63	.12	30.47	>.0001	3.39	3.86
SAS PA (centered)	-.03	.12	-.22	.83	-.27	.22
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.48	.17	-2.86	.01	-.81	-.14
SAS PA x IRRSB-Global	-.03	.12	-.26	.80	-.29	.22
(Constant)	3.62	.12	30.80	>.0001	3.38	3.85
SAS NA (centered)	-.33	.10	-3.28	.002	-.52	-.13
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.24	.16	-1.46	.15	-.57	.09
SAS NA x IRRSB-Global	.03	.08	.42	.67	-.13	.19
(Constant)	3.59	.12	30.45	>.0001	3.36	3.83
SAS ATA (centered)	.29	.14	2.11	.04	.02	.55
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.25	.19	-1.36	.18	-.62	.12
SAS ATA x IRRSB-Global	-.13	.11	-1.25	.22	-.34	.08

Note. *N* = 83. SAS = Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale; PA = Positive Attitudes; NA = Negative Attitudes; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 11. Moderation Effect of Sociopolitical Attitudes (SAS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Depression

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	4.05	.13	30.20	>.0001	3.78	4.31
SAS PA (centered)	.12	.13	.87	.39	-.15	.38
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.61	.18	-3.30	.001	-.97	-.24
SAS PA x IRRSB-Global	.13	.14	.96	.34	-.14	.41
(Constant)	4.01	.14	29.03	>.0001	3.73	4.28
SAS NA (centered)	-.22	.13	-1.68	.10	-.47	.04
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.44	.21	-2.15	.03	-.86	-.04
SAS NA x IRRSB-Global	.04	.10	.41	.68	-.15	.23
(Constant)	4.00	.13	29.83	>.0001	3.73	4.27
SAS ATA (centered)	.20	.15	1.34	.18	-.10	.50
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.46	.22	-2.10	.04	-.90	-.02
SAS ATA x IRRSB-Global	-.07	.12	-.61	.54	-.30	.16

Note. *N* = 83. SAS = Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale; PA = Positive Attitudes; NA = Negative Attitudes; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 12. Moderation Effect of Sociopolitical Attitudes (SAS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Behavioral/Emotional Control

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	4.41	.13	33.93	>.0001	4.15	4.67
SAS PA (centered)	.05	.13	.38	.71	-.22	.32
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.58	.15	-3.86	.0002	-.87	-.28
SAS PA x IRRSB-Global	.15	.12	1.21	.23	-.10	.40
(Constant)	4.41	.13	34.07	>.0001	4.15	4.67
SAS NA (centered)	-.26	.11	-2.32	.02	-.48	-.03
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.41	.15	-2.64	.01	-.71	-.10
SAS NA x IRRSB-Global	-.08	.08	-.96	.34	-.23	.08
(Constant)	4.36	.14	32.10	>.0001	4.09	4.63
SAS ATA (centered)	.16	.15	1.04	.30	-.15	.46
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.42	.18	-2.29	.02	-.79	-.06
SAS ATA x IRRSB-Global	-.09	.10	-.83	.41	-.29	.12

Note. *N* = 83. SAS = Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale; PA = Positive Attitudes; NA = Negative Attitudes; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 13. Moderation Effect of Sociopolitical Attitudes (SAS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Mental Health Index 18 Positive Affect

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.68	.12	31.74	>.0001	3.45	3.91
SAS PA (centered)	.05	.11	.49	.63	-.16	.27
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.38	.15	-2.58	.01	-.67	-.09
SAS PA x IRRSB-Global	.01	.08	.12	.90	-.15	.17
(Constant)	3.64	.12	30.70	>.0001	3.41	3.88
SAS NA (centered)	-.13	.09	-1.44	.15	-.31	.05
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.26	.15	-1.73	.09	-.57	.04
SAS NA x IRRSB-Global	.09	.07	1.26	.21	-.05	.22
(Constant)	3.63	.12	31.11	>.0001	3.40	3.87
SAS ATA (centered)	.36	.12	2.92	.004	.12	.61
IRRSB-Global (centered)	-.13	.15	-.82	.42	-.43	.18
SAS ATA x IRRSB-Global	-.13	.09	-1.51	.14	-.2991	.04

Note. *N* = 83. SAS = Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale; PA = Positive Attitudes; NA = Negative Attitudes; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Table 14. Moderation Effect of Sociopolitical Attitudes (SAS) on the Relationship Between Race-Related Stress (IRRSB) and Black Activism

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	CI _{95%} for <i>b</i>	
					Lower	Upper
(Constant)	3.99	.14	29.30	>.0001	3.72	4.27
SAS PA (centered)	-.17	.15	-1.13	.26	-.48	.13
IRRSB-Global (centered)	.87	.20	4.42	>.0001	.48	1.27
SAS PA x IRRSB-Global	-.07	.13	-.50	.62	-.33	.20
(Constant)	4.02	.14	28.79	>.0001	3.75	4.30
SAS NA (centered)	-.22	.11	-1.93	.06	-.44	.01
IRRSB-Global (centered)	1.04	.21	5.01	>.0001	.63	1.45
SAS NA x IRRSB-Global	-.05	.11	-.48	.63	-.26	.16
(Constant)	3.99	.15	27.01	>.0001	3.69	4.28
SAS ATA (centered)	-.25	.25	-1.04	.30	-.74	.23
IRRSB-Global (centered)	.79	.22	3.58	.0006	.35	1.23
SAS ATA x IRRSB-Global	-.06	.18	-.35	.73	-.43	.30

Note. *N* = 83. SAS = Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale; PA = Positive Attitudes; NA = Negative Attitudes; ATA = Attitudes toward President Trump and Trump Administration. Coefficients in bold represent significant moderations only.

Specifically, with the outcome variable of positive affect, the interaction between race-related stress and the CRIS Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI) racial identity attitude was found to be statistically significant, $b = .29$, 95% C.I. [.07, .50], $t = 2.68$, $p = .009$. The conditional effect of race-related stress on positive affect showed the following results: When CRIS IMCI attitudes are low (-1.0280), there is a significant negative relationship between race-related stress and positive affect, $b = -.59$, 95% C.I. [-.88, -.30], $t = -4.01$, $p = .0001$. At the mean value of CRIS IMCI attitudes (.0000), there is a non-significant negative relationship between race-related stress and positive affect, $b = -.29$, 95% C.I. [-.59, .01], $t = -1.93$, $p = .06$. When CRIS IMCI attitudes are high (1.0280), there is a non-significant positive relationship between race-related stress and positive affect, $b = .003$, 95% C.I. [-.44, .44], $t = .01$, $p = .99$. These results suggest that there is a negative relationship between race-related stress and positive affect for students with low CRIS IMCI racial identity attitudes, but not for those with average or high CRIS IMCI racial identity attitudes. Hypotheses 2a and 2c do not appear to be supported.

Moderation Analyses for Black Activism

For Black activism as the outcome variable, along with the single predictor variable of race-related stress, nine moderation analyses were conducted using the six CRIS racial identity attitudes and three SAS sociopolitical attitudes as individual moderators. There was one significant moderation, $R^2 = .35$, $F(3, 79) = 19.20$, $p < .0001$.

Specifically, with the outcome variable of Black activism, the interaction between race-related stress and the CRIS Internalization Afrocentricity (IA) racial identity attitude was found to be statistically significant, $b = .36$, 95% C.I. [.11, .61], $t = 2.87$, $p = .005$. The conditional effect of race-related stress on Black activism showed the following results: When CRIS IA

attitudes are low (-1.1418), there is a significant positive relationship between race-related stress and Black activism, $b = .59$, 95% C.I. [.18, 1.01], $t = 2.85$, $p = .005$. At the mean value of CRIS IA attitudes (.0000), there is a significant positive relationship between race-related stress and Black activism, $b = 1.01$, 95% C.I. [.68, 1.34], $t = 6.07$, $p < .0001$. When CRIS IA attitudes are high, there is a significant positive relationship between race-related stress and Black activism, $b = 1.42$, 95% C.I. [.96, 1.88], $t = .01$, $p < .0001$. These results identify CRIS IA attitudes as a moderator, strengthening the positive relationship between race-related stress and Black activism. There was partial support for hypothesis 2b, but not hypothesis 2d.

Qualitative Responses

In response to the open-ended question asking about their experiences amidst anti-Black racism and COVID-19 pandemics, 46 participants provided descriptive responses. There were 15 responses that declined to provide an answer (e.g., “none,” “n/a,” “no”) and the remaining 22 were left blank. Of the 46 responses, there was similar content relating to a number of topics. In general, participants indicated that while issues of racism and White supremacy have long been present and harmful in the lives of Black people in America, the COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of the sociopolitical environment, both exacerbated the structural inequalities experienced by Black communities and greatly increased media attention and public awareness to broad concepts and specific events. Responses addressed beliefs about the role of President Trump in emboldening and advancing racism at systemic and individual levels. Participants described negative experiences and poorer mental and physical health outcomes, uncertainty at how to balance activism and personal mental health, and avoidance of events and emotions to protect their mental health and physical safety.

Concerns about activism were raised. Some participants indicated having been unable to participate in Black activism such as marches or protests as a result of the pandemic (e.g., social distancing and quarantine rules, being in the army, physical health conditions, elderly and immunocompromised family members) and others found the nature of activism as described by the survey items to be somewhat incomplete. Participants also took issue with activism by others, expressing frustration and cynicism at the apparent performative, disingenuous, and pandering actions of non-Black individuals, corporations, and the media. Responses also indicated that participants were not surprised by events that have come to pass and were emotionally numb from having experienced “so much for so long.” Some indicated feeling no hope for changes in racial inequality due to the amount of ongoing work needed and the history of racism in the country. Others described feeling hopeful that after having experienced such “low points” as a nation (e.g., insurrection in the Capitol in January 2021), the increased awareness to anti-Black racism (however “trendy” the behaviors may be), and the inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, there could only be improvement in the country. For example, “The inauguration of President Joe Biden and Madam Vice President Kamala Harris has given me some hope for the future,” “I think it’s a great step for a better future,” and “Maybe one day it’ll be easier to a Black Female in America.”

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Using Critical Race Theory (CRT; Bell, 1995) as the framework for conceptualizing the holistic well-being of Black college students, the current study investigated the relationships among race-related stress, racial identity attitude, sociopolitical attitude, mental health outcomes, and Black activism. I also examined the moderating effects of six racial identity attitudes and three sociopolitical attitudes on the relationships between race-related stress and four mental health outcomes (i.e., anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect) and race-related stress and Black activism among 83 Black college students. In this chapter, I first present the findings and interpretations of the primary analyses. I will then discuss the limitations of the study and implications for counseling psychology research and practice.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the CRT framework and previous literature, I developed research questions and associated hypotheses to test the relationships among race-related stress, racial identity attitude, sociopolitical attitude, mental health outcomes, and Black activism in Black college students. First, I considered the extent to which race-related stress, racial identity attitude, and sociopolitical attitude are related to mental health outcomes and Black activism. Specifically, I hypothesized that a) race-related stress would be negatively associated with the four mental health outcomes but positively associated with Black activism; b) sociopolitical attitudes would be positively associated with the mental health outcomes but negatively associated with Black activism; c) more developed racial identity attitudes (i.e., IEAW, IA, IMCI) would be negatively associated with mental health outcomes but positively associated with Black activism; and d)

less developed racial identity attitudes (PA, PM, PSH) would be positively associated with mental health outcomes but negatively associated with Black activism.

Second, I considered the degree to which racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude moderate the relationships between race-related stress and mental health outcomes, and race-related stress and Black activism. Specifically, I hypothesized that a) race-related stress would decrease mental health outcomes, particularly for more developed racial identity attitudes; b) race-related stress would increase Black activism, especially for more developed racial identity attitudes; c) race-related stress would decrease mental health outcomes especially for negative sociopolitical attitudes, and d) race-related stress would be positively associated with Black activism, particularly for negative sociopolitical attitudes.

Sociopolitical Context of Findings

Given the rapid changes in the sociopolitical environment during the Trump administration, it is necessary to consider the results of this study in the context of the timing of the data collection. The unfortunate frequency with which Black Americans were murdered by law enforcement, the resulting protests and activities from social change movements, the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine, and preparation for national elections are significant events in 2020 that will have affected life circumstances, attitudes, and behaviors of study participants. Of note, data were collected from December 2020 to February 2021, a span of time which followed the grand jury decision in the murder of Breonna Taylor and the election of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris and included the insurrection by Trump supporters at the Capitol.

Race-Related Stress, Mental Health Outcomes, and Black Activism

As predicted, race-related stress was shown to be significantly and negatively related to each mental health outcome (i.e., anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect). That is, as Black college students reported higher levels of experiences of racism (cultural, individual, and institutional combined), they endorsed increased anxiety and depression and decreased positive affect and behavioral and emotional control. This is in line with a breadth of literature and studies (e.g., Banks, 2010; Boynton et. al, 2014; Hoggard et. al, 2015; O'Hara et al., 2015; Paradies et. al, 2015; Prelow et. al, 2006; Sue et al., 2019) that describe the various negative mental and physical health effects associated with racial discrimination.

Race-related stress was also shown to be significant and positively associated with Black activism. As Black college students reported higher levels of experiences of racism, they endorsed greater involvement in activities aimed at fostering positive social and political changes for Black Americans. With a rise in the volume, severity, and awareness of public, institutional, and systemic racial injustice in the country, students have found more opportunities to become involved in activism, increase agency, and push for social action. It is likely that continued and increased exposure to race-related stress engages elements of critical consciousness and leads to actions to decrease systemic oppression and racism-related intrapersonal discomfort systemic. It is important to recognize that the murder of George Floyd by law enforcement in May 2020 led to a resurgence of protests and activities related to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement during the summer of 2020 and national elections in the fall of 2020 presented another significant opportunity for engagement in Black activism, both of which may well be reflected in the results of the current study.

Sociopolitical Attitudes, Mental Health Outcomes, and Black Activism

There was general support for the hypotheses that negative sociopolitical attitudes would be associated with poorer mental well-being. Of the three component sociopolitical attitudes measured, Positive Attitudes, Negative Attitudes, and Attitudes toward President Trump and the Trump Administration, there were no significant relationships found between positive sociopolitical attitudes and any of the mental health outcomes. However, as hypothesized, increased endorsement of negative sociopolitical attitudes regarding the state of the country and less favorable attitudes toward President Trump and his administration were associated with worsened anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect. These results provide support to the notion that negative appraisals of the sociopolitical climate are associated with poorer mental health for Black students. This may be explained by stress about the state of the country in multiple (e.g., financial, international/global, educational, environmental, political, employment) domains and the performance of the government in mitigating and addressing issues and disparities. Importantly, this provides evidence that there are factors unique to the Trump administration, over and above participants' general malcontent with existing structural disparities, that contributed to poorer mental health.

Regarding activism, results supported the notion that increased endorsement of positive sociopolitical attitudes regarding the state of the country and more favorable attitudes toward President Trump and his administration were associated with less engagement in Black activism activities. Based on the literature, it was indeed expected that increased satisfaction and reasonable contentment with societal circumstances would be related to less drive to agitate for change and take action to interrupt the status quo. Interestingly, there was no significant relationship (only a very small, nonsignificant, positive one) between negative sociopolitical

attitudes and Black activism. It is possible that respondent's negative attitudes toward the state of the country encompassed factors beyond those that engaging in Black activism (as opposed to other forms of activism) would address. Participants who endorse generally higher levels of negative attitudes may also feel too overwhelmed, burned out, numb, cynical, or hopeless about the capacity for meaningful changes to engage in Black activism. Participants also reported feeling generally unsure about their involvement in Black activism. The qualitative answers provided by participants concur with lack of emotional resources or hope for activism, pandemic-related challenges to in-person activities, as well as some disillusionment about the sincerity and longevity of various efforts.

Racial Identity Attitudes, Mental Health Outcomes, and Black Activism

The results of the analyses involving racial identity attitudes, mental health outcomes, and Black activism offered partial support for the hypotheses of the study. Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (IEAW), which was characterized as a more developed racial identity attitude based on its position beyond the pre-encounter attitudes, was shown to be related to poorer presentation in the mental health outcome of anxiety (on the internalizing spectrum; Kotov et. al, 2017). This aligns with previous literature that indicated racial identity attitudes that feature more Black-centered perspectives correspond to worsened psychological functioning (e.g., Lee and Ahn, 2013; McClain et al., 2016). With more critical consciousness and active awareness of the racial inequality in the country, it is understandable that there would be increased worry, uncertainty, and unease. Participants tended to report decreased trust in White people generally and increased apprehension around individuals who appear to be Trump supporters. This may provide some

limited insight into the connection between anti-White attitudes, more so than the two internalization attitudes, and experiences of anxiety.

The Pre-encounter Miseducation (PM) racial identity attitude was positively associated with the mental health outcome of positive affect. PM is characterized by believing in and endorsing negative stereotypes about Black people. When individuals support miseducation-related ideals such as “too many Blacks [...] fail to see opportunities that don’t involve crime” or “Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work [...],” it follows that they may downplay the brutality and injustices visited on the Black community, believing that to be just and deserved, and thus experience less resulting distress. As James Baldwin (1961) stated, “to be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a state of rage almost, almost all of the time.” Without a developed and engaged critical consciousness about the injustices experienced by Black people in America, distress may be buffered, and something of an increase in positive affect is a reasonable expectation.

However, there were also results contrary to the hypotheses that less developed racial identity attitudes would correlate with better mental health outcomes and more developed racial identity attitudes would be associated with worsened mental health. For example, the Pre-encounter Self-Hatred (PSH) racial identity attitude was shown to be associated with poorer outcomes on the anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect measures. PSH has been used frequently to operationalize internalized racism or internalized racial oppression in other research (e.g., Graham et al., 2016) based on the focus on negative beliefs held about one’s own Blackness (“I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black”). Unsurprisingly, this study’s finding is consistent with the literature showing

connections between internalized racism and poorer mental health outcomes (e.g., Gale et al. 2020).

Of the three racial identity attitudes characterized as more developed, two (i.e., Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, IEAW, and Internalization Afrocentricity, IA) were shown to have significant positive relationships with Black activism. Unlike the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI) racial identity attitude which endorses celebration of and attention to other cultural identities and groups, the IEAW and IA attitudes are more characteristic of a positive focus exclusive to Black culture and experiences. Specifically, anti-White and pro-Black attitudes, respectively. It follows that IEAW and IA, more so than IMCI, would correspond to demonstrated commitment to exclusively Black activism activities.

The three Pre-encounter racial identity attitudes (i.e., Pre-encounter Assimilation, PA; PM; and PSH) were all significantly and negatively associated with Black activism, as initially hypothesized. This offers further support to theoretical notions that Black students will be less likely to see the importance of or feel the drive to engage in activism without an “encounter” as such, or when there is more acceptance of White values and less awareness and credence given to the negative racial experiences of Black people in America.

Moderating Effects of Racial Identity Attitudes

Race-related stress was found to be a predictor of the four mental health outcomes of anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect, providing a significant negative contribution to each. Upon considering the moderating effect of each racial identity attitude (i.e., PA, PM, PSH, IEAW, IA, and IMCI) on the relationship between race-related stress and each of the four mental health outcomes, only one model was significant: The IMCI racial

identity attitude moderated the relationship between race-related stress and positive affect. At low levels of IMCI, increases in race-related stress were associated with significant decreases in positive affect. Average and high levels of IMCI corresponded to non-significant negative and positive relationships, respectively, between race-related stress and positive affect.

These results suggest that there is a negative relationship between race-related stress and positive affect for students with low CRIS IMCI racial identity attitudes, but for those with average or high CRIS IMCI racial identity attitudes, that relationship may be weakened, absent, or reversed. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Sellers et al., 2006), it appears that stronger identification with Black culture and multiculturalism may buffer against low mood in the face of race-related stress. Students low in IMCI may endorse less of the unique components (e.g., community and support, internal cultural acceptance security, radical hope) that are protective of and contribute to improved psychological functioning. Of note, for all other models examined, regardless of level of racial identity attitude, the negative relationships between race-related stress and mental health were unaffected.

Race-related stress was also found to be a predictor of Black activism, providing a significant positive contribution. Upon considering the moderating effect of each racial identity attitude on the relationship between race-related stress and Black activism, only one model was significant: The IA racial identity attitude moderated the relationship between race-related stress and Black activism. At low, average, and high levels of IA, there was a significant, positive relationship between race-related stress and Black activism; endorsing IA appears to generally strengthen this relationship between race-related stress and Black activism. The deep connection to and exclusive positive focus on Black heritage and culture of IA (compared to IEAW and

IMCI) racial identity attitudes corresponds to increased commitment to and working towards activities in the service of advancing and furthering the social welfare of Black people.

Moderating Effects of Sociopolitical Attitudes

When considering the moderating effect of each of the sociopolitical attitudes (i.e., Positive Attitudes, Negative Attitudes, and Attitudes Toward President Trump and Trump Administration) on the relationships between race-related stress and the four mental health outcomes and race-related stress and Black activism, no significant moderation models emerged. The relationships did not vary as a function of levels of positive sociopolitical attitude, negative sociopolitical attitude, or attitudes toward the President Trump and his administration, respectively. Regardless of the strength of positive or negative sociopolitical attitudes, increased race-related stress generally corresponded to worse mental health and more activism for participants.

CRIS and SAS as Moderating Variables

It should also be noted that although the variables of racial identity attitude and sociopolitical attitude were considered for the moderation, in this study neither concept was represented by a single score that ranged from low to high or negative to positive. There is no total score for either the CRIS or SAS measures. Regarding the CRIS, racial identity development is not a linear process where individuals successively progress through stages to a fixed end. Individuals may simultaneously endorse elements from each identity attitude. The SAS was developed to capture positive and negative emotions separately, rather than combining them to be additive in description of overall attitude. Therefore, for the moderation analyses we were looking for influential interactions based on levels of endorsement of specific attitudes

(e.g., low versus high positive sociopolitical attitude or internalization multiculturalist inclusive racial identity attitude) rather than broad levels of the overarching concepts (e.g., racial identity attitude).

Qualitative Responses

Participants' responses on the open-ended question about the role of the concurrent COVID-19 and anti-Black racism pandemics were indicative of several general concepts. Many described increases in experiences and severity of racial discrimination, either personally or by others, and attributed this to the direct influence of President Trump. Other participants expressed a lack of surprise, noting that issues of racism have long been present in the history of the country and indicating little hope for meaningful changes. Several expressed happiness and hope at the inauguration of President Biden and Vice President Harris and a presumably inevitable improvement in the sociopolitical climate following some of the low points of the previous presidential administration.

There was considerable indignance towards what was considered insincere or "bandwagon" activism by individuals who have only recently "awakened" to the realities of anti-Black racism or only participate because it has become trendy on social media. Respondents also described feeling increased numbness, fear, sadness, physiological illness, generally worsened mental health, and avoidant coping strategies for perceived self-preservation. Participants stated their experiences of ways in which various disparities and injustices (e.g., income, employment, health care, legal) had been worsened and made more evident as a result of COVID-19. The coronavirus pandemic was also provided as a reason that some individuals were unable to engage in more public forms of activism (e.g., protests, marches) that were organized, especially in the

summer of 2020 in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. There were sentiments of wanting a broader conceptualization of “Black activism” as well as a desire to engage more, where possible.

Another common theme expressed was that of increased awareness and heightened sensitivity to one’s Blackness in White spaces. For some participants, this was accompanied by pride in their Black identity; others reported hypervigilance, symptoms of anxiety, anger, and mistrust in these situations. Several responses indicated frustration, pain, and anger at the responses from their universities, describing them as insincere and out of touch—if they even addressed the ongoing events at all. It was also clear that participants had reactions of cynicism, disappointment, sadness, and anger toward the marked difference in response by law enforcement and news media to BLM protesters compared to the pro-Trump insurrectionists at the Capitol. These responses, in the context of the timing when data were collected, certainly provide insight into some of the trends seen in the results.

Limitations

There are several limitations in the current study related to sampling, research design, measurement, and analysis. First, there is potential for self-selection bias due to non-random purposive and snowball sampling procedures. It is possible that participants with certain characteristics related to the primary variables elected to participate in the study. For example, students with fewer perceived experiences of race-related stress, lower critical consciousness, or more favorable attitudes toward President Trump and the sociopolitical environment may not have felt it necessary to participate and share their experiences or may have been among those who did not complete the measures. Conversely, individuals with negative experiences seeking

an outlet for their voices may have more readily, eagerly, and completely participated in this research. The study is limited in its ability to generalize to all Black students in the U.S. since the largest volume of the participants were from a mid-western university. Also, while the racism made more explicit by President Trump is persistent across the nation, it is possible that certain regions/states have better or worse climates for people of color. In consideration of these concerns related to sampling techniques and location, future studies ought to attempt to recruit participants through random sampling or gather data from individuals whose demographics (e.g., location) are diverse and representative.

Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design. While appropriate for correlational research, there are associated threats to the internal validity and caveats to interpretation of the results. For example, confounding variables may systematically affect independent or dependent variables and ambiguous temporal precedence prevents isolation of cause versus effect (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). In this study, race-related stress, racial identity attitudes, and sociopolitical attitudes were conceptualized as predictors of mental health and Black activism, and results were interpreted as such. However, it is entirely reasonable that bi-directional relationships may exist among the variables. Therefore, as an example, it may also be possible to interpret the relationship between race-related stress and Black activism that participants who engage in more activities related to Black activism are more likely to experience and report increased race-related stress. Thus, to establish causal relationships among the study variables and mitigate the effects of confounding variables, future research using longitudinal and/or experimental methodologies would be ideal.

Third, measurement and data collection may contribute to the limitations in interpreting the study results. The use of self-report questionnaires to collect data creates challenges related

to participants' endurance and fatigue, self-awareness, and social desirability. For example, some items on the CRIS which addressed Anti-White attitudes have strongly worded expressions of negative feelings. This may cause decreased participation or activated social desirability biases for participants who do not want to appear "hateful" or angry. Although CRIS scores have been shown to be "not strongly influenced by social desirability concerns," (Worrell et al., 2004, p.8), this consideration must still be present for this and other measures administered. The self-report nature of the measures also introduces the possibility that participants' general answers around sensitive subjects (e.g., mental health) might not be accurate due to stigma or social desirability biases.

Participants' reactions to the distasteful and hateful actions carried out and instigated by the president may have fluctuated in intensity by the time of data collection since it had been four to five years since the election and people may have become desensitized or acclimatized to these new "norms." Indeed, the timing of data collection itself was delayed due to the unprecedented social changes (e.g., lockdown, quarantine) resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and out of respect for the toll on the Black community in the wake of continued violence, racial inequality, and social injustice. While the number of participants and usable cases (i.e., sample size of 83) obtained was lower than desired or expected, it was nonetheless sufficient for significance in the statistical analyses utilized. This limits the robustness of findings, but it must be acknowledged that difficulty in recruitment of Black participants was indeed a consequence of the challenging sociopolitical context.

The Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale was developed for the purposes of this study and shown to have structural validity through factor analysis and reasonable internal consistencies. However, further exploration and studies to assess other forms of validity (e.g., discriminant,

convergent) with other populations and hypotheses is certainly warranted. As discussed previously, only the total score, or Global Racism score, of the Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief (IRRS-B), rather than the subscales (i.e., Cultural, Institutional, and Individual), was used due to concerns regarding internal consistency. While this did not hamper interpretation of the scores, future studies may seek to isolate and better understand the nuanced relationships in experiences of race-related stress.

It is also important to note that the mental health outcomes measured are not operationalized to differentiate between state or trait characteristics, so it is unclear whether these elements of participants' well-being are tendencies that have been present as cognitive and behavioral tendencies prior to the race-related stress experienced in the current sociopolitical climate or in response to it. Additionally, the study does not explicitly address the ways that racism may intersect with other social forces, including classism, patriarchy, and homophobia, that contribute to the oppression in America (Dixon & Anderson, 2018). I hope for and encourage future researchers to thoroughly address these intersections of identity in studies of sociopolitical climate and discrimination experience of minoritized and marginalized populations in the United States.

Lastly, during the data cleaning process, I removed cases in which at least one entire measure had not been completed. The majority of this attrition occurred immediately after the informed consent or during the first measure and thus those cases would not have allowed for meaningful analysis of the study variables. However, it is possible that this premature dropout may be related to concepts and variables important to the study, such as racial identity attitudes, depression, or sociopolitical attitudes. For example, individuals who endorse more Pre-encounter (especially Miseducation) racial identity attitudes, low critical consciousness, or positive

sociopolitical attitudes may have interpreted the description of the study and the initial questions as unnecessary, complaining, or blowing things out of proportion and exited the survey. Similarly, individuals experiencing emotional fatigue or depressive episodes may have withdrawn due to the subject matter or the time and energy required to complete all measures. While acknowledging the inevitable difficulty of the subject matter and unavoidably awkward timing of data collection, future researchers of similar content may need to be more strategic in data collection techniques to lessen participant dropout.

Implications for Research and Practice

The results of this study present noteworthy implications for research on the experiences of Black university students. First, with regard to contributions to contemporary research, this study will add to the literature that explores the full experiences of Black people in the United States, using the Critical Race Theory framework. It investigates new relationships among variables that have been previously studied, but in the context of a dynamic and difficult sociopolitical context, in order to provide more nuanced understanding of Black students' racial identity attitudes, mental health outcomes, and activism when faced with race-related stress. Based on the qualitative responses obtained in this study, future researchers may also consider re-evaluation of the concept of activism given the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of social media by individuals and corporations, performative allyship, and public versus private forms of engagement.

Second, the Sociopolitical Attitudes Scale (SAS) was developed for this study in the absence of other measures regarding positive and negative attitudes toward the state of the country and the actions of President Trump and his administration. There were no other studies

directly examining the influence of the Trump administration on the attitudes, mental health, and activism activities of Black college student populations. This study will extend the understanding of the effects of that political era and capture the unique experiences and feelings about that sociopolitical climate. While the timing of data collection presented challenges, the study also acquires a unique temporal snapshot in a time of national instability, politically as well as from the unprecedented effects of a global pandemic. Future studies utilizing mixed-methods or qualitative analysis to explore the experiences of Black Americans during the Trump presidency and COVID-19 pandemic would also provide a richer and deeper narrative and understanding of this sociopolitical era.

Third, given the historical significance of the events of the past four years—particularly the COVID-19 pandemic and the final months of the Trump presidency—longitudinal studies may provide valuable insight into the long-term effects these events may have on the psychosocial development and outcomes of students who entered college during these years. Future studies comparing these students to cohorts who have and have not experienced significant social upheaval in their lifetimes may also be of value to the counseling psychology literature.

There are also key implications for clinical practice and other institutional interactions with Black college student populations. Clinicians should note the well-established relationships between race-related stress and worsened mental health outcomes, the intuitive relationships between sociopolitical attitudes and mental well-being, and the potential for varying relationships among racial identity attitudes and mental health outcomes. Clinical exploration to facilitate critical consciousness, racial identity development, discussion of sociopolitical events, and empowerment and activism will be beneficial to Black students, as will culturally

appropriate interventions, coping, and support (e.g., radical hope, self-care and compassion, community building) to encourage mental well-being and buffer against emotional distress that may result from such explorations and activism. It will be important to understand clients' and students' individual circumstances (e.g., endorsement of racial identity attitudes), validate their experiences, and provide support aligned with their values. Clinicians should explore, with their Black student clients, the ways in which their racial centrality influences their experience of race-related stress and their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses. Although sociopolitical attitudes were not found to moderate relationships between race-related stress and mental health or activism, clinicians should make space for discussions of how their Black clients are affected by and respond to systemic oppression and ongoing social injustice.

The results of this study may advise university administrators directly of the effects of race-related stress and sociopolitical flux on mental well-being for Black students. This may indicate a need for greater resources and spaces for Black students on campuses (e.g., more diverse/representative hiring of faculty, staff, and mental health clinicians; funding for Black cultural groups and activities that embrace Black identity and promote multiculturalism; culturally informed policies and support around organizations and various forms of activism). Instructors, particularly those teaching Black students, should also be aware of and sensitive and responsive to the impact of race-related stress and sociopolitical events on factors such as attitudes expressed in classrooms and changes in academic performance due to challenges resulting from these experiences. Clinicians and other stakeholders who interact with Black students should also note that racial identity attitudes do not necessarily impact mental health in any particular direction. As seen from this study and the body of literature, endorsing either pre-encounter or internalization racial identity attitudes can both be a protective factor and contribute

to poorer mental health, depending on context. Future studies should deepen the exploration of the nuances of racial identity and mental health in Black populations.

Conclusion

The current study examined the relationships among race-related stress, racial identity attitudes (i.e., Pre-encounter Assimilation, Pre-encounter Miseducation, Pre-encounter Self-Hatred, Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive), sociopolitical attitudes (i.e., Positive Attitudes, Negative Attitudes, and Attitudes Toward President Trump and Trump Administration), Black activism, and mental health (i.e., Anxiety, Depression, Behavioral and Emotional Control, and Positive Affect) for Black college students. The racial identity attitudes and sociopolitical attitudes were also examined as potential moderators of the relationships between race-related stress and mental health outcomes and race-related stress and Black activism. The results indicated that increased experiences of race-related stress were associated with worsened mental health and greater participation in Black activism. Generally, negative sociopolitical attitudes were related to poorer mental health while positive sociopolitical attitudes correlated to better mental health outcomes. Positive sociopolitical attitudes about President Trump and his administration were associated with less engagement in Black activism.

There were varying relationships between racial identity attitudes, mental health, and activism. Greater endorsement of Immersion-Emersion Anti-White attitudes was correlated with worsened anxiety and more activism. The Internalization Afrocentricity attitude was also associated with higher report of Black activism. Increases in Pre-encounter Miseducation attitudes were related to more positive affect and less engagement in activism. Of note, the Pre-

encounter Self-Hatred racial identity attitude was shown to be predictive of worsened outcomes in anxiety, depression, behavioral and emotional control, and positive affect as well as decreased engagement in Black activism. Higher endorsement of Pre-encounter Assimilation was associated with lower self-report of activism activities. These results largely supported the hypotheses that race-related stress and negative sociopolitical attitudes would be correlated with poorer mental health but increased Black activism, Pre-encounter (less developed) racial identity attitudes would be related to less engagement in activism, and Internalization and Immersion-Emersion (more developed) racial identity attitudes would be associated with greater involvement in activism. They also suggest that there are complex relationships among the racial identity attitudes and mental health: less developed racial identity attitudes may be a protective factor or buffer against poor mental health outcomes, but this is not always the case (e.g., self-hatred and internalized racism).

The Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive racial identity attitude was shown to moderate the relationship between race-related stress and positive affect, and Internalization Afrocentricity attitudes moderate the relationship between race-related stress and Black activism. While none of the three sociopolitical attitudes moderated any relationships between race-related stress and mental health or race-related stress and Black activism, the qualitative responses provided by participants are indicative of the importance of the sociopolitical atmosphere in the lived experiences of Black Americans. This study has implications for research and clinical practice with Black college students. Findings of this study will add to the literature on racial identity development and mental health as well as fill gaps related to the effects of the contemporary United States sociopolitical context. Mental health practitioners are encouraged to provide space for processing current events, normalize and validate feelings about these events,

facilitate empowerment and engagement with Black culture, and explore racial identity while providing culturally appropriate interventions to enhance mental well-being.

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APPENDIX A. APPROVAL OF PURDUE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

IRB-2020-762 - EXEMPTION MEMO

irb@purdue.edu <irb@purdue.edu>

Fri 5/29/2020 1:53 PM

To: Ciftci, Ayse <ayse@purdue.edu>; Ife K Sinclair <isinclair@purdue.edu>



This Memo is Generated From the Purdue University Human Research Protection Program System, [Cayuse IRB](#).

*****THIS LETTER IS BEING ISSUED DURING THE FACE TO FACE RESTRICTION ON HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH STUDIES RELATED TO COVID-19. NO FACE TO FACE RESEARCH IS ALLOWABLE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. THIS DOCUMENT SERVES AS PROTOCOL APPROVAL FROM THE HRPP/IRB, BUT DOES NOT PERMIT FACE TO FACE RESEARCH UNTIL THE COVID-19 RESTRICTION IS LIFTED*****

Date: May 29, 2020

PI: AYSE CIFTCI

Department: PWL EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Re: Initial - IRB-2020-762

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT ERA

The Purdue University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) has determined that the research project identified above qualifies as exempt from IRB review, under federal human subjects research regulations 45 CFR 46.104. The Category for this Exemption is listed below . Protocols exempted by the Purdue HRPP do not require regular renewal. However, the administrative check-in date is May 29, 2023. The IRB must be notified when this study is closed. If a study closure request has not been initiated by this date, the HRPP will request study status update for the record.

Specific notes related to your study are found below.

Decision: Exempt

Category:

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Findings:

Research Notes:

Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through [Cayuse IRB](#). All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in [Cayuse IRB](#).

What are your responsibilities now, as you move forward with your research?

IRB-2020-762 - Modification: 1. COVID-19 EXEMPT (MODIFICATION) Approval

irb@purdue.edu <irb@purdue.edu>

Mon 8/17/2020 12:13 PM

To: Ciftci, Ayse <ayse@purdue.edu>; Ife K Sinclair <isinclai@purdue.edu>



*****THIS LETTER IS BEING ISSUED DURING THE FACE TO FACE RESTRICTION ON HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH STUDIES RELATED TO COVID-19. THIS DOCUMENT SERVES AS PROTOCOL APPROVAL FROM THE HRPP/IRB, BUT DOES NOT PERMIT FACE TO FACE RESEARCH UNTIL AN APPROVED UNIVERSITY COVID-19 RESEARCH SPACE SOP PERMITS RESEARCH OPERATIONS. ******

This Memo is Generated From the Purdue University Human Research Protection Program System, [Cayuse IRB](#).

Date: August 17, 2020

PI: AYSE CIFTCI

Department: PWL EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Re: Modification - IRB-2020-762

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT ERA

The Purdue University Institutional Review Board has approved the modification for your study "*UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT ERA* . " The Category for this Exemption is listed below. This study maintains a status of exempt and an administrative check-in date of May 29, 2023. The IRB must be notified when this study is closed. If a study closure request has not been initiated by this date, the HRPP will request study status update for the record.

Specific details about your modification approval appear below.

Decision: Exempt

Findings: Modification = Added one new open-ended question to Questionnaire

What are your responsibilities now, as you move forward with your research?

Document Retention: The PI is responsible for keeping all regulated documents, including IRB correspondence such as this letter, approved study documents, and signed consent forms for at least three (3) years following protocol closure for audit purposes. Documents regulated by HIPAA, such as Release Authorizations, must be maintained for six (6) years.

Site Permission: If your research is conducted at locations outside of Purdue University (such as schools, hospitals, or businesses), you must obtain written permission from all sites to recruit, consent, study, or observe participants. Generally, such permission comes in the form of a letter from the school superintendent, director, or manager. You must maintain a copy of this permission with study records.

APPENDIX B. INITIAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Header: Survey Invitation: Understanding the Experiences of Black College Students.

Dear Purdue Student,

My name is Ife Sinclair, and I am a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Purdue University. I am currently working on a research project under the direction of my advisor, Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi, and we are inviting you to participate in our research on the experiences of Black college students in the current sociopolitical era. This study will help us to have a better understanding of and provide attuned support to Black college students. You may receive the same invitation email more than once. Please complete the survey only once.

In order to participate, you need to **a) self-identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora; b) be living in the U.S. and pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree; c) be at least 18 years old; d) be studying at a predominantly White institution (PWI); e) be at least 2nd generation U.S. citizen or DREAMer; and f) speak English as a primary language.**

It will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete the survey questions. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Your responses will be completely anonymous and results will be reported as aggregate data.

At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a **\$50 gift card for Amazon.com** by submitting your email address. Winners will be selected at random. The odds of winning are dependent on the number of responses received but are expected to be 1 in 400 or better. Electing to participate in the drawing does not impact the anonymity of your responses; your survey answers are not connected to the information you provide to enter into the drawing.

If you are interested, please click on the link below to complete the on-line survey.
https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_er0AiW5RI3OLy6N

Please feel free to forward this e-mail invitation to your friends who are eligible to participate in the study. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me at **isinclai@purdue.edu** or reach out to my advisor Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi at ayse@purdue.edu.

Thank you for your time and help!

Sincerely,

Ife Sinclair, M.S.Ed
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Department of Educational Studies

Purdue University
isinclai@purdue.edu

APPENDIX C. FOLLOW UP REMINDER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Header: REMINDER: Survey Invitation: Understanding the Experiences of Black College Students.

Dear Purdue Student,

My name is Ife Sinclair, and I am a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Purdue University. I am currently working on a research project under the direction of my advisor, Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi, and we are inviting you to participate in our research on the experiences of Black college students in the current sociopolitical era. This study will help us to have a better understanding of and provide attuned support to Black college students. You may receive the same invitation email more than once. Please complete the survey only once.

In order to participate, you need to **a) self-identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora; b) be living in the U.S. and pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree; c) be at least 18 years old; d) be studying at a predominantly White institution (PWI); e) be at least 2nd generation U.S. citizen or DREAMer; and f) speak English as a primary language.**

It will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete the survey questions. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Your responses will be completely anonymous and results will be reported as aggregate data.

At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a **\$50 gift card for Amazon.com** by submitting your email address. Winners will be selected at random. The odds of winning are dependent on the number of responses received but are expected to be 1 in 400 or better. Electing to participate in the drawing does not impact the anonymity of your responses; your survey answers are not connected to the information you provide to enter into the drawing.

If you are interested, please click on the link below to complete the on-line survey.
https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_er0AiW5RI3OLy6N

Please feel free to forward this e-mail invitation to your friends who are eligible to participate in the study. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me at **isinclai@purdue.edu** or reach out to my advisor Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi at **ayse@purdue.edu**.

Thank you for your time and help!

Sincerely,

Ife Sinclair, M.S.Ed
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology

Department of Educational Studies
Purdue University
isinclai@purdue.edu

APPENDIX D. SOCIAL MEDIA STATUS

Hello! I am currently conducting research on the experiences of Black college students. If you take this on-line survey, you will have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon.com gift card.

In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years old and must self-identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora. Please feel free to share this with your friends who are eligible to participate in the study.

Thank you for your time and help!

https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_er0AiW5RI3OLy6N

(Ife Sinclair: isinclai@purdue.edu)

APPENDIX E. WEB-SURVEY CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Understanding the Experiences of Black College Students in the Current Era

Research Project Number IRB-2020-762

Ayşe Çiftçi, Ph.D.

Ife Sinclair, M.S.Ed.

Department of Educational Studies

Purdue University

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the moderating factors of race-related stress and Black activism in Black college and university students.

Qualifications for the Participants

In order to participate, you need to **a) self-identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora; b) be living in the U.S. and pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree; c) be at least 18 years old; d) be studying at a predominantly White institution (PWI); e) be at least 2nd generation U.S. citizen or DREAMer; and f) speak English as a primary language.**

Procedures

If you wish to participate in this study, please click the “participate in the study” button below after reading this form. You will then be directed to the online survey to complete the questionnaires. You will also be provided with the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 Amazon.com gift card.

Duration of Participation

This survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Risks

Completing the survey should not be harmful to you. However, some of the information you encounter when completing the questionnaires may be mildly irritating or upsetting to you. These risks are considered minimal and no greater than you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits

You understand that there are no obvious personal benefits to you from participating in this study. However, the findings may benefit the counseling profession and society. This study may increase understanding of contributing factors to well-being in Black students. The findings then may inform helping professionals in providing better services to improve the well-being among Black college and university students.

Compensation

At the end of this survey, you will be given the opportunity to click on a link to provide your

email address for entrance into a random drawing for a \$50 Amazon.com gift card. The odds of winning are dependent on the number of responses received but are expected to be 1 in 400 or better.

Confidentiality

All your responses are completely anonymous and will be kept confidential. Your survey answers will not be able to be traced directly to you or your email address, and all data will be coded and entered into a computerized data file. The data will be stored in password-protected computers to which only Ife Sinclair, M.S.Ed. and Ayşe Çiftçi, Ph.D. will have access. E-mail addresses obtained for the lottery drawing will be destroyed after the drawing. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at Purdue University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

You do not have to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw your participation at any time and you can skip questions if you choose, without penalty.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact either Ife Sinclair at isinclai@purdue.edu or Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi at ayse@purdue.edu. If you have concerns about the treatment of research participants, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at Purdue University, Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032, 155 S. Grant St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114. The phone number for the Board is (765) 494-5942. The email address is irb@purdue.edu.

Documentation of Informed Consent

I have read the information provided above which describes this study and my participation in the study. I have had the opportunity to read this consent form and have the research study explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research project and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research project described above.

If you agree to participate, please print a copy of this form for your records, and then click on the button at the bottom of the page.

[I agree]

APPENDIX F. INDEX OF RACE-RELATED STRESS-BRIEF VERSION

(IRRS-B; UTSEY, 1999)

This survey questionnaire is intended to sample some of the experiences that Black people have in this country because of their “Blackness.” There are many experiences that a Black person can have in this country because of his/her race. Some events have just once, some more often, while others may happen frequently. Below you will find listed some of these experiences, for which you are to indicate those that have happened to you or someone very close to you (i.e., a family member or loved one). It is important to note that a person can be affected by those events that happen to people close to them; this is why you are asked to consider such events as applying to your experiences when you complete this questionnaire. Please select the number on the scale (0 to 4) that indicates the reaction you had to the event at the time it happened. Do not leave any items blank. If an event has happened more than once, refer to the first time it happened. If an event did not happen select 0 and go on to the next item.

0 = This never happened to me.

1 = This event happened, but did not bother me.

2 = This event happened & I was slightly upset.

3 = This event happened & I was upset.

4 = This event happened & I was extremely upset.

1. You notice that crimes committed by White people tend to be romanticized, whereas the same crime committed by a Black person is portrayed as savagery, and the Black person who committed it, as an animal.
2. Salespeople/clerks did not say thank you or show other forms of courtesy and respect (e.g., put your things in a bag) when you shopped at some White/non-Black owned businesses.
3. You notice that when Black people are killed by the police, the media informs the public of the victim’s criminal record or negative information in their background, suggesting they got what they deserved.
4. You have been threatened with physical violence by an individual or group of White/non-Blacks.
5. You have observed that White kids who commit violent crimes are portrayed as “boys being boys,” while Black kids who commit similar crimes are wild animals.
6. You seldom hear or read anything positive about Black people on radio, TV, in newspapers, or history books.
7. While shopping at a store the salesclerk assumed that you couldn’t afford certain items (e.g., you were directed toward the items on sale).
8. You were the victim of a crime and the police treated you as if you should just accept it as part of being Black.
9. You were treated with less respect and courtesy than Whites and other non-Blacks while in a store, restaurant, or other business establishment.

10. You were passed over for an important project although you were more qualified and competent than the White/non-Black person given the task.
11. Whites/non-Blacks have stared at you as if you didn't belong in the same place as them; whether it was a restaurant, theater, or other place of business.
12. You have observed the police treat Whites/non-Blacks with more respect and dignity than they do Blacks.
13. You have been subjected to racist jokes by Whites/non-Blacks in positions of authority and you did not protest for fear they might have held it against you.
14. While shopping at a store, or when attempting to make a purchase, you were ignored as if you were not a serious customer or didn't have any money.
15. You have observed situations where other Blacks were treated harshly or unfairly by Whites/non-Blacks due to their race.
16. You have heard reports of White people/non-Blacks who have committed crimes, and in an effort to cover up their deeds falsely reported that a Black man was responsible for the crime.
17. You notice that the media plays up those stories that cast Blacks in negative ways (child abusers, rapists, muggers, etc.), usually accompanied by a large picture of a Black person looking angry or disturbed.
18. You have heard racist remarks or comments about Black people spoken with impunity by White public officials or other influential White people.
19. You have been given more work, or the most undesirable jobs at your place of employment while the White/non-Black of equal or less seniority and credentials is given less work, and more desirable tasks.
20. You have heard or seen other Black people express a desire to be White or to have White physical characteristics because they disliked being Black or thought it was ugly.
21. White people or other non-Blacks have treated you as if you were unintelligent and needed things explained to you slowly or numerous times.
22. You were refused an apartment or other housing; you suspect it was because you're Black.

APPENDIX G. SOCIOPOLITICAL ATTITUDES SCALE

Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings about how things actually are in the U. S. today, using the 7-point scale below. There are no right or wrong answers. Base your responses on your opinion at the present time.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree

1. I feel hopeful about the way things are going in the country these days.
2. I feel angry about the way things are going in the country these days.
3. I feel afraid about the way things are going in the country these days.
4. I feel proud about the way things are going in the country these days.
5. I feel bitter about the way things are going in the country these days.
6. I feel happy about the way things are going in the country these days.
7. I feel worried about the way things are going in the country these days.
8. I feel relieved about the way things are going in the country these days.
9. I feel depressed about the way things are going in the country these days.
10. I feel sad about the way things are going in the country these days.
11. I feel satisfied about the way things are going in the country these days.
12. I trust the elected government officials in the United States.
13. In this country, everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
14. President Trump is racist.
15. President Trump supports White supremacist agendas.
16. Presently, the rights and freedoms of all people are respected in this country.
17. The Trump administration has been helpful to Black people in this country.

APPENDIX H. CROSS RACIAL IDENTITY SCALE

(CRIS; VANDIVER ET AL. 2002)

Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings, using the 7-point scale below. There are no right or wrong answers. Base your responses on your opinion at the present time.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree

1. As an African American, life in America is good for me.
2. I think of myself primarily as an American, and seldom as a member of a racial group.
3. Too many Blacks “glamorize” the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don’t involve crime.
4. I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am Black.
5. As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).
6. I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.
7. I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.
8. When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.
9. I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.
10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black.
11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life.
12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.
13. I believe that only those Black people who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America.
14. I hate the White community and all that it represents.
15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in who that person might be.
16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.).
17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see.
18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be “American” and not African American.
19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues.
20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of them.
21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time.
22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles.
23. White people should be destroyed.

24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian-Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.).
25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am an American, and second I am a member of a racial group.
27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me.
28. African Americans are too quick to turn to crime to solve their problems.
29. When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, postures, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes.
30. I hate White people.
31. I respect the ideas that other Black people hold, but I believe the best way to solve our problems is to think Afrocentrically.
32. When I vote in an election, the first thing I think about is the candidate's record on racial and cultural issues.
33. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, because this connects me to other groups (e.g., Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).
34. I have developed an identity that stresses my experiences as an American more than my experiences as a member of a racial group.
35. During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times.
36. Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work and education.
37. Black people will never be free until we embrace an Afrocentric perspective.
38. My negative feelings toward White people are very intense.
39. I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.).

APPENDIX I. MENTAL HEALTH INDEX-18

(MHI-18; VEIT & WARE, 1983)

The next set of questions are about how you feel, and how things have been for you during the past 4 weeks. Please answer every question. If you are not sure which answer to select, please choose the one answer that comes closest to describing you.

- 1 = All of the time
- 2 = Most of the time
- 3 = A good bit of the time
- 4 = Some of the time
- 5 = A little of the time
- 6 = None of the time

During the past 4 weeks, how much of the time...

- 1. Has your daily life been full of things that were interesting to you?
- 2. Did you feel depressed?
- 3. Have you felt loved and wanted?
- 4. Have you been a very nervous person?
- 5. Have you been in firm control of your behaviors, thoughts, emotions, feelings?
- 6. Have you felt tense or high-strung?
- 7. Have you felt calm and peaceful?
- 8. Have you felt emotionally stable?
- 9. Have you felt downhearted and blue?
- 10. Were you able to relax without difficulty?
- 11. Have you felt restless, fidgety, or impatient?
- 12. Have you been moody, or brooded about things?
- 13. Have you felt cheerful, light-hearted?
- 14. Have you been in low or very low spirits?
- 15. Were you a happy person?
- 16. Did you feel you had nothing to look forward to?
- 17. Have you felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up?
- 18. Have you been anxious or worried?

APPENDIX J. INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN AMERICAN ACTIVISM SCALE

(IAAAS; SZYMANSKI, 2012)

Please indicate to what degree each item describes your involvement in the stated activity.

- 1 = Very untrue of me
- 2 = Moderately untrue of me
- 3 = A little untrue of me
- 4 = Not sure
- 5 = A little true of me
- 6 = Moderately true of me
- 7 = Very true of me

- 1. I write to politicians and elected officials concerning African American issues.
- 2. I educate others about African American issues.
- 3. I participate in African American demonstrations, boycotts, marches, and/or rallies.
- 4. I attend conferences/lectures/classes/training on African American issues.
- 5. I attend African American organizational, political, social, community, and/or academic activities and events.
- 6. I am involved in antiracism work.
- 7. I am active in African American political activities.
- 8. I am involved in research, writing, and/or speaking about African American issues.
- 9. I am involved in organizations that address the needs of other minority groups (e.g., women, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons).
- 10. I am involved in planning/organizing African American events and activities.
- 11. I vote for political candidates that support African American issues
- 12. I donate money to African American groups or causes.
- 13. I am involved in African American related teaching and/or mentoring activities.
- 14. I am a member of one or more African American organizations and/or groups.
- 15. I read African American literature.
- 16. I am a member of one or more African American listservs.
- 17. I actively participate in African American organizational, political, social, community, and/or academic activities and events.

APPENDIX K. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you racially/ethnically identify as Black, African American, or belonging to the African diaspora?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Skip to end of survey)
2. Are you currently a college or university student (graduate or undergraduate) in the United States?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Skip to end of survey)
3. Do you study at a predominantly White institution?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Skip to end of survey)
4. In what region of the United States is your institution:
 - a. West (WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, MT, WY, UT, CO, AK, HI)
 - b. Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)
 - c. Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MN, IA, MO, WI, IL, MI, IN, OH)
 - d. Northeast (ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, RI, CT, NJ, PA, MD)
 - e. Southeast (AR, LA, MS, KY, TN, AL, GA, FL, SC, NC, VA, WV, DE)
5. Age: _____
6. What is your gender identity? Check all that apply:
 - a. Cisgender man (man who was assigned male sex at birth)
 - b. Cisgender woman (woman who was assigned female sex at birth)
 - c. Genderqueer
 - d. Non-binary
 - e. Trans
 - f. Trans man
 - g. Trans woman
 - h. If none of the above choices apply to you, please use your own description:

7. With which of the following do you identify? (check only one):
 - a. Black
 - b. African American
 - c. African
 - d. Afro-Caribbean
 - e. Biracial (Please Specify): _____, _____
 - f. If none of the above choices apply to you, please use your own description:

8. Are you a(n)?
- a. Undergraduate student
 - b. Graduate student
 - c. _____
9. Are you an international student?
- a. Yes (Skip to end of survey)
 - b. No
10. What is your generational status?
- a. 1st generation: you were born outside of the U.S. and moved to the U.S. as an adult 15 years of age or older
 - b. 1.5 generation: you were born outside of the U.S. and moved to the U.S in early or middle childhood, i.e., 6-14 years of age
 - c. 2nd generation: you were born in the U.S. and at least one parent was born outside of the U.S.
 - d. 3rd generation or more: you and both parents were born in the U.S.
11. What is your first or primary language? _____
12. Please mark the choice that best describes your political ideology.
- a. Conservative
 - b. Liberal
 - c. Progressive
 - d. Libertarian
 - e. Populist
 - f. Democratic Socialist
 - g. Communist
 - h. _____
13. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and increased national attention to racial injustices and anti-Black racism in the United States, is there anything that you would like to add or comment about your experiences amid these events? Feel free to include any information that you think is relevant or that you would like us to know.
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