

**Psychological Separateness and Parental Attachment as Predictors of
Black Students' Psychological Resilience and Adjustment to College**

By

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Abstract

PSYCHOLOGICAL SEPARATENESS AND PARENTAL ATTACHMENT AS
PREDICTORS OF BLACK STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL
RESILIENCE AND ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE

by

Alice Rebecca Shepard

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This study examined the role that psychological separation and parental attachment has in the ability of Black college students to be resilient and to adjust during their beginning time at college. Counseling and psychological service centers on college campuses in the U.S. are seeing a surge in students seeking treatment (Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton & Benton, 2003; Kitzrow, 2003). Psychoanalytic and attachment theories are currently being considered in order to gain better insight into students' distress (Robbins, 1989). Going off to college has been equated with a naturally occurring 'strange situation' similar to that created in Mary Ainsworth's pivotal research on childhood attachment (Kenny, 1987), and late adolescence is being considered as the second time point for Margaret Mahler's theory of separation-individuation in infancy (Blos, 1979). Several studies have shown that students who enjoy a better level of psychological separation from their parents and who also have a better quality of attachment to their parents

experience reduced stress, a greater sense of well-being, and have an overall easier time adjusting to college (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Kenny & Perez, 1996).

There were 52 Black college students who participated in this study. All of the students were either freshmen or sophomores and all attended a predominantly White institution. There were two predictor variables one for psychological separation and one for parental attachment. There were three outcome variables, two for resilience, psychological well-being and minority status stress, and one for college adjustment. Each variable was measured by a corresponding self-report survey. Emotional independence from mothers, an aspect of psychological separation, was the most telling predictor for success in terms of improved psychological resilience and college adjustment. In contrast, functional independence from mothers, also an aspect of psychological separation, was associated with increased minority status stress and poor college adjustment. Lastly, secure attachment to mother, an aspect of parental attachment, was indicative of good college adjustment. The implications of these findings for parents, counselors, and college preparatory organization, are addressed.

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Chapter One

Introduction

There is an enormous adjustment process that students go through when entering college. Gone are the regularities of a pre-planned high school schedule. Gone are the core groups of friends that students have created in their schools and neighborhoods. Also gone are the structures and expectations of having a daily family routine. For most students, the first year of college will be the longest period of time they have ever been away from home. For those students who go away to college, beginning their undergraduate education entails a physical and psychological separation from family. While some students excel with their newfound independence, others do not do as well. This study examined some of the important factors that influence Black college students during their initial time at school.

In the adjustment to college issues central to students' personhood --such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, and political affiliations --are directly and indirectly challenged. Students are exposed to new ways of thinking and are called on to process various and sometimes competing ideas in order to determine what they wish to incorporate into or eliminate from their own way of being. During this time, old informational structures change and new growths in understanding are allowed to emerge. Deeply held ideals stemming from family may crumble under greater reflection or may be further buttressed. Whatever the nature of the transition, one experiences a loss of the familiar. In its absence is the potential for tremendous personal development and self-assuredness or alternatively for identity diffusion, regret, and self-doubt.

The range of problems that Black college students face in their beginning time at college can be enormous. They have similar adjustment concerns as White students but also additional challenges due to their minority status. The adjustment to college requires students to gain a greater level of independence. They need to be able to manage their time, complete demanding academic work, and navigate their social life, all while being able to maintain a healthy emotional state. In life, it is often the family that provides a sense of consistency, support, validation, and helps to regulate affect states of its members. Once in college, Black students need to be able to cope with a multitude of demands -- including those brought about by their minority status-- without having the security of their parents' presence. Although many consider going away to college to be an important milestone, it can lead some Black students to experience a heightened level of mental and emotional distress.

Richard Kadison, a psychiatrist at Harvard University, states that there is a mental health crisis on American college campuses (Kadison & Foy, 2004). The extent of mental health problems has been building for some time. In fact, a 1998 college survey showed suicide to be the second leading cause of death in the American college population and remains so today (National Mental Health Association, 2006). While suicide is an extreme outcome of mental health difficulties during the college years, other indicators of distress are also prevalent on U.S. campuses. A 2004 survey of 47,202 students by the American College Health Association found that 40 percent of U.S. college students became so depressed during their undergraduate education that they had difficulty functioning. In addition, college related drinking causes an average of 1,400

deaths per year (National College Health Association, 2005; National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2003).

Psychological difficulties can be compounded for Black college students attending predominantly White campuses (Kenny & Perez, 1996; Kadison et al., 2004). “Significant personal, social, and family adjustments may be encountered by students of color”. These students often need to create their own social networks to counteract feelings of isolation (Kenny et al., 1996, p. 527). They encounter the struggles typical of all entering freshman as well as additional adjustment concerns related to their minority status (Kenny et al., 1996). “They frequently face cultural and racial differences that can interfere with their personal, social, and academic growth” (Kadison et al., 2004, p.48).

Traditionally, in the lead up to college a greater emphasis is placed on helping Black students become academically ready than there is on helping them to be emotionally prepared for the undertaking. Colleges and universities have tried to bridge this gap by providing brief orientation programs for minority students. Orientation programs offer a crash course in college expectations. Although they do address important social aspects of student life, one can argue that there is seemingly not enough time or enough follow up to many of these programs. The longer first year of college programs tend to focus on skill building for time-management, goal setting, and test preparation but not as much on relationship building, substance abuse, sexuality, or mental health concerns. In addition, both types of programs are occurring at a time when Black students are already away from home and potentially already in jeopardy of heightened emotional distress. Although more students entering U.S. colleges state that

they are confident in their ability to graduate, increasingly fewer students do (Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand, 2004).

The goal of the current study is to look at the influence that psychological separation and parental attachment have on Black students' ability to be resilient and to make a positive adjustment to their time at college. Please note that for the purposes of this study, resilience was operationally defined in terms of reduced minority status stress and improved psychological well-being. Also note that although important differences exist, the terms Black and African-American are used interchangeably. In this study it was hypothesized that: 1. the success of Black college students' psychological separation from their parents, and 2. the quality of their attachment organization would affect their ability to be psychologically resilient, as well as their overall adjustment to college. Quantitative methods were used to explore the extent to which the process of psychological separation and parental attachment contributed to Black students' experience during their beginning time away at school.

This document consists of four additional chapters. The second chapter offers a review of the key theoretical perspectives and relevant research on psychological separation, parental attachment, resilience (minority status stress and psychological well-being) and college adjustment. The third and fourth chapters respectively provide a description of the methodology for the study and a detailed statement of the results. The fifth and final chapter considers how the findings on psychological separation and parental attachment fit with the relevant literature and contribute to our understanding of Black college students.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

This study focused on the effects of psychological separation and parental attachment regarding Black students' ability to be psychologically resilient and to adjust to college. I will review some of the important theoretical underpinnings and supporting research on psychological separation and parental attachment. In addition, the key literature on resilience and college adjustment for Black students will also be explored. This chapter will open with an overview on Black college students and adolescent identity development. Both subjects provide an important context for understanding the aims of this study.

Black College Students

According to the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE, 2006), the graduation rate for Black students at American colleges and universities is 42 percent compared to the 62 percent graduation rate of White students (JBHE, 2006). Within the American Black college student population, gender is also a factor. Black men graduate at a rate of 35 percent, while Black women graduate at a rate of 46 percent (JBHE, 2006). Many studies examined the reasons behind differential graduation rates (JBHE, 2006). Despite extensive study, the exact factors that contribute to this continued disparity remain unclear (JBHE, 2006).

Fleming wrote that "it seems that the effects of White colleges in general and Black colleges for women are too often distracting for high achievers. High-scoring students appear distracted by issues of race, identity conflicts, depression, and

psychosomatic illness, among other factors. These distractions take the student's focus away from where it needs to be: on academic issues" (Fleming, 2002, p. 16). The above statement by Fleming captures a primary concern. However, I strongly disagree with her perspective. Instead I believe that the problems she listed are not "distractions", but are intrusions that can significantly disrupt adolescents' sense of well-being. Issues such as race, identity, and mental health concerns are deserving of serious consideration when thinking of how best to help students prepare for college. Perhaps even more than academic success, psychological factors influence students' college experience (Kadison et al., 2004).

College is certainly a time for exploring identity concerns. Students are away from family and are confronted with broader a reality. Issues around identity directly impact students' level of stress, psychological well-being, and college adjustment. This is potentially even more the case for Black students who attend predominantly White colleges. Issues of identity can become complicated as students grow into themselves intellectually and emotionally while surrounded by others who are racially different. Differences in race often, but not always, entail disparities in academic preparation, household income, and sense of privilege (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly 2006). How well Black students are able to explore their identity concerns and gain a sense of self-knowledge and acceptance represent one of the main struggles/accomplishments of adolescence. Further research on Black college students will be reviewed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Adolescent Identity Development

There are pressing developmental considerations that late-stage adolescents face. Although the process of identity development is life-long, there are distinct challenges experienced in adolescence. The critical theories of adolescent identity and ethnic identity development offer a necessary framework from which to explore the two primary constructs of this study, psychological separation and parental attachment. Adolescence is a time considered to be fraught with confusion, anger, and some degree of risk taking. Late adolescence is often seen as a period for the exploration of: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, peer group affiliation, romantic relationships, and the determination of college major/career path. All of these concerns can contribute to or detract from students' sense of emotional health and psychological well-being.

The next pages will review the work on adolescent identity development by Erik Erikson (1956) and James Marcia (1967, 1983) as well as racial identity development by William Cross (Cross 1971; Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) and ethnic identity formation by Jean Phinney (1989). Marcia operationalized Erikson's views on adolescent identity development. Cross and Phinney further adapted Marcia's model to incorporate issues of racial and ethnic identity development (Cross, 1971; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Ong 2007). The works by Marcia, Cross, and Phinney were selected for this paper because they stem fairly directly from Erikson's theory of adolescent ego development. Together, Erikson, Marcia, Cross, and Phinney provide a largely comprehensive and linear though not exhaustive framework for the adolescent psychological development.

Erikson is credited with being the first psychoanalytic thinker to focus on adolescent development (Kroger, 1996). Erikson built on Freud's theory of psychosexual development and expanded it beyond the psychoanalytic premise that it is based solely on instinctual drives and defenses (Kroger, 1996; Eichler, 2006). Instead, Erikson helped to place ego development within a social construct. His eight stages of psychosocial development were created to span from birth until death. In each stage there is an inherent crisis that is to be resolved in order for one to progress successfully to the next level of development. Erikson's adolescent stage of ego development is termed 'identity versus role confusion'. The positive resolution of this stage is to establish a coherent identity and sense of self in relation to others. According to Erikson, "the adolescent process [however] is conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates" (Erikson, 1956, p. 66).

In Erikson's theory, ones' early identifications with parents, which are based on idealizations, can impede the developmental process. Part of the work of adolescence is to reshape these identifications so that they are more firmly based in a "social reality" (Erikson, 1956). Erikson named three steps for ego development that growing children experience: introjection-projection, identification, and identity formation (Erikson, 1956). The first stage of introjection-projection is representative of the symbiotic early relationship between caregivers and babies. In this stage there is a sense of shared 'mutuality' which children gain based on their 'self-feelings' stemming from the safety of their early relationships (Erikson, p.68, 1956). The second stage consists of

identifications in which children living within the loving ‘hierarchal’ structure of the family develop a sense of identification with primary caregivers (i.e., I want to be strong like daddy). Lastly, identity formation occurs “where the usefulness of identification ends” (Erikson, 1956, p. 68). Here, older children come to perceive of themselves in terms of their shifting roles within the larger society. Identity formation “is a configuration of gradually integrating constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles” (Erikson, 1956, p. 71). In this process childhood identifications are synthesized, rejected, or amended in a mercurial process of the consolidation of the ego (Erikson, 1956).

A period of intense identity formation, served by the restructuring of the ego is difficult for young people to encounter. To aid in this process Erikson believed a ‘moratorium’, was important in order to give developing youths the ability to experience new ideas and new ways of being (Erikson, 1956). In many ways going off to college is the closest that some students will have to a traditional moratorium. According to Erikson, the crisis of each stage of development rests between two opposing poles. In the end, this struggle is meant to promote an optimal balance between the two extremes, favorably tipped towards the positive outcome. In the fifth stage, ‘identity vs. role confusion’, it is necessary to experience a period of non-commitment before developing a firm sense of self. If this is not done adolescents risk prematurely closing off other possibilities.

Marcia (1966, 1967, 1983) further codified Erikson’s fifth stage of psychosocial development to aid in research on adolescent identity formation. “While Erikson saw

identity as some balance between commitment and confusion about one's role in society, Marcia identified two distinct types of commitment and two distinct types of non commitment" (Kroger, 1996, p. 34). Marcia (1966) defined identity development as a process consisting of four levels. Each identity status represents the degree of exploration and commitment. Marcia developed his model based on findings from research he conducted with a semi-structured ego identity interview. The four levels going from least adaptive to most adaptive are: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. Below is a table of Marcia's theoretical model of ego development which depicts his four ego identity statuses.

Table 1: *James Marcia Ego Identity Development*

Levels of Commitment	Level of Exploration	
	High	Low
High	Achievement	Foreclosure
Low	Moratorium	Diffusion

In Marcia's model (1966, 1967), diffusion is the status that pertains to adolescents who have been unable to make any real commitments in their lives. The foreclosure status describes adolescents who have not challenged their childhood beliefs and who have remained too closely tied to the identity of their parents. The moratorium status identifies adolescents who are currently in a period of crisis and who have not yet been able to make firm commitments. Lastly, the identity achievement status indicates those

adolescents who have “experienced a crisis period and are committed to an occupation and ideology” (Marcia, 1967, p. 119). Marcia’s last level of identity achievement reflects the ability to create a coherent and stable sense of self.

Phinney (Phinney, 1989) incorporated the work on racial identity development by Cross (1971, 1978) as well as the works of others into Marcia’s model of ego identity development. Phinney’s model for ethnic identity development is intended to be applied to Blacks as well as others so that direct comparisons between ethnic groupings can be made. Though there are some important differences between Cross’ original 1971 construct and Phinney’s (1989) they share many similarities.

Table 2: *Adolescent & Ethnic Identity*

	Erikson (1967)	Marcia (1968)	Cross (1971*)	Phinney (1989)
1.	Role Confusion	Diffusion	Pre-Encounter	-----
2.	Identity	Foreclosure	Encounter	Diffusion/Foreclosed
3.	Role Confusion	Moratorium	Immersion/Emersion	Moratorium
4.	Identity	Achievement	Internalization	Achieved

* Cross updated his theory of Nigrescence in 1991

Cross’ model is based on how Blacks develop a positive sense of themselves given a societal context of discrimination. In the original version of his theory Blacks in the pre-encounter stage were classified as being pro-Caucasian and anti-Black. Blacks in the encounter stage were characterized as experiencing discrimination, which led them to

alter their previously held feelings. Those in the immersion-emersion stage had ensconced themselves in Black culture and adopted anti-Caucasian attitudes. Lastly, Black students in the internalization stage developed a positive sense of belonging to their racial group and also held positive views of people outside of that group. Cross revised his racial identity theory in 1991. Instead of each stage representing an identity, it is now intended to describe an “overarching theme” (Cross et al., 2002). For example, the pre-encounter stage now has three separate identities: pre-encounter assimilationist, pre-encounter mis-education, and pre-encounter self-hatred. Please see Cross (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991; Cross & Vandiver, 2001) and Cokely (2002) for a more detailed review of Cross’ revised Nigrescence theory.

Phinney (1989) conducted research to see if Marcia’s understanding of ego identity development was applicable to the process of ethnic identity development in a range of minority adolescents. She initially proposed four status levels based on Marcia’s ego identity model. Phinney hypothesized that those in the diffuse status would have had “little or no” exploration of feelings about what it means to be part of their ethnic group. Adolescents in the foreclosed status also have “little or no” exploration regarding what it means to be a member of their ethnic group but nevertheless would have developed strong feelings about their ethnic identity based on their reactions to social experiences. Adolescents in the moratorium status would have begun some examination of their ethnic identity and would be likely to experience “confusion” about it. Lastly, those in the achieved status would have completed a personal exploration of their ethnicity in which they developed a deepened understanding and achieved self-acceptance (Phinney, 1989. P. 38).

It is important to note that coders for Phinney's study (1989) could not distinguish between the responses of students in the diffusion stage and those in the foreclosed stage. As a result the two were combined leaving the three stages for ethnic identity development as: diffusion/foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved (Phinney, 1989). Phinney found that "minority adolescents who had explored and were clear about the meaning of their ethnicity (ethnic identity achieved) showed higher scores on self-evaluation, sense of mastery, social and peer interactions, and family relations, compared to the diffusion and foreclosed adolescents" (Phinney, 1989, p. 47). Cross' research also showed that Black students who were in the internalization stage of racial identity development were better off in terms of well-being and self-esteem (1971). In addition, Phinney conducted a study in 1990 which found that the Black and Mexican college students engaged in more of an "ethnic identity search than White subjects" (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990, p. 180). Concerns about ethnic/racial identity are of great importance to Black college students and can hinder how they feel about their college experience (Phinney, 1989).

Taken together, the works of Erikson, Marcia, Cross, and Phinney describe many of the identity struggles of Black adolescents. Erikson's initial understanding of role confusion and identity development in adolescence led Marcia to conceptualize this stage in terms of four statuses, two levels which represented a lack of commitment and two levels which represented a lack of exploration. Lastly, Phinney and Cross extended Marcia's paradigm to minority adolescent identity formation. Issues of racial or ethnic identity can be even more central than occupational choice or friendship group (Phinney, 1989). While the theories of Erikson, Marcia, Cross, and Phinney incorporate the impact

of external societal factors on adolescent identity development, other theorists gave greater consideration to the transformation occurring within the adolescent.

Theoretical Views on Separation-Individuation

Margaret Mahler devised the theory of separation-individuation. It described the process that infants undertake when first coming to perceive of themselves as separate entities from their mothers (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). A second psychological separation from parents is believed to occur in adolescence, reflected in maturing youths' ability to develop a more independent sense of self. Mahler's separation-individuation process occurs in children between the ages of four months and approximately three years of age. It consists of four sub-stages: differentiation, practicing, rapprochement, and consolidation. In each stage children are further able to differentiate themselves from their mothers.

Peter Blos (1968, 1979) adopted Margaret Mahler's theoretical understanding and applied it to adolescent character development. Blos (1968) structured the separation process in adolescence into four developmental challenges that must be overcome in order to proceed into healthy adult development. During this process adolescents are in search of "self-realization" (Blos, 1979, p. 414). Blos described the separation process that occurs in adolescence as being different from that in infancy in that children are moving away from internalized as opposed to externalized objects. That is, adolescents struggle to create their own values and identity. The four challenges adolescents experience are: second individuation, residual trauma, ego continuity, and sexual identity (Blos, 1968).

In the second individuation, there is the “loosening ties with the internalized parent which has sustained the child during latency and phallic periods” (Kroger, 1996, p. 53). The loosening of ties is necessary in order for adolescents to develop love objects outside of their family (Kroger, 1996). During the second individuation process adolescents will experience both drive and ego regression in the service of the ego (Blos, 1968). It is believed that even as adolescents want greater independence, they experience a pull towards “regressive yearnings to recapture the gratifications, security, and sense of omnipotence of early childhood” (Eichler, 2006, p. 22). There is a period of shifting identifications as adolescents revisit childhood drives and try to balance them with a more mature sense of self (Blos, 1968).

Blos referred to residual trauma as the next precondition for character formation in adolescence (Blos, 1968). Here trauma is meant in general terms to be unfavorable or injurious conditions that negatively impact ones’ development (Blos, 1968). Blos saw trauma as a universal experience that leaves a lasting effect on individuals. While experienced first in childhood, it is re-experienced in adolescence in order to integrate the negative experiences into the ego. This is done to gain a sense of mastery over them. Kroger (1996), cautions that it is important to consider the degree of the trauma experienced and that the mastery of childhood trauma is often a lifelong task, and is not just limited to adolescence. According to Blos, adult development will be impaired if one avoids working through childhood traumas. Individuals who have not done so will remain vulnerable to a heightened sense of anxiety and possible phobias (Blos, 1968).

Third, Blos (1968) saw ego continuity as having an important role in creating a pathway for adult development. The integration of childhood experiences into the ego is

necessary to help stabilize character formation and to garner a sense of “wholeness”. A lack of ego continuity can lead to the denial of ones’ self experience (Kroger, 1996). Ego continuity further allows for disentanglement from internalized parental objects.

Individuals are able to conceive of themselves as “constant”; that is, as someone with a past as well as a future (Blos, 1968). The last precondition for adulthood is sexual identity. Blos viewed the psychological understanding of gender identity as occurring at a much younger age, whereas sexual identity development is not fully completed until adolescence. Blos believed adolescence is a time period in which bi-sexual feelings are resolved. In Blos’ view, the Oedipal conflict is re-visited in reverse and the children’s attraction to the same sex parent is overcome (Blos, 1968).

Blos’ (1968, 1969) theory of character formation in adulthood has been critiqued on a number of fronts. Research has shown that separation-individuation largely occurs in late adolescence as opposed to early or middle adolescence (Kroger, 1996). Others have argued that a direct parallel should not be made between the separation process in infancy and that in adolescence, since by the time of adolescence there is no longer a symbiotic merging with the mother (Kroger, 1996). In addition, it is felt that in order for adolescents to be able to give up parental interjects, the individuation process has to have already occurred (Kroger, 1996). Another problematic aspect of Blos’ ideas regarding the separation process for adolescents is that he correlated success with a sharp break in ones’ relationship with their parents (Gilligan, 1982; Rice, Cole, & Lapsley, 1990). Blos’ perspective implied “that the primary task of adolescence is to repudiate parental relationships, to disengage psychologically from internalized influences of parents, and to chart an individual course of development” (Rice et al., 1990, p.195). Nevertheless,

Blos' model is useful when considering the possible roots of poor adjustment for college students. As will be described below, a number of researchers have conducted studies based on Blos' theory of the second separation-individuation process occurring in adolescence. However, the research has largely been conducted with Caucasian students. All students go through a physical and psychological separation from parents when they leave home to begin college. The current study will examine the effects of psychological separateness on Black college students and in so doing test the continued relevance of Blos' theory. A review of some of key studies on separation-individuation is provided below.

Research on Separation-Individuation and College Students

Adolescents who are not able to separate in positive ways from their family of origin are more likely to have difficulty adjusting to college life (Lapsley, Rice & Shadid, 1989; Rice, 1992). Out of Blos' four challenges experienced in adolescent character formation, his first challenge separation-individuation has received the most focus from researchers (Kroger, 1996). Several measures have been created to help assess the separation-individuation process in adolescence. One of the most widely used measures is The Psychological Separation Inventory. Hoffman created The Psychological Separation Inventory in 1984. The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) incorporated the work of Blos (1968, 1979) as well as Mahler (Mahler et al., 1975) in acknowledging that the separation process is based on both physical as well as intra-psycho changes.

Hoffman (1984) believed that psychological separation in college students could be measured in four dimensions: functional independence, emotional independence, attitudinal independence, and conflictual independence (Hoffman, 1984). Functional independence (FI) refers to the ability to take care of everyday things without the help of parents. Emotional independence (EI) refers to college students' ability to maneuver through social interactions without needing an excessive amount of closeness and/or emotional support from parents. Conflictual independence (CI) is defined as not holding on to feelings of anger, guilt, or mistrust. Lastly, attitudinal independence (AI) pertains to the ability to develop independent views as separate from that of ones' parents (Hoffman, 1984).

Hoffman (1984) conducted his initial study utilizing the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) to look at the effects of psychological separation in late adolescents. There were 75 male and 75 female students who participated in the study; 87 percent of them were Caucasian (Hoffman, 1984). Hoffman (1984) found that greater emotional independence (EI) from parents was related to students having fewer academic difficulties. Conflictual independence (CI) from parents was related to better personal adjustment for female students and to better romantic relationships for both male and female students. In writing about the PSI, Hoffman (1984) suggested that this measure could be useful in helping to identify and treat the typical problems that college students encounter. Hoffman explored this idea more fully in a later study (Hoffman & Weiss, 1987).

In a second study, Hoffman (Hoffman et al., 1987) utilized the Psychological Separation Inventory to help assess the effects of psychological separation and family

dynamics on college students' problems. These problems included: depression, anxiety, interpersonal concerns, academic, physical health, and substance abuse. There were 83 male and 107 female students who participated in the study. All of the participants were Caucasians from 'intact families'. The specificities of the subject selection were made in order to "reduce the confounding influences of race and family structure" (Hoffman et al., 1987, p.158). In the study, Hoffman found that lower conflictual independence and increased inter-parental conflict were related to college students having a greater number of presenting concerns (Hoffman et al., 1987). The findings demonstrated how important it is to be aware of the damaging impact that poor family dynamics can have on students even while they are away at school. Students' ability to work through conflicted feelings towards parents can help them to create positive personal relationships and improve their sense of well-being during their college years (Hoffman et al., 1987).

Lopez, (Lopez, Campbell, & Watkins, 1989) conducted a study that examined the role of family structure and psychological separation on college adjustment. The data of 554 (222 male, 332 female) students was used for the study. The percentages of ethnicities among the participants were not provided. All participants had married parents, both of whom were living. The study found that higher conflictual independence (CI) was the greatest predictor of positive college adjustment for both males and females. The study also found that marital discord and inappropriate family stratifications (i.e., role reversal or over-involvement) were related to conflicted and distant relationships with their families by males and with conflicted and dependent relationships with their families by females (Lopez et al., 1989). Lopez recommended that college counselors aid

students in maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and parents particularly those parents who were experiencing marital distress (Lopez et al., 1989).

Lapsley (Lapsley, Rice, & Shadid, 1989) examined the effect that psychological separation can have on college adjustment at different stages in the college process. The study looked at 130 (78 male, 52 female) freshmen as compared to 123 (70 male, 53 female) upperclassmen. The percentages of ethnicities among the participants were not reported. As expected, Lapsley found that freshmen were more psychologically dependent on their mothers and fathers and showed greater difficulty with adjustment (Lapsley et al., 1989). In addition, it was determined that better college adjustment for freshmen was associated with functional and emotional independence from mothers and with conflictual independence from fathers (Lapsley et al., 1989).

Rice, Cole, Lapsley (1990) examined the role of separation-individuation, family cohesion, and college adjustment. This study looked at 240 (138 male, 102 female) students, 89 percent of whom were Caucasian. College students who reported positive feelings of separation from parents (CI) depicted themselves as having had a positive adjustment to college (Rice et al., 1990). Rice argued the need for preventive interventions for emotionally at risk students. These interventions could include workshops in which students directly address their feelings regarding their separation process from parents.

Another important finding of the Rice, Cole, Lapsley (1990) study (described above) was the role of general independence (GI). Using factor analysis Rice found that three subscales from the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) (attitudinal independence, functional independence, and emotional independence) were inter-related

and together measured a general sense of independence (GI) from parents. Conflictual independence (CI) was not found to be inter-related to the other subscales. CI measures positive feelings of separation from parents (Rice et al., 1990). Some later studies have opted to not look at the four individual subscales of the PSI as being distinct but rather in terms of either general independence (GI) or conflictual independence (CI) (Choi, 2002). Based on the findings for the strong role of conflictual independence in college adjustment, Rice (Rice et al., 1990) wrote that, “apparently, the successful management of the emotional responses to separation [CI] may be more important than independence [GI], when confronted with the adaptational challenges of the college environment” (Rice et al., 1990, p. 201).

In 1992, Rice conducted a follow up to the Lapsley, Rice, Shadid (1989) study (described above). This was done in part to better understand developmental changes within the individual as they mature. Rather than compare different students at different years in college, this study employed a longitudinal approach using the same group of students. The data was originally collected on 130 first year participants (Lapsley et al., 1989) and information was collected from them again in their third year of school. There were 81 (45 male, 36 female) students of the original 130 that participated at the second time point. The students who were now in their third year of college reported greater psychological independence from both parents as well as feeling better adjusted to college life than they had as freshmen. The noted gains overtime in psychological independence were related to emotional, functional, and conflictual independence.

Given how critical identity development is to late adolescence, Lucas (1997) carried out a study that examined identity development, career development, and

psychological separation in college students. There were 247 (129 male, 118 female) students who participated in the study. Here, the researcher used the revised Extended Objective Measure of Identity Status, which is based on James Marcia's work, to evaluate the students in terms of their identity development (please see p.10 for a review of Marcia's theory). Lucas used two out the four identity statuses: moratorium and achievement. Lucas found that female college students scored lower than their male counterparts in terms of functional and emotional independence and as a result were more likely to experience a continued dependence on parents for their personal needs and for approval. While identity achievement predicted career self-efficacy, it also predicted a decrease in emotional independence for men and a decrease in attitudinal independence for women. Lucas (1997) stated that the results were "somewhat puzzling" because they were not as expected in that identity achievement did not predict greater independence. However the researcher noted that the unexpected outcome might be due to the demographics of the participants over half were non-Caucasian (Lucas, 1997, p. 129). The findings suggest that important differences might exist in terms of psychological separation from parents for minority students.

Choi 2002 noted that it was unclear whether the separation-individuation process would be relevant to college students of ethnically diverse backgrounds. She reported that, "no empirical research has investigated the influences of culture and ethnicity on the nature of psychological separation-individuation for non-Caucasian college students" (Choi, 2002, p. 468). Indeed, only one other study sought to address ethnic differences in relation to separation-individuation (Gnaulti & Heine, 2001). The Gnaulti et al., study did not use the PSI and its findings as they relate to African-Americans are reviewed

separately. Choi (2002) looked at the influence of psychological separation on college adjustment for 170 (68 male, 102 female) Korean American college students. She noted that there was a “misleading tendency” to equate independence from parents with better adjustment because Korean culture is traditionally more collectivist in nature (Choi, 2002). In her study, she used two constructs, general independence (a merger of attitudinal independence, emotional independence, and functional independence), and conflictual independence. It was found that similar to studies with predominantly Caucasian students, conflictual independence (CI) was related to positive college adjustment. However, unlike in the studies with Caucasian students, general independence (GI) was inversely related to adjustment. Choi found that students who had a general dependence in relation to their parents reported a better experience in their beginning time at college. She argued that for Korean American students’ dependence on parents is more in keeping with their cultural norms and not necessarily indicative of problematic development (Choi, 2002).

Summary of Separation-Individuation

Students’ ability to psychologically separate from their parents was originally shown to be a good predictor of college adjustment (Hoffman, 1984; Hoffman & Weiss, 1987; Lapsley et al., 1989; Lopez et al., 1989; Rice et al., 1990). However, those from the feminist perspective have challenged this view. Instead, they felt that the emphasis on autonomy was a disadvantage to women who are more typically socialized to maintain a closer connection to their families of origin (Chodorow, 1989; Gnaulati et al., 2001; Josselson, 1988; Mattanah et al., 2004). In addition, the research was also criticized for

the lack of ethnic and racial diversity of the studies' participants. As a result, parental attachment became a more widely used predictor of psychological well-being and college adjustment. The next section will review the theoretical understanding of parental attachment as it applies to college students.

Theoretical Views on Parental Attachment

“While the end of adolescence thus is the stage of an overt identity crisis, identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is the lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society. Its roots go back all the way to the first self-recognition: in the baby's earliest exchange of smiles there is something of a self-realization coupled with a mutual recognition” (Erikson, 1956, P. 69).

There are continuations in “attachment processes” that span from childhood to adulthood and become more solidified in adolescence (Allen & Land, 1999). Attachment status determines how future relationships are organized as well as the development of capacities for affect regulation and the establishment of a core sense of self. Bowlby's ethological theory on attachment came from his observations of the ill effects of children who were raised deprived of loving and attentive parents (Bowlby, 1969). Ideally parents will serve as a secure base from which growing infants can explore the world with greater confidence and independence (Bowlby, 1969). Primary caregivers' consistency, availability, and responsiveness around basic needs such as feeding, changing diapers, and cuddling are critical to infants' psychological development. Children who have grown up in a stable environment with attentive caretakers believe that their basic needs will continue to be met. Alternatively, children who have suffered abuse or neglect are not able to move forth into the world with the same level of assuredness. Bowlby's work was further substantiated by Mary Ainsworth's research on attachment patterns in

children (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). Ainsworth originally identified three attachment styles; however, after further review an additional insecure attachment category was added. The attachment classifications are: secure; insecure-avoidant; insecure-resistant; and insecure-disorganized (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main, 1995). Attachment patterns influence the capacity for affect regulation through the development of internal working models.

Internal working models (Bowlby, 1988) are ways of thinking of oneself and others. Securely attached children tend to develop internal working models that promote a positive sense of self, while children with insecure attachment patterns are likely to feel unworthy, unable to self regulate, and unsafe in the presence of their caregivers. Children who are maltreated and neglected believe they are unlovable (Bowlby, 1980). Additionally, if parents have been repeatedly hostile and rejecting, their children will develop the expectation of poor treatment by others (Bowlby, 1980). As infants age, their internal working models will guide essential aspects of their future interactions with those outside of their family. If their internal working models are based on negative schemas, they are more likely experience later interpersonal and emotional hardship.

Attachment patterns are also linked to affect regulation. Children who have secure attachment styles are better able to regulate their distress (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). This is because they are able to seek support from their caregivers whom they use as a secure emotional base (Kobak et al., 1988). Children depend on their parents to help manage their internal states (Terman, 1984). Going back to the original bond between mothers and babies, attentive caregivers are able to help soothe and otherwise respond to children's physical and emotional needs. Children who have not had this as a foundation

are at greater risk for affect dysregulation and even future psychopathology (Sroufe, 1997).

Although attachment patterns in childhood have been well substantiated, there is some concern as to their continued stability. Are they stable into one's college years? Bowlby believed that attachment patterns were prevalent in individuals from the "cradle to the grave" (Bowlby, 1969). He later explained that attachment patterns are likely to continue in children for two reasons. First, parents' behavior towards their children tends to be consistent, and second because attachment patterns are self-sustaining (Bowlby, 1988). For example, anxious children will receive less favorable responses from their parents thus further contributing to their anxiety. Empirical research has shown support for Bowlby's perspective at least into the college years (Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim, 2000). Patterns of attachment established in childhood determine to some extent how well students will be able to manage the emotional stress of college life (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Mattanah et al., 2004). Studies have found that those students who have secure levels of attachment in childhood are better able to navigate the emotional upheavals of this complex time in their lives (Armsden et al., 1987; Vivona, 2000). A review of the key research on parental attachment and college students is provided below.

Research on Parental Attachment and College Students

Several measures have been created to help assess parental attachment in late stage adolescents. Two of the most popular measures are the Parent Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Kenny, 1987) and the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment

(IPPA) (Armsden et al., 1987). The PAQ is based on Ainsworth's research on attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The PAQ assesses students' willingness to seek help, as well as feelings about their parents in terms of level of interaction, emotional support, availability, and their satisfaction with the parental support they have received (Kenny, 1987; Kenny & Rice, 1995). The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) which was chosen for this study, is based on Bowlby's theory of attachment and was created to help assess the internal working models for late-stage adolescents (Armsden et al., 1987 p. 431). The IPPA is based on three spheres influence: trust of parents, communication with parents, and feelings of alienation from parents. I will review the research findings based on the PAQ followed by those based on the IPPA.

Using the PAQ, Kenny (1990) devised a study to see whether quality of attachment to parents remained stable throughout the college years. There were 159 (57 male, 102 female) students who participated in the research. The participants were predominantly Caucasian (90 percent) and had married parents. A total of 29 (13 male, 16 female) of these students participated in a previous protocol during their freshman year. The 1990 study found that the students gave high ratings for their parents in terms of quality of interaction, fostering autonomy, and providing emotional support (Kenny, 1990). This study did not find many differences between male and female students. The one difference was that female students reported a greater likelihood to seek out parental support in times of stress (Kenny, 1990). In addition, no significant changes were found in the quality of attachment for those students whose perceptions of their parents' involvement were measured at the two separate time points (freshman year and senior year). This finding implies that parental attachment bonds remain stable throughout the

college years and that “affective closeness to parents should not be perceived as synonymous with dependency or as the antithesis of independence” (Kenny, 1990).

Unlike studies on psychological separation, those on parental attachment included greater ethnic and racial diversity among the research participants. Kenny and Perez (1996) looked at the relationship between parental attachment and psychological well-being in freshmen. Noting the lack of research with ethnically diverse college students Kenny (1996) recruited 172 college students of whom, 70 (34 male, 36 female) were African-American, 42 (20 male, 22 female) were Asian-American, and 60 (27 male, 33 female) were Latin-American. No significant differences between the racial groups in terms of levels of attachment quality and the indicators of psychological well-being were found. In addition, the findings among the different racial groups were consistent with those based predominantly on Caucasian student samples (Kenny et al., 1996). It was found that higher quality of attachment was related to better psychological well-being. The researchers did note that secure levels of attachment may be arrived through different means in the different racial groups and that there remained a need to “develop more culturally sensitive models of college student adjustment” (Kenny et al., 1996, p. 533).

Hinderlie & Kenny (2002) conducted a study on parental attachment and college adjustment for Black students who attended predominantly White colleges. It was noted that Blacks at predominantly White institutions tended to have fewer Black faculty to provide them with mentorship and reported greater difficulty forming relationships with Caucasian faculty members (Hinderlie et al., 2002). Given the lack of support on campus, it was unclear if the connection to family for those students would take on greater importance. There were 186 (86 male, 100 female) Black students who

participated in the research. The study found that secure parental attachment was related to better college adjustment. Attachment to both parents predicted academic as well as personal/emotional well-being and attachment to father promoted a sense of institutional belonging. Quality of parental attachment however did not predict the students' social adjustment in college. Based on these findings, Hinderlie et al., (2002) suggested that secure attachment to parents as well as campus support were needed to help those Black students who attend predominantly White colleges.

In the initial study of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, Armsden and Greenberg (1987) looked at the effects of attachment on psychological well-being for undergraduates. There were 86 (32 male, 54 female) students who participated in the research, 80 percent were Caucasian. Participants were assigned to either a 'high security' or 'low security' attachment categories (Armsden et al., 1987). It was found that the quality of attachment was "highly related to well-being, particularly to self-esteem and life satisfaction" (Armsden et al., 1987, p. 445). The average self-esteem score for individuals in the 'high security' group was in the 70th percentile, while those in the low security group only had a mean score in the 20th percentile.

Vivona (2000) conducted two studies using the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA). In the first she looked to see whether the IPPA subscales could be further delineated into the three attachment levels that Ainsworth (Ainsworth et al., 1978) described. She found great support for the secure attachment level as a predictor and lesser support for either the insecure-ambivalent or the insecure-avoidant attachment levels. Although she conducted a follow-up study that confirmed these results, it remains unclear whether the findings from the IPPA are best suited to be discussed in these terms

(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In her follow-up study, Vivona (2000) looked at the impact of the quality of attachment relationships on college adjustment. There were 172 (60 male, 112 female) freshmen who participated, 78 percent were Caucasian. The study found that college students with insecure levels of parental attachment were prone to greater incidents of depression (Vivona, 2000). She also found that the women who were classified as insecure-avoidant had a poorer adjustment to college and greater difficulty developing intimacy with others. Overall, the results indicated that attachment organization affected students' ability to regulate their emotional states, which in turn impacted their ability to adjust to college. The study showed that students with better quality of attachment to parents had a better emotional experience while at school.

Summary of Parental Attachment

The literature on parental attachment has shown that it is a viable predictor of college student adjustment (Armsden et al., 1987; Kenny, 1990, 1996; Rice, Cunningham, & Young, 1997; Vivona, 2000). Unlike the studies conducted on psychological separation (see previous section) the studies on parental attachment and college adjustment paid more attention to cultural diversity. Nonetheless, parental attachment does not measure psychological separation. It is important to note that there is a growing awareness of the need to consider both in terms of adolescent development and college adjustment. The next section will review the combined role of psychological separation and parental attachment.

Theoretical Reviews of Combined Psychological Separation and Parental Attachment

The task of late adolescence is to manage independence as well as emotional connection (Holmbeck & Leake, 1999). College students who have a secure pattern of attachment are seen as being able to separate in positive and non-conflictual ways from their parents (Mattanah, et al., 2004). Both constructs offer significant insight into how well students are able to adjust to life on campus. Josselson (1988) takes a strong stance against Blos' premise that healthy adolescent development is based on a sharp break from parental bonds. In reviewing the research on healthy adolescent development she found that the "majority of adolescents maintain harmonious, loving relationships with parents" (Josselson, 1988, p. 92). She further wrote that "attachment is not the opposite of separation-individuation - it is coincident with it" (Josselson, 1988, p. 95). Doctors (2000) agreed with the importance of viewing the two constructs as interrelated. Doctors (2000) stated that, "individuation is advanced by secure attachment". The adjustment to college is a twin process. College-age adolescents need to be able to separate from their families of origin so that they can become more self-sufficient and discover who they are as individuals. However, students' very ability to do so is hinged in part on the quality of their early life attachments. A brief review of the key research findings regarding the combined effects of psychological separation and parental attachment on college adjustment is provided below. There continues to be a dearth of studies that address both of these issues for Black college students.

Kenny and Donaldson (1992) looked at the connection between psychological separation, parental attachment, and college adjustment. The study analyzed 162 female freshmen, 78 percent of whom were Caucasian. The results from this study indicated that

conflictual independence -low levels of anxiety and guilt from parents- and to a lesser magnitude attitudinal dependence - attitudes, beliefs and opinions that are similar to parents-, were related to positive adjustment. In terms of attachment, secure attachment was associated with better psychological and academic functioning. Here the results were consistent with the literature to date. Conflictual independence is the best predictor for college adjustment with Caucasian students (Rice et al., 1990) and secure attachment is the best predictor for college adjustment (Rice et al., 1997).

In 2003, Kalsner and Pistole conducted a study on the effects of psychological separation, parental attachment, and ethnic identity on college adjustment. There were 252 (105 male, 147 female) students who participated in the research. Of the sample, approximately 30 percent were Asian, 16 percent Indian, 22 percent Black, 10 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Caucasian, and 7 percent who identified as other. The researchers questioned whether Black students' adjustment to college would be based on a greater level of interdependence given "culturally consistent family-related practices", these included respect for elders and strong ties to a sense of Black community (Kalsner et al., 2003, p. 96). Based on the multi-ethnic sample higher levels of individuation were found to be related to better adjustment and to reduced psychological distress. However, it was also found that greater levels of dependence pertaining to inclusion in family activities and the availability of parental advice were also related to decreased psychological distress as well and to improved commitment to ones' goals. The students' continued dependence on their parents aided in important aspects of their well-being. In terms of attachment, it was found that emotional support from parents helped students achieve a greater sense of independence and experience better overall adjustment to college life

(Kalsner et al., 2003). There were no significant findings related to Black students. It was found that Asian students reported less psychological separation from parents than did Caucasian students.

Mattanah (Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand, 2004) examined the potential mediational effects between separation-individuation, parental attachment, and college adjustment. In the study, 404 (158 male, 246 female) students participated, 78 percent were Caucasian. As expected, secure attachment was found to be related to better college adjustment. However, psychological separation was shown to mediate the effects of attachment on college adjustment. This finding demonstrated the continued importance of studying both factors. The authors noted that this study was the first to demonstrate that separation-individuation could mediate the impact of parental attachment on college adjustment (Mattanah et al., 2004).

Summary of Combined Psychological Separation and Parental Attachment

The combined effects of psychological separation and parental attachment have been shown to be important constructs that influence students' beginning time at college. So far it has been demonstrated that conflictual independence is related to better well-being and better college adjustment for Caucasian students (Rice et al., 1990). It has also been shown that parental attachment predicts better college adjustment for both Caucasian and minority students. Further research is needed to see how these constructs apply to the experience of Black students who attend predominantly White colleges. As will be described in greater detail, the current study hypothesized that the effects of both psychological separation and parental attachment would influence Black students' ability

to be psychologically resilient and to adjust to their college years. The remainder of this chapter will review the literature on psychological resilience and college adjustment for Black students.

Psychological Resilience, Psychological Separation, and Parental Attachment

Psychological resilience is the capacity for successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1995). This concept emerged in the social and developmental psychology literature, and was originally derived from research on children with mental ill parents (Garmezy & Rodnick, 1959). More recently it has been used to help understand the psychological health of at-risk adolescents (Kenny, Gallagher, Alvarez-Silva, Silsby, 2002; Luthar, 1991).

Psychological resilience is vital in order for students to handle the difficulties they experience while at college. The concept of resilience is based on risk factors and protective factors. Risk factors are those that contribute to the students' inability to overcome adverse circumstances or events. Risk factors for college students could include: financial stress, emotional stress, discrimination, academic stress, substance abuse, family, and a predisposition to mental illness. Alternatively, protective factors serve as a buffer to help individuals handle the difficult events in their lives. Examples of protective factors for college students could include: friends, family, spiritual beliefs, involvement in campus activities as well as feelings of connection to professors, advisors, and counselors. I have included family as both a potential risk factor and a potential protective factor because families have a pivotal role, which can affect students in both

positive and negative ways (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Hawley & DeHaan, 1996). For the purposes of this study, resilience was defined in terms of Black students' ability to handle the stress related to their minority status and to achieve a positive sense of well-being.

Psychological Resilience: Minority Status Stress and Black College Students

The act of leaving home to attend school is anxiety provoking for most students. Kenny (1987) has likened it to Ainsworth's Strange Situation laboratory separation procedure, which – like going off to college – provokes the children's attachment system. Kenny and Perez (1996) noted that this experience might be particularly stressful for minority students: "The strangeness of that situation maybe heightened for the racially or ethnically diverse student entering a predominantly White campus" (Kenny et al., 1996, p. 528). Both overt and covert forms of racial discrimination on campus can make students feel unwelcome, and likely contribute to lower graduation rates for Black students (Smedley, Myers, and Harrell, 1993). One example of the potential stressors Black students face is the resentment by some non minority students at what they perceive to be the easier admission standards afforded by affirmative action programs. This is particularly the case at top tier colleges (Kadison et al., 2004). Insubstantial academic preparation and a lack of a family college tradition have also been cited as hindering Black students' success and adding to the level of distress they experience (JBHE, 2006).

Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) conducted a study on minority-status stress and college student adjustment. They found that "status-related pressures are associated with increased feelings of distress and pose additional demands on students' coping

resources” (Smedley et al., 1993, p. 446). Minority students attending predominantly White colleges feel great concern regarding their academic readiness and worry they are being perceived negatively by their White peers and professors (Smedley et al., 1993). Claude Steele discusses this concern in greater detail in his research on “stereotype threat” (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Anderson J. Franklin also addresses this concern in his work on the “invisibility syndrome” (Franklin, 1999). Steele believes that Black students’ academic performance is hindered because they fear confirming negative stereotypes that Whites hold of Blacks in terms of having a lower intellectual ability. Franklin’s theory on invisibility states that Blacks go through “an inner struggle with the feeling that one’s talents, abilities, personality, and worth are not valued or even recognized because of prejudice and racism” (Franklin, 1999, p. 761). These concerns can add significant pressure to the lives of Black college students.

In addition, Black students who attend predominantly White colleges often feel caught between two cultures; the European American culture which is more pronounced on White college campuses, and the African-American culture of their own families (Taylor, 1989). Black students are more prone to maintain connection with their families at home because they seek the cultural/emotional support that may not be available to them on campus (Gnoulati et al., 2001). However, some evidence suggests that close family attachments could also be a source of stress and conflict for students entering college, especially when the predominant racial and ethnic culture of the campus differs from that of the students’ families (Kenny et al., 1996, p. 528). This can especially be the case for first generation college students whose parents’ may place greater pressure on them to succeed (A. J. Franklin, personal communication, May 2009).

Psychological Resilience: Psychological Well-Being and Black College Students

Psychological well-being has been defined as the ability to handle adversity while still managing ones' emotional and mental state in a mature and healthy manner (Franklin & Jackson, 1990). A sense of psychological well-being is largely subjective (Deiner, 1984). It can be characterized by feelings of happiness, high self-esteem, economic success, and positive interpersonal relationships (Franklin, 1996). Well-being can also be viewed in terms of the parental attachment relationship (Kenny et al., 1996). Internal working models formed in childhood create lasting patterns for how children come to think of themselves (Rice et al., 1997). Positive self-esteem is one of the essential aspects of psychological well-being (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994).

Rice, Cunningham, and Young (1997) conducted a study on parental attachment, social competence, and well-being. They found that social competence was a predictor of emotional well-being. For men, social competence was related to the quality of attachment to father and for women it was related to the quality of attachment to both mother and father (Rice et al., 1997). In addition, Kenny and Perez (1996) conducted a study that explored the connection between parental attachment, psychological separation, and psychological well-being for minority freshmen. The researchers found two key factors that led to better psychological well-being in minority freshmen (Kenny et al., 1996). Those factors are: 1. having a positive relationship with a family attachment figure, and 2. having that same family member encourage their independence (Kenny et al., 1996). Separation and attachment processes are implicated in psychological well-being, just as they are in the capacity to manage stress. Students with secure levels of

parental attachment have been found to be more sociable, have a more positive view of themselves, and to report fewer psychological difficulties, such as depression, in college (Rice, et al, 1997).

Parental Attachment, Psychological Separation, and Black College Student Adjustment

As described above, both separation-individuation (Gnaulati et al., 2001; Lapsley et al., 1989; Levin, Green, & Millon, 1986; Rice et al., 1990) and attachment organization (Armsden et al., 1987; Vivona, 2000) have been well studied in relation to college student adjustment. However, very few researchers have looked at the effects of separation-individuation and/or attachment as predictors of college adjustment with Black students (Gnaulati et al., 2001; Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Rice et al., 1997).

Research has shown that Black college students report high levels of connection to their family of origin (Taylor, 1989). Gnaulati and Heine (2001) found that Black undergraduates relied heavily on their parents for guidance. They also found that Blacks anticipated rejection from others more frequently, had greater difficulty negotiating closeness with others, and were less likely to associate with their college professors (Gnaulati et al., 2001). Jacqueline Fleming (1984) found that Black students tended to do better on Black college campuses because they had greater social support. As a result, they were able to develop stronger friendships, interact more frequently with professors, and generally feel a greater connection to campus life (Fleming, 1984). A more recent study by Watson and Kuh (1996) similarly reported that Black students demonstrated a greater level of involvement in campus activities while attending predominantly Black schools. Despite the importance of the data on the benefits of going to a Black college,

many Black students attend predominantly White schools. The ability to be resilient by handling the stress of their minority status and by maintaining a sense of well-being is therefore an imperative for these students.

Statement of Purpose

This study examined the effects of psychological separation and parental attachment on Black students' ability to be psychologically resilient (i.e., manage stress and/or establish a sense of well-being) and to adjust to college. It is of significant concern that Black students are prone to discontinue their undergraduate studies at high rates (JBHE, 2006). Black graduation rates nationwide are 42 percent while graduation rates for Caucasian students are 62 percent (JBHE, 2006). It is important to explore some of the perhaps overlooked psychological factors that influence college adjustment for Blacks so that the process can be ameliorated. Quantitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data from the college participants. This study was conducted so that additional ideas and understanding might be added to how college preparatory organizations, high schools, parents, and counselors help ready Black students for their college years.

Hypotheses

Please note that the hypotheses were designed to be two-tailed to allow for the broadest possible outcomes.

Hypothesis 1: The quality of psychological separation will be related to psychological resilience and/or college adjustment.

Hypothesis 1a: The quality of psychological separation, as measured by Psychological Separation Inventory (Hoffman, 1984), will be related to the level of minority status stress, as measured by Minority-Status Stress Scale (Smedley et. al., 1993).

Hypothesis 1b: The quality of psychological separation, as measured by Psychological Separation Inventory (Hoffman, 1984), will be related to the level of psychological well-being, as measured by The Franklin Psychological Well-Being Index (Franklin, 1996).

Hypothesis 1c: The quality of psychological separation, as measured by Psychological Separation Inventory (Hoffman, 1984), will be related to the level of college adjustment, as measured by Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985)

Hypothesis 2: Attachment organization will be related to resilience and college adjustment.

Hypothesis 2a: College students' attachment organization, as measured by Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden et. al., 1987) will be related to the level of minority status stress, as measured by Minority-Status Stress Scale (Smedley et al., 1993).

Hypothesis 2b: College students' attachment organization, as measured by Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden et al., 1987) will be related to the level of psychological well-being, as measured by The Franklin Psychological Well-Being Index (Franklin, 1996).

Hypothesis 2c: College students' attachment organization, as measured by Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), will be related to the level of college adjustment, as measured by Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker et al., 1985)

Chapter Three

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 52 (16 male, 36 female) self-identified African-American college students. Fifty percent of the students enrolled in the study attended a major Catholic university in New England and 50 percent of the students attended colleges and universities in New York City area. All students were either in their first or second year of undergraduate education at predominantly White institutions; 42 percent were freshman or 58 percent were sophomores. All of the students lived away from home either in dorms or other housing. A fairly large proportion of the sample came from working and lower middle class families, 70 percent of students had an annual family household income below \$75,000 (See Table 3).

Table 3. *Annual Family Household Income*

Annual Family Household Income	Percentage of Participants
\$25,000-50,000	40 percent
\$51,000-75,000	30 percent
\$76,000-100,000	8 percent
\$101,000-125,000	8 percent
\$126,000-150,000	10 percent
\$151,000-175,000	4 percent

Procedure

Participants completed a pre-coded packet consisting of a participant data form (Appendix A) and five self-report measures (Appendixes B-F). The total time necessary to complete the measures was approximately 90 minutes. The data was collected in person on campus or in a nearby public setting, this occurred outside of class time on a voluntary basis. Students received 30 dollars in compensation for their participation. Participants were recruited through personal and professional contacts at colleges, universities, and college preparatory organizations.

Measures

Participant Data Form (Appendix A)

The data form consisted of 21 questions. Information was obtained on participants' race, gender, and year in school. In addition, data regarding the participants' families were also collected. Questions included annual household income, gender of the custodial parent, and frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent.

Measurement of Psychological Separation (Appendix B)

The Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI; Hoffman, 1984)

The PSI (Hoffman, 1984) is a self-report instrument that consists of 138 questions. The instrument was designed to assess respondents' feelings about separating from their parents. Respondents are queried about their thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behavior. The PSI takes approximately 12 minutes to administer. The four subscales are: Functional Independence, Emotional Independence, Attitudinal Independence, and Conflictual Independence. For the purposes of this study all four subscales were

analyzed for the participants' responses regarding their mothers and fathers. The Functional Independence (FI) subscale assesses the adolescents' ability to care for their basic needs without the help of parents. Emotional Independence (EI) measures the students' ability to handle the demands of social interactions without requiring excessive reassurance from parents. Conflictual Independence (CI) measures students' freedom from negative feelings toward their parents, particularly guilt or anger. Lastly, Attitudinal Independence (AI) evaluates how well students have been able to create and maintain independent beliefs from those of their mothers and fathers. Students answered based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1-5. The internal consistency coefficients of Conflictual and Attitudinal Independence range from .88 to .92 and the stability coefficients range from .83 to .96 (Hoffman, 1984).

Measurement of Attachment (Appendix C)

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA: Armsden & Greenberg, 1987)

The IPPA is a self-report measure that consists of 75 items, 25 in each of the three sections (Mother, Father, and Peer). It is used to assess respondents' feelings of attachment towards parents and towards peers. The IPPA takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. There are three subscales: 1. Trust, 2. Communication, and 3. Alienation. The Trust and the Communication subscales measure respondents' sense of felt security regarding their parents and peers (Armsden et al., 1987). In contrast, the Alienation subscale measures their negative thoughts and feelings about the unavailability or lack of responsiveness from parents and peers. For the purposes of this study only the full-scale scores for mother and father were analyzed. The full-scale score is derived by adding the scores of the three subscales (Trust, Communication, and Alienation) together. The answers for the Alienation subscale are reverse scored before

they are included in the total. Students answered based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1-5. The internal consistency coefficients for mother and father attachment are .87 and .89 and the stability coefficient is .93 (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

Resilience Measures

Measurement of Minority Student Stress (Appendix D) Minority Status Stress Scale (MSSS: Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993)

The MSSS is a self-report measure consisting of 33 questions. It assesses the level of stress minority students experience at predominantly White colleges and universities due to their race and/or ethnicity. The MSSS takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. The Minority Status Stress Scale consists of five subscales: 1. Social Climate Stresses, 2. Interracial Stresses, 3. Racism and Discrimination Stresses, 4. Within-Group Stresses, and 5. Achievement Stresses. For the purposes of this study all five subscales were analyzed. The Social Climate stresses subscale assesses the students' feelings that their school is unsupportive of people of their race and/or ethnicity. Interracial Stresses measures students' belief that heightened tension exists between the White and the non-White students on campus. The Racism and Discrimination stresses subscale evaluates students' feelings that they are not being treated fairly or with the same level of respect as students in the majority group. Within Group Stresses subscale measures the students' sense that other members of their racial or ethnic group are judging them negatively. Lastly, the Achievement Stresses subscale assesses students' lack of confidence in their ability to succeed in their college coursework and doubts about

their intelligence. Students answered based on a 6-point Likert scale from 0 - 5. The internal consistency coefficients for the scales range between .76 - .93.

Measurement of Psychological Well-Being (Appendix E) The Franklin Well-Being Index (FWBI: Franklin, 1996)

The FWBI is a 23-item measure of psychological well-being. The FWBI assesses psychological well-being for African-Americans. The FWBI takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. The index measures seven areas: 1. Happiness, 2. Positive Self-Esteem, 3. Blame for a Bad Job, 4. Negative Self-Esteem, 5. Economic Well-Being, 6. Role Performance, and 7. Interpersonal Relationships. For the purposes of this study information gained from the Happiness, Positive Self-Esteem, and the Negative Self-Esteem subscales were analyzed. Happiness measures the respondents' feelings of satisfaction with their lives. Positive Self-Esteem evaluates respondents' feelings of self value. Negative Self-Esteem measures the level of doubt that the respondents have regarding their abilities. The scores from negative self-esteem are reverse scored before they are included in the total. Students answered on a Likert scale ranging from 1-4. The internal consistency coefficients for the scales range between .59 and .70.

Measurement of College Adjustment (See Appendix F) The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985)

SACQ is a self-report instrument comprised of 67 questions. It measures how well students are able to adjust to college. The SACQ takes approximately 20 minutes to administer. The SACQ consists of four sub-scales that represent four aspects of adjustment: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal–Emotional Adjustment,

and Goal Commitment–Institutional Adjustment. For the purposes of this study only the full-scale score was analyzed. The subscale for Academic Adjustment measures how well students are able to manage the coursework and educational demands of college. The Social Adjustment subscale evaluates how students are able to navigate their interpersonal relationships. The Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale measures students' emotional states and feelings of distress that might manifest on a somatic level. Lastly, the subscale of Goal Commitment-Institutional Adjustment assesses how well students are able to keep to their academic goals and feel a sense of affiliation to their academic institution. Students answered the SACQ on a Likert scale from 1-9. The internal consistency coefficients range from .78 to .92 (Baker et al., 1985).

Chapter Four

Results

The goal of this research was to explore the effects of: a) psychological separation and, b) parental attachment on Black students' ability to be resilient and adjust to college. In order to examine the relationships between the predictor variables of psychological separation and parental attachment on the one hand, and the outcome variables of psychological resilience and college student adjustment on the other, a multivariate multiple regression model was employed.

Variables

There are two sets of predictor variables, one based on psychological separation and the other based on parental attachment. For the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) eight subscales were evaluated (four for mother and the same four for father). These are: Emotional Independence, Conflictual Independence, Attitudinal Independence, and Functional Independence. For the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA), two full-scale scores were examined; Attachment to Mother and Attachment to Father. This provides a total of ten predictor variables.

There are three sets of outcome variables: minority status stress, psychological well-being, and college student adjustment. For the Minority Status Stress Scale five subscales were examined: Social Climate Stresses, Interracial Stresses, Racism and Discrimination Stresses, Within-Group Stresses, and Achievement Stresses. For the Franklin Psychological Well-Being Index three subscales were analyzed: Happiness,

Negative Self-Esteem, and Positive Self-Esteem. Lastly, for the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire only the full-scale score was examined. This provides a total of nine possible outcome variables.

Hypothesis I: Psychological separation from parents will predict to minority status stress, psychological well-being, and college adjustment

Multivariate, multiple regression analysis was used to relate the eight subscales of the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) to the five subscales for the Minority Status Stress Scale (MSSS), the three subscales for the Franklin Well-Being Index (FWBI), and the one full-scale score for the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). In deference to relatively modest sample size, only the univariate analyses, which are embedded in the multivariate output, are presented. These analyses correspond to ordinary multiple regression models in which each dependent variable is regressed on the eight PSI subscales (i.e., four for the mother and four for the father).

Of the subscales of the Psychological Separation Inventory, Emotional Independence and Functional Independence were significantly related to subscales of the MSSS, the FWBI, and the SACQ (see tables 4 -7). Specifically, Emotional Independence from mother predicted to the Social Climate Stresses, and the Within Group Stresses subscales on the MSSS, as well as the Happiness and Negative Self-Esteem subscales on the FWBI, and to the full-scale score on the SACQ. Functional Independence from mother predicted to Achievement Stresses and Interracial Stresses and to poor college adjustment. With the exception of results from the college adaptation scale (SACQ), all effect sizes were small to medium; the effect size for the relationship between Emotional Independence and the SACQ, however, was large (Partial Eta Squared: .30). None of the

father subscales of the PSI predicted to the outcome variables; nor did the Attitudinal Independence or Conflictual Independence subscales of the PSI predict to any of the outcome variables.

Students with higher levels of independence from their mothers benefited greatly. They were less likely to experience Social Climate Stresses and perceived their colleges and universities as being both inclusive and supportive. They were also less likely to experience Within Group Stresses and felt comfortable in their relationships with the other Black students on campus. In addition, students who scored higher on Emotional Independence were happier and reported higher levels of self-esteem. Their overall adjustment to college was also better. In contrast, those students with higher levels of Functional Independence from their mothers reported greater difficulties. Functional Independence measures adolescents' ability to take care of day-to-day tasks. Those with higher levels of Functional Independence were more likely to experience Achievement Stresses and Interracial Stresses. For example, they were less likely to lean on others, particularly attachment figures, and experienced greater stress regarding their college work and regarding their relationships with White students, professors, and other college personnel.

Emotional Independence and Minority Status Stress

Table 4 *Relationships between MSSS Outcomes and PSI Emotional Independence From Mothers– Univariate Regression Results*

Dependent Variable:	b	F	p
Social Climate Stresses	-.05	5.21	<.05
With-in Group Stresses	-.05	4.17	<.05
Achievement Stresses	-.023	1.06	NS
Racism/Discrimination Stresses	-.010	.162	NS
Interracial Stresses	-.043	3.40	NS

Emotional Independence and Psychological Well-Being

Table 5 *Relationships between FWBI Outcomes and PSI Emotional Independence From Mothers– Univariate Regression Results*

Dependent Variable:	b	F	p
Happiness Scale	.03	8.93	<.01
Negative Self-Esteem	.03	6.54	<.05
Positive Self-Esteem	.007	.909	NS

Emotional Independence and College Adjustment

Table 6 *Relationship between SACQ Outcome and PSI Emotional Independence From Mothers – Univariate Regression Results*

Dependent Variable:	b	F	p
Full-scale Score	.66	17.45	<.01

Functional Independence and Minority Status Stress

Table 7 *Relationships between MSSS Outcomes and PSI Functional Independence From Mothers– Univariate Regression Results*

Dependent Variable:	b	F	p
Social Climate Stresses	.042	3.301	NS
With-in Group Stresses	.035	2.010	NS
Achievement Stresses	.59	5.472	<.05
Racism/Discrimination Stresses	.036	1.538	NS
Interracial Stresses	.052	3.956	.05

Table 8 *Relationships between SACQ Outcomes and PSI Functional Independence From Mothers – Univariate Regression Results*

Dependent Variable:	b	F	p
Full-scale Score	-.398	4.968	<.05

Parental Attachment

Hypothesis II: Quality of attachment will predict to minority status stress, psychological well-being, and college adjustment

In order to test the second hypothesis, both full-scale scores for mother and father were analyzed in relation to the five subscales for MSSS, the three subscales for FWBI, and the one full-scale score for SACQ. A series of univariate analyses were conducted, in which each dependent variable was regressed on the two full-scale scores for the IPPA, i.e., one for the mother and one for the father. Attachment to mother predicted the better college adjustment on the SACQ ($b=6.215$, $F=3.9$, $p=.05$); the effect size was small. None of the other analyses was significant. Students who had a better quality of attachment to their mothers were better able to adapt to college based on a wide-range of factors including academics, emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and level of school affiliation.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study examined the role that psychological separation and parental attachment have in Black students' adjustment to college. Theories of psychological separation and parental attachment have traditionally been studied for White college students. The results of the current study show that issues related to psychological separation and parental attachment are of great relevance to Black students beginning their post secondary education. In this study, psychological separation and parental attachment were considered in terms of Black students' ability to be psychologically resilient and/or adjust to college. I will argue that greater consideration needs to be given to the psychological concerns of beginning Black college students and to advocate for psychologically minded interventions that target their ability to strengthen attachment bonds both on and off campus.

Attachment theory was originally studied in terms of the important early relationships between mothers and infants. Babies who are securely attached trust in the availability of a concerned and attentive caregiver. In the Strange Situation research protocol devised by Ainsworth, securely attached infants were more likely to explore the playroom and to engage with the researcher (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Going away to college has been likened to the Strange Situation protocol in that the attachment systems between mothers and children become activated in the process of children leaving home. Students in their beginning years at college need to trust in the continued availability of responsive caregivers so that they can be confident in their ability to explore the college

environment and to engage with others. This need is particularly present for Black students who attend predominantly White colleges. It is expected that they will be able to form new relationships from which to gain a sense of security while being surrounded by others who are to some degree culturally different.

The results of the current study demonstrate the importance of examining both psychological separation and parental attachment as they pertain to Black students. In this chapter, I will begin with a brief overview of the research findings before engaging in more detailed discussion of how the results relate to the relevant literature. I will then provide an illustrative case example and address the important implications of the current study. Finally, I will suggest ideas for future research and acknowledge the limitations of the study.

Overview of Results

This study found important results pertaining to both psychological separation and parental attachment. In terms of psychological separation, both Emotional Independence and Functional Independence from mothers were related to the students' ability to be psychologically resilient and adjust to college. While Emotional Independence predicted psychological well-being, reduced minority status stress, and overall positive adjustment, Functional Independence was indicative of greater minority status stress and poorer overall adjustment to college. In terms of parental attachment, better quality of attachment to mothers was related to better college adjustment. In addition, there were two unexpected findings of the study. First, none of the analyses for either psychological separation or parental attachment yielded significant results regarding the students'

relationships with their fathers. Second, a large percentage of students reported that they were the first or among the first in their families pursue a college degree. The significance of these findings is discussed below.

Psychological Separation and Parental Attachment

Margaret Mahler originally conceptualized separation-individuation as the process that infants experience as they separate from their mothers (Mahler et al, 1975). Bos adapted Mahler's theory and applied it to the separation process adolescents go through as they leave home (1968, 1979). Many seeking to understand the concerns of college students initially embraced the concept of psychological separation (Hoffman, 1984). In doing so, problems with adjustment were associated with the students' difficulty in being able to separate effectively from primary caregivers (Bos, 1968; Hoffman 1984; Hoffman et al., 1987). In acknowledgement of the growing dissatisfaction with the premise of psychological separation, researchers began to explore the role of parental attachment as a predictor of college adjustment.

Bowlby (1980) argued that early attachment bonds provided a cognitive framework for later relationships. He termed this cognitive framework as Internal Working Models (IWM). Internal Working Models, "guide the individual's feelings, thoughts, and expectations in later relationships" (Slade, 1999, p. 578). Bowlby theorized that patterns of attachment established in childhood would persist into to adulthood (1980). Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim (2000) provided empirical evidence to support the enduring effects of attachment by conducting a follow up study which re-evaluated the individuals' attachment styles after twenty years had

elapsed. To date this is the longest follow up study on childhood attachment categorizations. In the Waters' et al. study, children were analyzed at one year of age and then again when they were twenty-one years old. In the follow-up, 64 percent of the participants had the same attachment classification as they had as infants. Environmental factors were seen as greatly influencing the continuation in their individual attachment styles from infancy into young adulthood.

“In essence, attachment categories tell a story. They tell a story about how emotions have been regulated, what experiences have been allowed into consciousness, and to what degree an individual has been able to make meaning of his or her primary relationships” (Slade, 1999, p. 585). Differences in attachment styles represent individuals' likelihood of being able to use their primary relationships both as a source of security as well as a resource for their “independent functioning” (Vivona, 2000). Thus being able to understand the role of parental attachment for beginning Black college students is of great importance.

Secure Attachment and Emotional Independence

In terms of the current study, it was initially unclear whether secure attachment would hinder Black students' ability to separate from their parents in healthy ways. However, it has been suggested that the constructs of attachment and separation-individuation are not in competition with each other. Instead, it is theorized that secure attachment actually facilitates better levels of independence (Josselson, 1988; Levy, Blatt, & Shaver, 1998). One important study conducted by Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand

(2004) found this to be the case. Mattanah reported that secure attachment actually aided in college students' separation from their parents (Mattanah et al., 2004).

It makes a great deal of sense that securely attached college students would indicate being emotional independent from their mothers. Securely attached individuals have benefited from responsive caregivers. As children they are confident in their caregivers' continued availability. The positive level of emotional connection they experienced taught them that others are a source of comfort and reassurance. As a result, students who are securely attached tend to have a greater sense of ease in social situations and are more likely to ask for help in times of difficulty, which in turn increases their ability to be more independent from their parents (Lopez et al., 1989; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

In the current study, students who reported being better adjusted to college were both securely attached to their mothers, and able to emotionally separate from them in healthy ways. My findings that psychological separation and parental attachment work together are consistent with those by Mattanah (Mattanah et al., 2004). The research participants in the current study continued to need a secure base in terms of primary caregivers in order to manage the unsettling task of leaving home and beginning college. However, rather than their continued parental ties being a hindrance to their college success, better quality of attachment to mothers was a positive indicator of these students' adaptability.

Insecure-Avoidant Attachment and Functional Independence

In contrast to the positive findings on Emotional Independence, Black students in this study with higher levels of Functional Independence were found to have greater difficulty adjusting to college. Although the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (used in this study) was not designed to distinguish between the subcategories of insecure attachment (Armsden et al., 1987) some important inferences can be made. For example, one can draw the parallel between students who reported high levels of Functional Independence and those who would perhaps have been categorized as ‘avoidant’ or ‘dismissive’ in their attachment style. Students with high levels of Functional Independence predominantly handle their day-to-day tasks without seeking help from others (Hoffman, 1984). It is likely that these students are averse to ask for needed assistance. In this study, students with high levels of Functional Independence reported struggling on both an emotional and an academic level as evidenced in their lower scores on the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker et al., 1985).

In the above sections I explored how Emotional Independence from mothers can be viewed in terms of secure attachment and how Functional Independence from mothers can be understood in terms of insecure-avoidant attachment. The similarities between the two constructs become even more apparent when considering the students’ help seeking and emotion regulating behavior. Help seeking and affect regulation have long been discussed in the attachment literature as learned behaviors based on early life experiences with caregivers (Bowlby, 1969; Slade, 1999).

Psychological Resilience -- Help Seeking and Affect Regulation

In this study, students with better levels of Emotional Independence from their mothers were successful at having their emotional needs met elsewhere. Possible sources of support on campus for students might include: friends, relationship partners, professors, mentors, counselors, advisors, coaches, and/or religious figures. Evidence of these students' help seeking and emotion regulating behavior can be found in their responses to the two resilience measures in the study. Resilience was assessed as a function of increased psychological well-being and decreased minority status stress. In terms of psychological well-being, students with better levels of Emotional Independence reported having better self esteem and greater happiness (as measured by the Franklin Well-Being Index; Franklin, 1996). They also reported reduced stress in terms of how well they saw themselves fitting in with the other Black students on campus (Within Group Stresses) and with the larger college community (Social Climate Stresses) (as measured by the Minority Status Stress Scale; Smedley et al., 1993).

The parallel can again be drawn between those students with better levels of Emotional Independence and individuals with secure attachment. Securely attached individuals demonstrate their ability to be resilient in a number of ways. "Secure people appraise potentially stressful events as manageable, as problems to be solved or overcome realistically, and they both rely on their effective coping skills and turn to others for comfort and support when necessary" (Mikulincer et al., 2007, p. 460). In addition, securely attached individuals have been able to internalize the positive aspects of their early caregivers and have learned to become self-soothing (Mikulincer et al., 2007). The ability to be self-soothing means that they are better able to maintain a

positive emotional state and this in turn aids them in their ability to connect well with others (Mikulincer et al., 2007). In the present study, students who reported higher levels of Emotional Independence showed that they were securely attached in that they had better self-esteem, greater levels of happiness, and were more confident in their sense of kinship with others of their own race as well as with those outside of it. These abilities served to create a positive emotional cycle in which their greater social competence led them to have more support, which in turn bolstered their feelings of belonging, social ease, and resourcefulness even more.

In contrast, college students with higher levels of Functional Independence indicated --in addition to reporting a poor adjustment to college --, they experienced an increase in minority status stress. On the Minority Status Stress Scale they struggled with Achievement Stresses and Interracial Stresses. The subscale of Achievement Stresses measures ones' worry that they are not academically prepared for the college work; the subscale of Interracial Stresses measures the distress that students' experience when they perceive their campus as unwelcoming or discriminatory towards members of their race. Students with higher levels of Functional Independence may have had early life experiences in which their help seeking behavior was met with inconsistency or with rejection by caregivers. Students with higher levels of Functional Independence were likely to struggle academically, because they were less likely to seek assistance in times of difficulty. This is due to their perception of others as being hostile and/or rejecting (as seen by their responses to the Minority Student Stress Scale). Black students with higher levels of Functional Independence can become caught in a negative loop in which they

feel anxious and isolated and yet unable to seek out help. Kobak and Sceery (1988) conducted a study that found support for this perspective.

Kobak (Kobak & Sceery, 1988) looked at differences in attachment style and affect regulation in college students. The Kobak et al. (1988) study used the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985), which is more in-depth than the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden et al., 1987) measure used in this study. The four adult attachment categories derived from the AAI are secure, preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant (Hesse & Main; 2000). In Kobak's research students who were dismissive were less likely to remember upsetting events from childhood as a way of protecting themselves from re-experiencing negative affect. Those in the dismissing group were considered to be more hostile by their peers and experienced higher levels of loneliness (Kobak et al., 1988). The dismissing group was also rated as experiencing greater levels of alienation from parents and reported not feeling as loved by their parents despite evidence to the contrary (Kobak et al., 1988). "Even if both anxious and avoidant people tend to feel lonely, only avoidant people seem to choose to withdraw socially and remain isolated" (Mikulincer et al., 2007). The Kobak study illustrates the conflict that students with higher levels of Functional Independence experience, in that they are independent (i.e., avoidant/dismissing) to their own detriment.

In terms of psychological resilience, there were no discernible links between Functional Independence and psychological well-being. Students with higher levels of Functional Independence experienced greater Achievement Stresses and Interracial Stresses. On the Minority Status Stress Scale (Smedley et al., 1993) individuals with

Achievement Stresses endorsed feeling less intelligent than others and less emotionally supported by their families, while individuals with Interracial Stresses endorsed feeling unsupported by members of their own race in addition to feeling tension with the Caucasian students on campus.

Thus, Black students who attend predominantly White colleges, and who are avoidant, are less willing to interact with members outside of their racial group and/or seek help for their academic worries. Although their behavior is likely to stem from a need to be self-protective, it places them at a disadvantage. It is my belief, that these students' behavior can be viewed as a psychological defense against disappointment and hurt. It is possible that their tendency to be avoidant was actually at one point adaptive for them. This would most likely be the case for those students coming from homes of abuse or neglect. "Mothers who were rejecting or inconsistent in their responsiveness during the first year were likely to have children who either avoided their mothers or who could not be comforted or contained by them upon reunion" (Slade, 1999, p. 579). When avoidant children grow up and are faced with the additional academic and social demands of college their old ways of coping are fully activated, to their great disadvantage.

Secure Attachment and Ethnic Identity

Although not directly assessed in this study, it is important to think about how attachment might have influenced the Black students' ethnic identity development and how that might have been related to the findings on Emotional and Functional Independence. Racial and ethnic identity development is a key task in adolescence for minorities (Cross, 1979, 1991; Phinney et al., 1990). Individuals with secure attachment

are more likely to have an integrated sense of self in relation to their own ethnicity as well as being able to see the positive aspects of other ethnic and cultural groups (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Phinney et al., 1990). In the current study, students with better levels of Emotional Independence reported: 1. reduced minority status stress in terms of Within Group Stresses, which depicted that they felt good about being part of the Black community at their college and 2. reduced Social Climate Stresses, which suggested that they also felt good about interacting with others from different cultural backgrounds. Thus it is likely that the students with better levels of Emotional Independence would have been assessed as having a better understanding of their ethnic/racial identity status. In contrast, students with higher levels of Functional Independence reported feeling uncomfortable around other races - (increased Interracial Stresses). It is thus likely they would have been found to be in the diffusion/foreclosed phase of their ethnic identity development.

Divergent Findings and Emotional Independence

In the current study, the finding that Emotional Independence was a good predictor of psychological resilience and college adjustment is divergent from most of the data in the literature. The majority of studies which are based on Caucasian college students, found Conflictual Independence (CI) to be the most salient predictor variable (Hoffman, 1984; Hoffman et al., 1987; Lapsley et al., 1989; Lopez et al., 1988; Rice et al., 1990). Conflictual Independence is defined as not holding on to feelings of anger, guilt, or mistrust towards parents (Hoffman, 1984). The findings that emphasize the centrality of Conflictual Independence are so apparent Rice (Rice et al., 1990) argued that

the other three subscales of the Psychological Separation Inventory (Emotional Independence, Attitudinal independence, and Functional independence) should be merged to create a construct of General Independence (GI) from parents (Rice et al., 1990). However, given that the majority of findings for the current study were related to Emotional Independence from mothers, the use of the General Independence (GI) construct is not recommended in the assessment of psychological separation for Black college students.

In the studies that used a predominantly Caucasian student sample it was found that secure attachment was related to Conflictual Independence (Rice, Fitzgerald, Whaley, & Gibbs, 1995; Schwartz & Buboltz, 2004). One possible explanation for why Conflictual Independence would have a salient role for Caucasian students and not for the Black students in this study is that Caucasian students may have a more individualistic family/cultural background. Therefore Conflictual Independence would enable Caucasian students to more fully actualize their individualism. In contrast, it can be argued that Blacks tend to come from a more collectivist family culture (J. Bennett, personal communication, May 2009). Blacks often maintain very close ties with extended family members. In Black families, one's sense of kinship leads to the expectation of loyalty and the desire to 'give back' to other members who are in need or who are less fortunate (Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 1996). The ability to do so brings a sense of pride but it can also create additional burdens on those students who may already be emotionally over-extended (Hines et al., 1996).

In the present study, feeling free from guilt or anger towards parents did not positively or negatively affect Black students' ability to be psychologically resilient or

adjust to college life. When anger and guilt is experienced by children in Black families, it is often with the understanding that regardless, there will be continued connection and responsibility. This is why I believe that the findings in the current study on the importance of Emotional Independence are of great relevance. Black college students were shown to benefit from additional support outside of their family systems perhaps largely because of the significant pressures they experience from their families at home.

Divergent Findings: Functional Independence

The findings regarding Functional Independence from mothers also diverged from the literature based on Caucasian students. On the face of it, the negative role of Functional Independence was difficult for me to understand given the premise that better levels of independence from parents resulted in better outcomes for late-staged adolescents (Blos, 1968; Hoffman 1984; Hoffman et al., 1987). The results of the current study suggest that while the Black students in the sample may be functionally independent it is most likely by necessity as opposed to by choice. This implies that they may not have had early life emotional experiences that led them to feel confident in either their help seeking or emotion regulating behaviors. Students who reported high levels of Functional Independence struggled with how to navigate the daily demands of college life. As a result they experienced increased stress and difficulty with adjustment.

Convergent Findings and Parental Attachment

In the current study it was found that better quality of attachment to mothers predicted better overall adjustment to college. This finding is very much in keeping with

the literature for both minority (Kenny et al., 1996; Rice et al., 1997) and non-minority students (Armsden et al., 1987). The role of having a secure relationship with parents has consistently been related to positive college adjustment (Kenny et al., 1992; Lapsley, Rice, & Fitzgerald, 1990; Vivona, 2000). When one considers the skills that are necessary in the adjustment to college, it is clear why securely attached individuals would be able to do so well. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker et al., 1985) assesses four domains of adjustment: academic, social, personal-emotional, and goal commitment-institutional. This represents a fairly broad range of competencies. In order to do well, students need to be able to garner academic support, establish friendships, regulate their emotional states, and feel a sense of connection to the their campus as a whole. Securely attached individuals are at a great advantage in these areas. Based on their belief that others are a source of support these students are better able to navigate the difficulties they encounter (Mikulincer et al., 2007).

Fathers' Absence and Lack of Family Education

The lack of significant findings for fathers was most likely due to the high number (38 percent) of students who reported having a minimal relationship with their fathers (i.e., seeing them once a year or less). This statistic highlights a critical societal concern regarding the fewer number of fathers in the Black family household. Research has shown that fathers have a pivotal role in school adjustment for their college-age children. This is particularly the case for academic achievement and selection of career choice or major (Jones, 2004; Marcia, 1980). In addition, other studies have found fathers to be influential in terms of emotional and social adjustment (Rice et al., 1997). By not having

a supportive relationship with their fathers, a number of the participants might have been at a disadvantage in terms of college adjustment. However, it is also possible that the effects of their fathers' absences may have been mitigated through an African-American cultural norm of reliance on extended family members to help raise children (Boyd-Franklin, 1989).

In addition, in this study 14 students were first generation college students and an additional 8 students were among the first in their families to go to college. That means that 22 students, almost 50 percent, of the sample were either first to go to college or among the first in their families to go to college. This number would probably be even greater if the students had been asked how many of them were the first in their families to go away to college as opposed to living at home while attending school. This is an important finding because parents who have not been to college are not as knowledgeable about how to prepare their children for the college years. In addition, first generation college students may experience greater pressure from their families to succeed (to be the first to make it). This is particularly stressful because these parents are likely to be unaware of the multiple demands that college students face both academically and socially. Although not directly assessed in the study it is likely that, first generation college students will have higher levels of Functional Independence from parents by necessity, and thus be at greater risk for difficulty in college.

Summary of Results

The results of this study have shown the importance of studying both psychological separation and parental attachment as they relate to Black college students'

ability to overcome adversity and do well during their beginning time at college. Based on the findings in this study, it is recommended that all four subscales of the Psychological Separation Inventory be used when assessing Black college students. Continued use of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment is also recommended as better quality of attachment to mother was shown to be a viable predictor for Black college student adjustment. Kenny stated that ‘the specific behaviors and patterns of interaction that constitute secure attachment may vary across individuals and cultures’ (Kenny et al., 1996, p. 532). Thus it is possible that for Caucasian students secure attachment would be associated with Conflictual Independence while for Black students secure attachment would be related to Emotional Independence.

Illustrative Case Example

I have included a case example to better illustrate some of the central concerns in this study. Although this patient was not affiliated with the study I believe his narrative is useful to exemplify the concerns of those Black students who are functionally but not emotionally independent from their mothers. The material presented in the case example is portrayed to broadly illustrate the central issues of psychological separation and parental attachment. In order to protect the patient, all identifying information and some additional information has been altered. ‘Michael’ is African-American and the oldest son of five children. I worked with him for approximately four years during my training in clinical psychology at the City University of New York. Michael grew up with his mother and younger siblings and had no relationship with his father. Michael had many responsibilities towards his younger siblings. This included getting them ready for

school in the morning, helping them with homework, and bringing them to their therapy sessions.

I met with Michael over a number of years beginning in his early teens. Michael spent most of his time in treatment struggling to figure out how to form relationships. He would inevitably arrive at our session proclaiming that he had just deleted this person or that person from his cell phone. Michael was easily frustrated with girls who expressed romantic interest in him or with guys who want to become friends with him. Michael would often get angry or feel disappointed with a friend and rather than communicating this, he would pull away or abruptly stop talking to them. Despite the considerable stress he experienced at home and in his peer relationships, Michael managed to maintain average grades. Towards the end of his sophomore year of high school, he expressed a desire to go away to college. Michael worked hard to bring up his grades and worried if any teacher knew him well enough to write a recommendation letter on his behalf.

Michael had a difficult relationship with his mother. He loved her but often felt criticized and rejected by her. Michael's mother felt that her son should either go to college or get a job. As a single mother, she did not have the money to help him pay for college. In addition, she felt that if he wanted to attend college he would need to figure it out on his own. Michael's grandmother lived out of state, but provided him with emotional and financial support. Her help enabled him to take the scholastic aptitude test and pay for college application fees. In one instance Michael was disappointed because he had wanted to participate in a college tour being offered by his school, but his grandmother was not able to send him the money in enough time.

Michael was eventually accepted to a historically Black college in the same state as his grandmother. In addition, he was awarded a small scholarship. In session, Michael beamed and stated that he could not wait to get away from his mother who he blamed for most of his troubles. About a month after his acceptance, Michael started to question what college would be like. He expressed concern if there would be cable television in his dorm room. He did want to go if he could not have cable television.

Weeks later, and after the fact, Michael disclosed that he had turned down the scholarship and had decided not to go away to school. Instead he decided to continue to live at home and commute to his local college. When asked about his decision Michael said that he was not ready to go away. We continued to work for another year in the therapy. Unfortunately, differences between Michael and his mother deepened. Michael eventually applied to another four-year college that was close to home but allowed him to live on campus. In retrospect, Michael felt that the year he lived at home helped to prepare him to go away to college. During this time, he made significant strides in terms of friendships. A friend who attended a nearby college introduced him to new people. Michael ultimately decided to go to his friend's school. By then he had a social network waiting for him that he had worked hard to develop and maintain.

In this case, Michael was functionally independent from his mother but initially not ready to go away to college. In hindsight, his decision to postpone doing so was the correct choice. His inability to form and maintain lasting friendships kept him emotionally dependent on his mother. It was not until he was able to learn to be more connected to others and to better manage difficulties with friends that he felt secure enough in himself to leave home. Michael's story signifies the importance of therapeutic

interventions for those students who may arrive on campus with insecure attachment styles. Implications based on the results of the study are provided below.

Implications

The results of this study have several important implications. Colleges have long asked the question of what can be done to improve the college adjustment process for Black students. Black students are shown to graduate at lower rates than non-minority students (Seidman, 2005). There are undoubtedly a number of factors ranging from finance to lack of sufficient academic preparation that can account for this (Seidman, 2005). The findings of the current study suggest Black students' affective bonds with parents as well as their ability to separate from them in positive ways are important factors to be considered. This study found significant associations between psychological separation, parental attachment, psychological resilience, and college adjustment.

Emotional independence from mothers was the most salient predictor variable of the study and predicted positive outcomes for both psychological resilience and college adjustment. Students who had other relationships from which to gain emotional support reported greater happiness and self-esteem. Traditionally, college orientation programs for minority students have focused on identity issues and providing opportunities for building a social network for students by holding social events. I believe that this is still important to do. However, it is arguably of even greater importance to provide students with skills for how to form relationships with friends, mentors, and fellow students. It is unrealistic to expect that all students will have the social competency needed to form a

multi-layered support network. Yet their ability to do so is vital for their sense of belonging, self-esteem, and academic success.

Unlike the findings for Emotional Independence, the findings on Functional Independence from mothers predicted negative outcomes in terms of academic stress and overall adjustment. Some students may feel that they need to be functionally independent from their parents before they are ready. Those parents who have not gone away to college may be unaware of the demands that their children will face. It is important to provide parents with more specific information on how to help their children while they are at school. Parents need to gain a better understanding of what the college environment is like and what difficulties the students are likely to encounter. It is also important that students have access to additional support on campus, through resident advisement, psychological counseling, tutoring, and emergency funding to aid in their day-to-day functioning.

In terms of parental attachment, it was found that better quality of attachment was related to better college adjustment. Parents need to continue to serve as a secure base for their college age children. Parents should be encouraged to provide emotional support in the service of helping their children to become more independent and more confident in their abilities to problem solve and to form healthy relationships.

In order to better help Black students succeed in college, I believe that there needs to be an increased focus on two areas: relationship building and self-care. Relationship building can be fostered through workshops on communication skill-building and on conflict resolution. Self-care can be fostered through openly discussing and preparing students for the psychological concerns they are likely to experience as well as,

encouraging them to seek help in times of distress. These ideas are discussed in greater detail below.

Many students struggle with poor communication skills. Students would benefit greatly from communication skill building workshops. This can teach them how to be less avoidant because they will learn that they can communicate with others in effective ways. There are some instrumental communication techniques stemming from couples' counseling work. These include effective listening techniques and being able to speak using "I" statements. These skills will enable students to form better relationships and gain a sense of efficacy in terms of how they relate parents, friends, professors, and other students.

In addition an important aspect of communication is conflict resolution. Many students, like my patient Michael felt that conflict would mean that they would have to either suffer in silence or end the relationship. The importance of learning effective ways to express and resolve anger can greatly help students to be resilient and to handle the adversity they are bound to experience while at college. The ability to communicate around conflict will help Black students maintain a healthy psychological state and enable them to establish secure attachments to others.

Lastly, it is important to help students develop habits of self-care. To foster this, parents can discuss possible emotional/psychological concerns that might be experienced during the college years with their children and encourage them to seek out psychological support when necessary. Schools and universities should also openly discuss the psychological concerns that students are likely to experience for two reasons. First, students may not know how to recognize the signs of depression or anxiety, and second it

can act to help reduce the stigma associated with mental health concerns and with seeking assistance for them.

Implications for Clinical Practice

Therapists and college counselors who work with distressed Black students can assess the quality of their attachment organization and make appropriate interventions. Those students who are not securely attached would benefit from individual sessions that would help them explore and address difficulties from childhood and offer ways to improve upon their current relationships with parents, friends, and romantic partners. In addition, it is important for counselors to assess students' level of Emotional Independence and Functional Independence from their mothers. Students who are distressed by their need for closeness to their parents may benefit from being able to work through the concerns, fears, and wishes that are keeping them in a more dependent state. Realistically, it may be more difficult for counselors to assess students for high levels of Functional Independence, as these students are less likely to seek out help and tend to avoid therapy. Nonetheless, if they do come in for individual treatment it would be important to explore the intra-psychic conflicts they might experience regarding help seeking while at the same time providing them with practical information pertaining to campus resources such as: tutoring, financial aid, and career services. In many ways college counselors can serve as a secure base for students and in doing so, further the students' ability to become more independent and resourceful.

Limitations of the study

There were several limitations to this study including small sample size, lack of random selection, non-experimental design, and the use of self-report measures.

Although there were a good number of significant results, several improvements can be made. The first limitation is sample size. Only 52 students participated in the study. This is a relatively low number of participants compared to other studies that address separation and attachment with college students. Other studies typically have one hundred or more students on whom they gathered information. Having a limited sample size directly affected the statistical power. Among other things, this meant that I was not able to do a deeper analysis of some of the subscales for the measures. This would have been particularly useful for the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, The Franklin Well-Being Index, and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. Not only would the information itself have been useful it would have also allowed for a more direct comparison between the results of this study and that of other studies. In this study 38 percent of the sample reported a lack of relationship with their fathers. As a result, there was not enough statistical power to assess the predictor variables for psychological separation and parental attachment as related to fathers.

A second limitation was that the sample was not chosen through a method of random selection. As a result, generalizations to other Black students must be made cautiously. A third limitation is that the study did not include controls. Experimental design would have also allowed for the claim of causality between the predictor variables and the outcome variables. However, while experimental design is good in theory, it would not have been practical for this study.

Lastly, I think it is important to note the limitations of using self-report measures. Self-report measures are based on the participants' responses and there is no effort made to corroborate their depiction. As a result some students might have portrayed their situations in a more positive way in order to conform to what is socially acceptable. There has been an ongoing debate in the literature regarding attachment self-report measures in terms of their validity (Mikulincer et al., 2007). However, empirical studies largely uphold the value of self-report measures for parental attachment (Mikulincer et al., 2007). The measures used in this study were not reliant on retrospective material. Therefore the students' responses were more likely to be accurate and not altered by the blurring effects that time has on memory. Given the above limitations, there are several avenues available for future research.

Future Research

There are many possible ideas for future research in the area of psychological separation and parental attachment for Black college students. There is a continued need to better understand and ameliorate the ability of Black students to be resilient and experience a positive adjustment to their undergraduate years. Ideas for future research include the use of a larger sample size, qualitative methods, and additional time points.

First, for future research it is suggested that a larger sample size be used for several reasons. It would allow for the analysis of: gender, individual subscales, and additional measures. A larger sample size would have created the possibility of looking at gender differences. It has been shown that Black men graduate from college at lesser rates than do Black women (Seidman, 2005). It would be interesting to ascertain if and

how the responses of males and females differ on the measures and gain insight into their potentially distinct experiences regarding psychological resilience and college adjustment.

In addition, a larger sample size would be particularly helpful in order to analyze more of the subscales for the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, the Franklin Well-Being Index, and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. Subscales provide in depth information and will be useful to help pinpoint areas of needed intervention. Lastly, a larger sample size would allow for the use of additional measures. A scale for ethnic/racial identity development is strongly recommended as this aspect of development for Black students coincides with issues of psychological separation and parental attachment.

Second, it is recommended that qualitative data be gathered, and third that longitudinal methods be utilized. A qualitative approach would provide a helpful context for the study of psychological separation and parental attachment. It is important hear in the students' own words how they: characterize their relationship with parents, view their ability to be resilient, and manage their feelings about beginning college. Lastly, a longitudinal study would be particularly helpful in making the connection between the college adjustment process and whether students are able to successfully graduate.

Summary

I feel strongly that there is an over-emphasis on helping students become academically prepared for college and an under emphasis on helping them to be emotionally ready. I have long held an interest in college adjustment, in part from my

counseling work with students nearing their college years as well as with those who were already in attendance. Many students have problems in college that far outweigh their academic concerns but nonetheless impact the viability of their academic success. In my work I find that a great deal of the students' stress stems from difficulties related to family, social interactions, and ascribing to an impaired sense of self (due to low self-esteem or depression).

Issues of separation and attachment are heightened as students leave home to create a life for themselves on campus. During this time period students need to be able to be psychologically resilient and adjust to the demands of college life. This study found that Emotional Independence (as measured by a subscale for psychological separation) from mothers produced the 5 out of the 9 significant results. Students who reported a positive emotional separation from their mothers had reduced minority status stress, increased psychological well-being, and a better overall adjustment. In addition, those students who reported a better quality of attachment to their mothers were also shown to have a better adjustment to college life. In contrast, those students who reported higher levels of Functional Independence (as measured by a subscale of psychological separation) from their mothers were shown to experience an increase in minority status stress and to have a poorer overall adjustment to college.

Information gained from research on parental attachment and separation can help counselors and others gain a higher level of insight into Black college students' emotional landscape and ability to form needed relationships. This is important because a sense of connection to college has been shown to greatly improve a students' likelihood of continuing their education (Seidman, 2005). This connection can come from many

sources including the students' relationships with professors, advisors, student life, and friends. Research on psychological separation and parental attachment can help inform the conceptualization and development of important student initiatives including college discovery programs, orientation programs, first year of college programs, and possible third party interventions.

Appendix A

Student Data Form

1. Gender (Circle One): Male Female
2. Age:
3. Date of Birth:
4. Name and Address of College:

5. Race/Ethnicity (Circle One): African Afro-American Afro-Caribbean
 Afro-Hispanic Other_____
6. Your Marital Status (Circle One): Married Separated/ Single Divorced
7. Did you have any times of extended separation from your parents and family prior to going away to college? If so for how long?
8. What year of college are you in?
9. What is your major?
10. Do live in a dorm? If no please specify if you live off campus or at home_____
11. What is your overall GPA?
12. Are you a member of a sorority or a fraternity?

- Please Note: The next set of question pertain to your Parent(s)**

13. SES (Circle One): \$25,000-50,000 \$50,000-75,000 \$75,000 –100,000
 \$100,000-125,000 \$125,000- \$150,000 \$150,000-175,000
14. Profession of Parents: Mother_____Father_____
15. Are your parents living (mother, father, both)
16. Are your parents divorced?
17. Who was the custodial parent? Mother Father Other_____
18. How often did you see the non-custodial parent?
19. How often do you call your parent(s) a week?
20. How often do you IM, email, or text your parent(s) a week now?
21. How often do you visit your parent(s) or do they visit you a semester?

Appendix B
The Psychological Separation Inventory

Hoffman (1984)

INSTRUCTIONS: The following list of statements describes different aspects of students' relationships with both their mother and father. Imagine a scale ranging from "Not at all true of me" to "Very true of me" that tells how well each statement applies to you. On the answer sheet provided, mark with a #2 lead pencil the letter that describes how well each statement applies to you. Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you. For each statement:

A = Not at all true of me
B = A little bit true of me
C = Moderately true of me
D = Quite a bit true of me
E = Very true of me

1. I like to show my friends pictures of my mother.
2. Sometimes my mother is a burden to me.
3. I feel longing if I am away from my mother for too long.
4. My ideas regarding racial equality are similar to my mother's.
5. My mother's wishes have influenced my selection of friends.
6. I feel like I am constantly at war with my mother.
7. I blame my mother for many of the problems I have.
8. I wish I could trust my mother more.
9. My attitudes about obscenity are similar to my mother's.
10. When I am in difficulty I usually call upon my mother to help me out of trouble.
11. My mother is the most important person in the world to me.
12. I have to be careful not to hurt my mother's feelings.
13. I wish that my mother lived nearer so I could visit her more frequently.
14. My opinions regarding the role of women are similar to my mother's.
15. I often, ask my mother to assist me in solving my personal problems.
16. I sometimes feel like I'm being punished by my mother.
17. Being away from my mother makes me feel lonely.
18. I wish my mother wasn't so overprotective.
19. My opinions regarding the role of men are similar to my mother's.
20. I wouldn't make a major purchase without my mother's approval.
21. I wish my mother wouldn't try to manipulate me.
22. I wish my mother wouldn't try to make fun of me.
23. I sometimes call home just to hear my mother's voice.
24. My religious beliefs are similar to my mother's.
25. My mother's wishes have influenced my choice of major at school.

26. I feel that I have obligations to my mother that I wish I didn't have.
27. My mother expects too much from me.
28. I wish I could stop lying to my mother.
29. My beliefs regarding how to raise children are similar to my mother's.
30. My mother helps me to make my budget.
31. While I am home on a vacation I like to spend most of my time with my mother.
32. I often wish that my mother would treat me more like an adult.
33. After being with my mother for a vacation I find it difficult to leave her.
34. My values regarding honesty are similar to my mother's.
35. I generally consult with my mother when I make plans for an out of town weekend.
36. I am often angry at my mother.
37. I like to hug and kiss my mother.
38. I hate it when my mother makes suggestions about what I do.
39. My attitudes about solitude are similar to my mother's.
40. I consult with my mother when deciding about part-time employment.
41. I decide what to do according to whether my mother will approve of it.
42. Even when my mother has a good idea I refuse to listen to it because she has made it.
43. When I do poorly in school I feel I'm letting my mother down.
44. My attitudes regarding environmental protection are similar to my mother's.
45. I ask my mother what to do when I get into a tough situation.
46. I wish my mother wouldn't try to get me to take sides with her.
47. My mother is my best friend.
48. I argue with my mother over little things.
49. My beliefs about how the world began are similar to my mother's.
50. I do what my mother decides on most questions that come up.
51. I seem to be closer to my mother than most people my age.
52. My mother is sometimes a source of embarrassment to me.
53. Sometimes I think I am too dependent on my mother.
54. My beliefs about what happens to people when they die are similar to my mother's.
55. I ask for my mother's advice when I am planning my vacation time.
55. I am sometimes ashamed of my mother.
57. I care too much about my mother's reactions.
58. I get angry when my mother criticizes me.
59. My attitudes regarding sex are similar to my mother's.
60. I like to have my mother help me pick out the clothing I buy for special occasions.
61. I sometimes feel like an extension of my mother.
62. When I don't write my mother often enough I feel guilty

63. I feel uncomfortable keeping things from my mother.
64. My attitudes regarding national defense are similar to my mother's.
65. I call my mother whenever anything goes wrong.
66. I often have to make decisions for my mothers.
67. I'm not sure I could make it in life without my mother.
68. I sometimes resent it when my mother tells me what to do.
69. My attitudes regarding mentally ill people are similar to my mother's.
70. I like to show my friends pictures of my father.
71. Sometimes my father is a burden to me.
72. I feel longing if I am away from my father for too long.
73. My ideas regarding racial equality are similar to my father's.
74. My father's wishes have influenced my selection of friends.
75. I feel like I am constantly at war with my father.
76. I blame my father for many of the problems I have.
77. I wish I could trust my father more.
78. My attitudes about obscenity are similar to my father's.
79. When I am in difficulty I usually call upon my father to help me out of trouble.
80. My father is the most important person in the world to me.
81. I have to be careful not to hurt my father's feelings.
82. I wish that my father lived nearer so I could visit him more Frequently.
83. My opinions regarding the role of women are similar to my father's.
84. I often, ask my father to assist me in solving my personal problems.
85. I sometimes feel like I'm being punished by my father.
86. Being away from my father makes me feel lonely.
87. I wish my father wasn't so overprotective.
88. My opinions regarding the role of men are similar to my father's.
89. I wouldn't make a major purchase without my father's approval.
90. I wish my father wouldn't try to manipulate me.
91. I wish my father wouldn't try to make fun of me.
92. I sometimes call home just to hear my father's voice,
93. My religious beliefs are similar to my father's,
94. My father's wishes have influenced my choice of major at school.
95. I feel that I have obligations to my father that I wish I didn't have.
96. My father expects too much from me.
97. I wish I could stop lying to my father.
98. My beliefs regarding how to raise children are similar to my father's.
99. My father helps me to make my budget.
100. While I am home on a vacation I like to spend most of my time with my father.
101. I often wish my father would treat me more like an adult.

102. After being with my father for a vacation I find it difficult to leave him.
103. My values regarding honesty are similar to my father's.
104. I generally consult with my father when I make plans for an out of town weekend.
105. I am often angry at my father.
106. I like to hug and kiss my father.
107. I hate it when my father makes suggestions about what I do.
108. My attitudes about solitude are similar to my father's.
109. I consult with my father when deciding about part-time employment.
110. I decide what to do according to whether my father will approve of it.
111. Even when my father has a good idea I refuse to listen to it because he has made it.
112. When I do poorly in school I feel I'm letting my father down.
113. My attitudes regarding environmental protection are similar to my father's.
114. I ask my father what to do when I get into a tough situation.
115. I wish my father wouldn't try to get me to take sides with him.
116. My father is my best friend.
117. I argue with my father over little things.
118. My beliefs about how the world began are similar to my father's.
119. I do what my father decides on most questions that come up.
120. I seem to be closer to my father than most people my age.
121. My father is sometimes a source of embarrassment to me.
122. Sometimes I think I am too dependent on my father.
123. My beliefs about what happens to people when they die are similar to my father's.
124. I ask for my father's advice when I am planning my vacation time.
125. I am sometimes ashamed of my father.
126. I care too much about my father's reactions.
127. I get angry when my father criticizes me.
128. My attitudes regarding sex are similar to my father's.
129. I like to have my father help me pick out the clothing I buy for special occasions.
130. I sometimes feel like an extension of my father.
131. When I don't write my father often enough I feel guilty.
132. I feel uncomfortable keeping things from my father.
133. My attitudes regarding national defense are similar to my father's.
134. I call my father whenever anything goes wrong.
135. I often have to make decisions for my father.
135. I'm not sure I could make it in life without my father.
137. I sometimes resent it when my father tells me what to do.
138. My attitudes regarding mentally ill people are similar to my father's.

Appendix C

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment

Armsden & Greenberg (1987)

The next set of questions asks you about your relationship with your female Parent (i.e. mother or whoever takes care of you).

1. My mother respects my feelings.
2. I feel my mother does a good job as a mother.
3. I wish I had a different mother.
4. My mother accepts me as I am.
5. I like to get my mother's point of view on things I am concerned about.
6. I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my mother.
7. My mother can tell when I am upset about something.
8. Talking over my problems with my mother makes me feel ashamed or foolish.
9. My mother expects too much of me.
10. I get upset easily around my mother.
11. I get upset a lot more than my mother knows about.
12. When we discuss things, my mother cares about my point of view.
13. My mother trusts my judgment.
14. My mother has her own problems, so I don't bother her with mine.
15. My mother helps me to understand myself better.
16. I tell my mother about my problems and troubles.
17. I feel angry with my mother.
18. I don't get much attention from my mother.
19. My mother helps me to talk about my difficulties.
20. My mother understands me.
21. When I am angry about something, my mother tries to be understanding.
22. I trust my mother.
23. My mother doesn't understand what I am going through these days.
24. I can count on my mother when I need to get something off my chest.
25. If my mother knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it.

The next set of questions asks you about your relationship with your male Parent (i.e. father or whoever takes care of you).

1. My father respects my feelings.
2. I feel my father does a good job as a mother.
3. I wish I had a different father.
4. My father accepts me as I am.
5. I like to get my father's point of view on things I am concerned about.
6. I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my father.

7. My father can tell when I am upset about something.
8. Talking over my problems with my father makes me feel ashamed or foolish.
9. My father expects too much of me.
10. I get upset easily around my father.
11. I get upset a lot more than my father knows about.
12. When we discuss things, my father cares about my point of view.
13. My father trusts my judgment.
14. My father has his own problems, so I don't bother him with mine.
15. My father helps me to understand myself better.
16. I tell my father about my problems and troubles.
17. I feel angry with my father.
18. I don't get much attention from my father.
19. My father helps me to talk about my difficulties.
20. My father understands me.
21. When I am angry about something, my father tries to be understanding.
22. I trust my father.
23. My father doesn't understand what I am going through these days.
24. I can count on my father when I need to get something off my chest.
25. If my father knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it.

Response categories:

- Almost never or never true
- Not very true
- Sometimes true
- Often true
- Almost always or always true

Appendix D

Minority Status Stress Scale

Smedley, Myers, & Harrell (1993)

Sample Questions:

Students rated their answers on a six-point scale from (0) does not apply, to (5) extremely stressful.

1. The university does not have enough professors of my race
2. Few students of my race are in my classes
3. Racist policies and practices of the university
4. My family has very high expectations of my college success
5. Feeling less intelligent or less capable than others

Appendix E

The Franklin Well-Being Index

Franklin (1996)

Sample Questions:

1. In general how happy are you with your life as a whole these days? Would you say that you are:
 - ☐ Very satisfied
 - ☐ Somewhat satisfied
 - ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
 - ☐ Very dissatisfied
2. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days? Would you say that you are:
 - ☐ Very happy
 - ☐ Pretty happy
 - ☐ Not too happy
3. How satisfied are you with your family life, that is, the time you spend and things you do with members of your family?
 - ☐ Very satisfied
 - ☐ Somewhat satisfied
 - ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
 - ☐ Very dissatisfied
4. I am a useful person to have around.
 - ☐ Almost always true
 - ☐ Often true
 - ☐ Not often true
 - ☐ Never true
5. I am a person of worth.
 - ☐ Almost always true
 - ☐ Often true
 - ☐ Not often true
 - ☐ Never true

Appendix E

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Baker, McNeil, & Siryk (1985)

Sample Questions: Students rated their answers on a nine-point scale from ‘applies very closely to me’ to ‘doesn’t apply to me at all’.

1. I feel that I fit in well with the college environment.
2. I am pleased about my decision to go to college.
3. I feel very different from other students at college in ways I do not like.

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