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Am I Black enough? – Identity and belongingness of second-generation African students

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Am I Black Enough? – Identity and Belongingness of Second-Generation African Students

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Abstract

Over the course of the past few years, research regarding Black students has continued to increase. However, a lot of the research regarding Black students has focused heavily on the experiences and outcomes of African American students. Due to the history in the United States, the term Black has become synonymous with African American, leaving out the experiences of many second-generation African children. This explanatory mixed-methods design study examined second-generation African students' ethnic identity and sense of belonging within the Black community in their school system. This study also compared reported levels of belongingness in college experiences versus high school. An electronic survey was distributed to 40 second-generation African Students currently attending 4-year public universities in Virginia. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 5 participants to gain insight on belongingness within the Black community. Recommendations for school psychologists and practitioners working with second-generation African students were provided. This study allows school psychologists to gain knowledge about the ethnic identity and sense of belonging among second-generation African students, so that they are able to be better advocates for their needs.

Key words: second-generation African, sense of belonging, ethnic identity, high school students, college students

Introduction

Over the course of the past 40 years, the number of African immigrants in the United States has increased by over 500% (Anderson & López, 2018). Despite the growing presence of Africans in the United States, research on them has been very limited (Clark, 2008), with even less focusing on the educational attainment of second-generation African students (Rong & Brown, 2007). According to the Pew Center for Research (2013), a second-generation African child is defined as a U.S.-born child whose parents are immigrants to the United States. Second-generation African children often feel pressure from their families to retain their African culture; however, there is also that same pressure from society to become *Americanized* (Clark, 2008). The question is then, to conform with society or to be marginalized for being different? And regardless of the choice, second-generation African students continue to struggle to cope with not feeling fully African, but not feeling fully American either. Clark (2008) found that second-generation African students tended to identify with, at varying degrees, one of the three categories: African American, the country their parents were born, or a mix of the two. Clark (2008) conducted a series of interviews with multiple students and found that second-generation African students, who adopted African American values and mannerisms, felt more comfortable identifying as Black. What does being Black mean to a second-generation African student?

Part of the confusion in the identity of second-generation African children stems from how society and popular culture defines what it means to be Black. Black in the United States is often synonymous with African American. For example, TV shows like "Black-ish," "Everybody Hates Chris," and "Good Times" represent various Black experiences through media; however, the focus stems solely on African American experiences. And while some second-generation African individuals may consider themselves to be African Americans as well, statements like *"one African to another, Luvvie you are a guest of African-American culture. Act accordingly"* continue to emphasis the notion that second-generation Africans are not "all the way Black" (Iloabugichukwu, 2018). Currently, while the Black population in the United States consists of nearly one-fifth first- or second-generation immigrants, their media presence continues to be limited (Buyinza, 2019).Second-generation African students can hold many different identities. However, the problem arises when they are not given that choice, because their experiences are undervalued if they chose to identify with their national origin. Many are "assigned African-American identities regardless of how

they identify" (Clark, 2008, p. 177). Because of this, second-generation students may feel a certain pressure to assimilate with the mainstream African American culture, especially in areas with smaller African immigrant populations (Clark, 2008).

School psychologists and other school-based practitioners may be able to help students better navigate their racial and cultural identities. Identity development and sense of belonging are strongly associated with students' ability to succeed socially and academically (Slaten, Rose, Bonifay, & Ferguson, 2019). The goal of the current study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of second-generation African students in hopes of aiding them in navigating their identity development and sense of belongingness to the Black community. Results from the study will provide school-based recommendations for working with second-generation African students and understanding their needs.

This study has important implications for understanding the identity development and perceived sense of belonging in second-generation African students, and the role they play in a student's academic, social, and emotional development. Currently, very little is known about students' development in this area. Research on the relationship between ethnic identity and academic achievement has shown that Black students' scores on the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* was positively correlated with their GPA ($r = .57$), predicting that strong ethnic identity is a significant predictor of academic success (Yasui, Dorham, & Dishion, 2004). More research is needed to evaluate how much of a role this can actually play on a student's life as they matriculate through college. Much of the focus of recent research is on African American students, failing to look into the different groups of students who are also Black (e.g., African, Caribbean, Afro-Latino, Black immigrants). Research on different groups of students could be beneficial to youth as they are developing through school, in hopes of reducing certain identity and sense of belonging issues.

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Review of Literature

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Sense of Belonging

According to Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation (1943), the sense of belonging is one of the most important needs in a person's life, coming second to physiological needs. The feeling of belonging has been linked to academic motivation and success, successful life transitions and adjustment, decision-making, and dropout prevention (Slaten, Rose, Bonifay, & Ferguson, 2019). Similarly, research has also shown that levels of racial-ethnic belonging is linked to academic success and engagement (Oyserman,

Brickman, Bybee, & Celious, 2006; Johnson, et al., 2007). With the increase of second-generation students, knowledge of and respect for different groups is important in fostering a sense of belonging in the school building (Faircloth, & Hamm, 2005). Schools have done a lot to move towards culturally competent practices especially when working with Black students; however, most practices continue to reflect African-American culture, failing to include experiences from students who are not African American (Morris, 2003). For example, public school curriculum heavily focuses on African American history, with an emphasis on slavery and segregation, putting no focus on their experiences prior while they were still in Africa (Wills, 1996).

Research has found that sense of belonging to both racial and ethnic groups has been strongly linked to identity development in multi-ethnic individuals (e.g., Ghanaian-Americans) when compared to mono-ethnic groups (e.g., African Americans; Kim, Suyemoto, & Turner, 2010. Additionally, when students feel like there are fewer differences between themselves and what is considered normal, they tend to have higher levels of belongingness (Booker, 2007). So, it would be helpful to include experiences of second-generation African students in school practices to help foster increased levels of belonging. In fostering higher levels of belongingness among students, it is crucial that the experiences of those ethnic and language minority students are included (Faircloth, & Hamm, 2005). Newman and Newman (2001) emphasized the importance of a strong sense of belonging, especially as students are moving through adolescence into adulthood, and for many, that sense of belonging is strongly linked to their feelings about school. In contrast, students' ability to successfully perform academically and socially declines with lower levels of belonging (Faircloth, & Hamm, 2005; Osterman, 2000).

Labels and Terminology

Who is considered Black in the United States? Due to the devastating history surrounding the term "Black," the term is often synonymous with African American, which forces Black Africans and Afro-Caribbean's to fall under a label that does not necessarily include their backgrounds (Ogundipe, 2011). However, the Black race is multifaceted; it includes many different ethnicities and cultures, and it is important that those differences are not overshadowed by what is deemed Black within American society. Often times, second-generation Africans and African immigrants are compared to and assumed to be African Americans, stripping them of their ethnic labels (Ogundipe, 2011). One study of immigrants from

Ethiopia revealed that when asked to report their race, immigrants chose Black but reported feeling very uncomfortable with that label (Chacko, 2003). In the same study, Ethiopian immigrants voiced similar discomfort with the term African American because they felt they were "different" (Chacko, 2003).

"Black ethnic groups are often simply aggregated together under the racial category 'Black' without respect to the ethnic diversity that exists between them" (Ogundipe, 2011, p. 1). Research has found that there are six main labels used to describe the Black population: Negro, Black, African, Black African, Afro-Caribbean, and African American, research has also found that these labels fail to include people of mixed race (Adams-Bass, Stevenson & Kotzin, 2014; Agyemang, 2005; Waters, 1994). The differences between the labels, though they may be perceived as minimal, are often overlooked and people are all lumped into the Black category, without acknowledging the differences within the group.

Many immigrants and second-generation children, however, continue to move away from structured labels and choose self-identify with their ethnic groups. Four labels used by second generation children are: 1. national origin (e.g., Somali, Nigerian, Kenyan, etc.), 2. hyphenated American (e.g., Somali-American, Nigerian-American, Kenyan-American, etc.), 3. American, and 4. racial identity (e.g., Black). The first two labels (national origin and hyphenated) fall in line with children who hold their parents' country of origin close to their identity, while the last two labels might mean that a child identifies more with American society (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). Additionally, the way a second-generation child might choose to label themselves might differ depending on the situation (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). For example, if a student is in a predominantly White area, they might wish to label themselves as Black, whereas if they are in a more diverse area, they might wish to label themselves as their national origin or hyphenate their label (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). This situational sense of labeling helps students feel like they are able to fit in, depending on the context of the situation.

According to Benson (2006), due to the connotation of the term Black in the United States, many immigrants and second-generation children do not identify as part of being a part of the Black community. Second-generation Africans may feel as though the term Black is not all encompassing and that because of the history in the United States, it mostly refers to African Americans. Second-generation African students may feel a sense of exclusion, not because they actually are different, but because they may feel the

connotation of the word Black challenges their legitimacy of being a part of that group (Kim, Suyemoto, Turner, 2010).

Identity Development of Second-Generation African Immigrants

According to the United States Census Bureau, the term Black is defined as "a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa" (2018). Culture, which is more difficult to conceptualize, includes language, religion, food, art, clothes, mannerisms, customs, beliefs, etc. With the exception of the Black race, the United States has been able to validate and recognize the various cultures that can make up each individual race. For example, to be an Asian American is to be a part of a racial group, however to be Vietnamese American is to be part of an ethnic group. Throughout the United States, it is recognized that within that group lies many linguistic, cultural, and ethnic differences. Asian Americans have managed to form an inclusive Asian American identity that brings the community together, while acknowledging cultural differences (Okpewho & Nzegwu, 2009). However, despite the fact that the Black race consists of a wide variety of cultural experiences and backgrounds, the terms race, culture, and ethnicity seem to be used interchangeably (Solomon, 2015; Alex-Assensoh, 2009). "Americans tend to see race and ethnicity as interchangeable for Black Americans– failing to recognize any ethnic heterogeneity within the racial category of Black" (Waters, 2001). Second-generation Africans are often forced into accepting a Black identity that is rooted in African American histories, values, and experiences, which may not be shared by second-generation African students (Kebede, 2018).

Second-generation children grow up exploring the relationship between acculturation within the United States and their own personal identity (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). They may ask themselves if they remain tied to their cultural background or do they assimilate with the mainstream culture. John Berry (1997) provides a framework for acculturation, showing that students vary greatly depending on where they feel their identity lies. Table 1 summarizes Berry's levels of acculturation.

Table 1

John Berry's Acculturation Model

	High identification with parent's home culture	Low identification with parent's home culture
High identification with United States culture	Integration	Assimilation

| | Low identification with United States culture | Separation | Marginalization |

Second-generation children are shaped by both their parents' experiences before they migrated to the United States and their own experiences, which may be unique to those of their parents and their peers. According to Berry's model (1997), a student who highly identifies with both the United States culture and their parents' home culture is able to maintain their cultural identity while also becoming a part of the overall culture. This is known as the *bicultural student*. However, students who have not been able to integrate the two cultures may have difficulties in that they may be seen as different from society or different from their home culture. Students falling in the *assimilation* category may want nothing to do with their parents' culture and may "just want to blend in with the mainstream culture" (Berry, 1997). Students in the *separation* category want to hold onto their cultural identity and tend to reject the mainstream culture. Here, students may want to associate with people who are from their same country or share similar cultural beliefs so that they are able to celebrate their own culture. Lastly, students in the *marginalization* category may feel like they do not belong in either category. While Berry's model is traditionally used to explain the differences between U.S. culture and the parent's home culture, some studies have explored this model as it pertains to overarching Black culture and the parent's home culture (Thelamour, 2017).

Overtime, second-generation children become more secure in their identity as they move from adolescence to adulthood (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). Though several racial and ethnic identity models have been proposed, few focused on the development of children and adolescents with immigrant backgrounds. By combining several different identity models, Jean Phinney's Ethnic Identity Theory shows that second-generation students may go through three stages when forming their ethnic identities (Bernal, & Knight, 1999): Table 2 gives a summary of the three stages of Phinney's model.

Stage One: Unexamined Ethnic Identity. During this stage, children and adolescents have not yet explored their ethnic identity and may have no interest in doing so. Individuals may accept the dominant culture, in this case African American culture, which may influence how they see their own culture. During this stage, second-generation African students may put more emphasis on their Black race than their African ethnic origins (Bernal, & Knight, 1999).

Stage Two: Ethnic Identity Search/Moratorium. Children and adolescents tend to continue in the *Unexamined Ethnic Identity* stage until they are faced with a situation that results in them examining their own identity. Similar to the *Identity Crisis* stage in Erikson's Theory of Development (1968), this stage is "a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development [moves] one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (p. 16). In a similar fashion, the *Encounter* stage in Cross' Stages of Racial Identity Development (1978) describes this as an event or situation that results in an individual questioning their outlook on life and coming to the realization that they are different than the majority. During this stage, second-generation African students may begin to see more of the differences between their African culture and the dominant African-American culture, which may cause some internal conflict about where they belong (Bernal, & Knight, 1999).

Stage Three: Ethnic Identity Achievement. When children and adolescents move to this stage, a lot of the conflict they may have felt during the second stage is resolved. They begin to accept that they are part of the minority culture, but are open to learning about the differences and similarities between their culture and the dominant culture. They are secure in their ethnic identity and have a more positive outlook on their identity within the dominant culture. During this stage, second-generation African students may feel more secure in their African heritage and may feel more comfortable being Black even though they are different than African Americans (Bernal, & Knight, 1999).

Table 2

Jean Phinney's Ethnic Identity Theory

Stage	Development
Unexamined Ethnic Identity	Children have not explored their own ethnicity and may accept values and attitudes of the society they are in.
Identity Search/Moratorium	Children begin to explore their ethnic identity as a result of a situation that has brought light to the differences between their ethnic identity and the majority culture.
Ethnic Identity Achievement	Children have an understanding of their ethnic identity and what it means to them. They have accepted the differences between their culture and society, and have learned to navigate between the two.

The Bicultural Student

  A bicultural student strongly identifies with two different cultures. In regards to the Black community, that can mean a number of things. For the purposes of this review, we will focus on a child who is a part of both the African and Black communities (Okpewho & Nzegwu, 2009). Bicultural students continue to have a fluid identity, navigating between their parents' home culture and the more dominant culture.

  In an unpublished thesis, Asante (2012) conducted focus groups and interviews with college students who identify with both their African culture and the overall Black culture. Participants reported feeling like they were not able to fully embrace their American culture due to feeling like their experiences were never included. They shared that it made them feel "bad sometimes because they just put all Black people in the same pot" (Asante, 2012). Students also reported feeling aware that there is a distinction and that it reflected in who they chose to be friends with once they left for college. Many students stated they were told that they were not Black because of their African background which changed the way they would view the term Black. Similarly, many students felt as though the African culture was an unimportant part of the Black community because it was rarely discussed or often misinterpreted. Students shared not wanting to be labeled as Black because they felt like it did not define who they were and that it put them all in a box, ignoring their differences (Asante, 2012).

  Similarly, many second-generation African students expressed feeling discriminated against by African Americans, because of their background, language, clothing, and food choices (Ogundipe, 2011). One student shared that "[African Americans] don't seem to like Africans a lot" (Ogundipe, 2011). Another student shared, "I feel a strong sense of commitment and loyalty to people of African descent. I do not feel that same sense of attachment to African Americans. I believe that we have very distinct social experiences and we also have very distinct cultural experiences, so to lump all of us together as one, I think begs the truth of the situation" (Ogundipe, 2011). One positive, however, was that many students also shared that as they transitioned from high school to college, they were able to take in the *good* from both cultures to help them shape who they were as an individual and use that to build relationships with those who were both similar and different in culture. Specifically, students shared that organizations like the African Student Association played a big part in making them feel like they belonged (Asante, 2012).

It is important that students are provided with supports in schools to assist them in navigating ethnic identity development and foster higher levels of belongingness. Many educational and psychological research studies have found that students' sense of belonging to their school, peers, and teachers positively correlated to both academic and non-academic outcomes, such as the student's motivation to learn and succeed, the student's level of academic success, and student's success in the future (Niemi & Hotulainen, 2015).

Methods

The current study was designed to explore identity development and sense of belonging of second-generation African college students. This study also compared participants college experiences with experiences they had in high school.

Research Questions

The study examined second-generation African students' ethnic identity and sense of belonging within the Black community. Specifically, the research questions for the study were:

1. How do second-generation African students define what it means to be Black?

2. How do second-generation African students perceive their sense of belongingness within the Black community?

3. Are there differences in second-generation African students' sense of ethnic identity between high school and college?

4. Are there differences in second-generation African students' sense of belongingness in the Black community between high school and college?

5. What supports do second-generation African students perceive were influential in developing their ethnic identity?

Measures

Prior to the survey, participants were asked a series of eligibility and demographic questions. There were three yes-or-no eligibility questions: (1) if they were U.S. born or they have spent a majority of their life in the U.S.; (2) if they had at least one parent born and raised in Africa; and (3) if they were currently attending a four-year public university in Virginia. Demographic questions included age, gender identity, university, and classification (e.g. first year, sophomore, junior, or senior).

Ethnic Identity Development. Participants' ethnic identity was measured using an adapted version of the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised*, (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The MEIM-R is a 6-item scale which consists of two different subscales – identity exploration (e.g. "I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs") and identity commitment (e.g. "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group"). The response set for MEIM-R items ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Subscale scores ranged from 3 – 15, while overall scores range from 6 – 30, with higher scores indicating higher levels of ethnic exploration, ethnic commitment, and overall sense of belonging with their ethnic group. Higher identity exploration scores indicate higher levels of interest in learning about and participating in one's culture, while higher identity commitment scores indicate higher levels of commitment to their ethnic group.

The MEIM-R has demonstrated high levels of reliability and measurement invariance indicating that the same construct is being measured across different ethnic groups (Brown, et. al, 2014; Phinney & Ong, 2014). Internal consistency reports indicated acceptable levels of internal consistency with both the exploration (Cronbach alpha = 0.80) and commitment (Cronbach alpha = 0.87) subscales and the overall scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.83) with Black participants (Brown, et. al, 2014). Much evidence has also been found to support the two-factor structure of this 6-item scale (Brown, et. al, 2014; Chakawa, Butler, Shapiro, 2015; Phinney & Ong, 2014). See Appendix D for the detailed scale.

Sense of Belonging. Participants' sense of belonging was measured using interview questions about students' sense of belonging to the Black community. Participants were asked to provide contact information if they wanted to be contacted for a follow-up interview and interviews were conducted by phone or video-conference software (e.g. Zoom or WebEx). See Appendix E for the interview protocol.

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Procedures

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Once IRB approval was obtained, the survey was administered via QuestionPro, an online survey tool. To recruit participants, a QuestionPro link was posted on different Black Student Association (BSA) and African Student Association (ASA) Facebook pages to allow students to voluntarily respond to survey questions. Schools without BSA and ASA Facebook pages were contacted through presidents/advisors of ASAs and BSAs from publicly available information. See Appendix A for list of schools contacted. The survey began with a brief description of the study and a consent form. See Appendix C for consent form.

Once respondents read and consented to the survey, they were asked three yes-or-no questions before they could start the survey: (1) if they were U.S. born or have spent a majority of their life in the U.S.; (2) if they had at least one parent born and raised in Africa; and (3) if they were currently attending a four-year public university in Virginia. If respondents answered yes to all three questions, they were then directed to demographic questions and then the adapted version of the MEIM-R. Participants were asked to fill out the adapted MEIM-R twice. They were first asked to fill out the survey with how they currently identified as and the second time, they were asked to think about how they felt in high school. Once respondents completed the survey, they were prompted to provide their email address if they would like to be considered for a follow-up interview. Of the 40 participants, 12 participants responded that they wanted to be considered for a follow-up interview. All 12 participants were emailed to set up a time for an interview; however only five participants responded and completed the interview. The participants had the option of a video conference using Zoom or phone interview. Four participants choose to interview over Zoom while one preferred a phone interview.

Analyses

Demographic and MEIM-R responses were first analyzed using descriptive statistics. In order to answer the research question of whether there are differences between second-generation African students' sense of ethnic identity as they transition from high school to college, data were analyzed using a within-subjects t-test, surveying 40 participants.

In order to analyze the qualitative data from interviews, thematic analysis was used to identity common themes in the interviewee's responses. Inductive thematic analysis was used so that themes are directly derived from the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In order to check examiner bias, the examiner discussed interview interpretations with interviewees to confirm interview results. The examiner also took note of personal biases prior to the start of the interview. During interviews, a clinical approach was utilized, as to keep examiner from relating own experiences to the experiences of interviewees.

Results

Demographic information was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Participants in the study were 40 second-generation African students, ages 18-24 ($M = 20.6$), that attended four-year public universities in

the Commonwealth of Virginia. Eleven participants identified as males and 29 identified as females. Four participants were college first years, six were college sophomores, 14 were college juniors, and 16 college seniors. When presented with a list of races (Asian/Asian American, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, White, Caucasian, European, not Hispanic, American Indian, Mixed: parents are from two different groups, or Other), 38 participants identified as Black or African Americans, while two participants identified as White or Middle Eastern. Table 3 (located in Appendix G) gives a summary of the ethnicities of participants. Participants were also asked to write in how they self-identify in terms of their ethnic identity. Table 4 (located in Appendix H) gives a summary of self-reported ethnicities of the participants. Participants attended the following universities: James Madison University ($n = 5$), University of Virginia ($n = 8$), George Mason University ($n = 14$), Virginia Polytechnic University ($n = 9$), William and Mary ($n = 1$), Virginia Commonwealth University ($n = 2$), Old Dominion University ($n = 1$).

A within subjects t-test was used to answer research question three, are there differences in second-generation African students' sense of ethnic identity between high school and college? Respondents reported a higher level of sense of belonging to their own ethnic group currently (M = 4.20, SD = .76) when compared to in high school (M = 3.73, SD = 1.11). The results of a t-test analysis revealed that this difference was statistically significant ($t(39) = 2.71$, p = 0.01). Similarly, respondents also reported a stronger attachment to their own ethnic group currently (M = 4.33, SD = .73) when compared to in high school (M = 3.90, SD = 1.08). The results of a t-test analysis revealed that this difference was also statistically significant ($t(39) = 2.17$, p = 0.04). There was a statistically significant difference ($t(39) = 3.67$, p < 0.001) when respondents were asked if they have engaged in activities that will help them understand their ethnic background better. Respondents shared that they have currently done more (M = 4.00, SD = .75) when compared to in high school (M = 3.38, SD = 1.19). There was no significant difference ($t(39) = 1.66$, p = .104) between the amount of time respondents have spent trying to find out more about their ethnic group currently (M = 3.62, SD = 1.03) when compared to in high school (M = 3.25, SD = 1.15). This shows that second-generation African students' sense of ethnic identity increases as they transition from high school to college.

Follow-up interviews were held with five participants, ages 20-22 ($M = 20.8$) to look at second-generation African students' sense of belonging to the Black community. Three participants identified as

males and two identified as females. The themes were identified as 'Black and African are *different*' and 'Influential Supports.' Table 5 summarizes interviewees responses.

Black and African are *different*: This theme encapsulates each of the participants' feelings that being Black and being African were different. Participants shared that they felt like their experiences and backgrounds were not included when thinking about what it meant to be Black. When asked about sense of belonging in the Black community, respondents tended to feel like *being Black and being African were two different things.* To answer the first research question, "how do second-generation African students define what it means to be Black?", respondents were asked what it meant to be Black. Respondents shared that they were Black "because of [their] skin color." The second research question—"how do second-generation African students perceive their sense of belongingness within the Black community?"—was answered by asking respondents if they viewed themselves as Black and if they felt like their experiences were highlighted in the Black community. One respondent (male, 21) shared:

"To the world, I may be Black, but amongst the Black community you can see I'm Nigerian."

Another respondent (female, 20) shared:

"I come from an immigrant family, so I don't consider myself Black because it doesn't represent who I am"

All respondents shared that they were Black *because of their skin color* they were Black*,* however that they still felt that they were *different* because they were African*.* They all shared that they were consistently asked "…but where are you *really* from?" which made them feel that regardless of their skin color, they were not *truly* Black.

Influential Supports: This theme captured participants' feelings of the different supports they have perceived as influential in developing their ethnic identity. To answer the fourth research question—"are there differences in second-generation African students' sense of belongingness in the Black community between high school and college?"—respondents were asked if their feeling of being Black has changed as they transitioned from high school to college. One respondent (male, 20) shared that:

"Before college, I felt like my ethnic identity was suppressed, but in college I was able to get back to my roots."

Another respondent (female, 22) had similar thoughts, sharing that:

"There was a lack of education of race and ethnicity in high school, they glossed over my history.
I felt like I was able to learn more once I got to college."

The last research question—"what supports do second-generation African students perceive were influential in developing their ethnic identity?"—was answered by asking what supports they had in high school or college that helped foster belongingness within the Black community. Respondents shared that their universities had different organizations that encompassed all different backgrounds, so diversity and different ethnic identities were really able pop out. One respondent (male, 21) shared:

"I was around more people who were African and that helped show me that even though I am not African American, I am still Black."

Similarly, another respondent (female, 20) shared:

"In college, there were clubs where I was able to find a lot more people like me that I could connect with."

Table 5

Thematic Analysis of Interview Responses

Black and African are *different*		Influential Supports	
R1: What does it mean to be Black?	R2: Do you view yourself as Black?	R4: Has your feeling of being Black changed?	R5: What supports did you have in HS and College?
"I am Black because of my skin color" Regardless of skin color, students still felt like they were not truly Black "...but where are you really from?"	"To the world, I may be Black, but amongst the Black community you can see I'm Nigerian" "I come from an immigrant family, so I don't consider myself Black because it doesn't represent who I am"	"Before college, I felt like my ethnic identity was suppressed, but in college I was able to get back to my roots" "There was a lack of education of race and ethnicity in high school, they glossed over my history. I felt like I was able to learn more once I got to college"	"I was around more people who were African in college and that helped show me that even though I am not African American, I am still Black" "In college, there were clubs where I was able to find a lot more people like me that I could connect with"

Discussion

The present study predicted that second-generation African students' sense of ethnic identity and sense of belonging within the Black community increased as they transitioned from high school to college.

For the most part, these hypotheses were supported. Respondents shared that they had more supports in college that aided in their increased sense of belonging and ethnic identity. However, the amount of time respondents spent trying to find out more about their ethnic group did not differ between high school and college. This finding suggests that even though participants were presented with more opportunities in college, they amount of time participants spent seeking out more knowledge about their individual ethnic groups did not increase when compared to high school. The results suggests that second generation African Students tend to feel a lower sense of belonging within the Black community in high school than they do in college. Students are provided with more opportunities in college that aid in their sense of belonging and ethnic identity.

Similarly, this study supports previous research findings that second-generation students tend to become more secure in their identity as they move from childhood to adulthood (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). Interviewees shared that there were a limited number of resources that were made available to them in high school, which made them feel like their African identity was *glossed* over. However, once they transitioned to college, they were provided with ample supports which made them feel like they belonged. This suggests that, when presented with the proper resources and supports, second-generation African students feel higher levels of belonging within the Black community.

The results of this study support the notion that second-generation African students tend to feel a higher levels of ethnic identity and sense of belonging to the Black community as they transition from high school to college. Consistent with research (Chacko, 2003; Ogundipe, 2011), the results of this study found that, on average, the participants were not comfortable being labeled as Black because it did not include who they were as a second-generation African.

It should be noted that the present study is limited, in that the sample consisted of only 40 participants from only seven different public universities in Virginia, resulting in limited generalizability to the second-generation African student population as a whole. The generalizability of the study is also compromised in that the ethnicities of the participants might not generalize to all second-generation African students.

These results should be taken into account when considering how to work with second-generation African students. School psychologists, specifically, can use this data to better serve second-generation

African students in the school building. This information can help put supports in place to help second-generation African students increase in both their ethnic identity and sense of belonging. School psychologists can start by having a conversation with second-generation students, their families, and faculty and staff within the school building. Students have shared that they have felt like their experiences are *glossed* over and ignored. Having a conversation would be the first step in making those students feel like their backgrounds were just as important as any other student in the school building.

Future research should focus on the specific supports that were made available to these students and how they better helped increase their ethnic identity and sense of belonging within the Black Community. Future research should also look to include a wider array of ethnic groups in order to increase the generalizability of the study.

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Appendix A

Virginia Public University Black and African Student Association Facebook Pages

Black Student Association Pages:

- GMU Black Student Alliance @bsagmu

- UVA Black Student Alliance @bsaatuva

- Black Student Alliance at Virginia Tech (BSA) @BSAatVT

- William and Mary Black Student Organization @wmBSOrg

- Christopher Newport University Black Student Union @cnubsu

- BSA Longwood @bsa.longwood

- UMW Black Student Association @UMWBlackStudentAssociation

- ODU Black Student Alliance @ODUBSA

- Black Student Alliance at Radford University

African Student Association Pages:

- African Student Association GMU @AfricanStudentAssociationGMU

- Organization of African Students at UVA @OASatUVAcville

- African Students Association – Virginia Tech Chapter @ASAvt

- ASU VCU – African Student Union

- Norfolk State African Student's Association @norfolkasa

- African Student Association @ ODU

Schools with no Black and African Student Association Facebook Pages:

- James Madison University

- Virginia State University

Schools with only Black Student Association Facebook Pages:

- William and Mary University

- Christopher Newport University

- Longwood University

- Mary Washington University

- Radford University

Appendix B

Facebook Script

Hello! I am currently completing my educational specialist degree at James Madison University. I am conducting a study on identity development and belongingness within the Black community of second-generation African students for my thesis. I would like to ask you to please take the time to complete this brief survey. Your input provides us with valuable information about your experience as a second-generation African student and your ethnic identity. We will use your feedback to make school-based recommendations to help assist other second-generation African students. This anonymous survey should take approximately 10 minutes. Thank you for your time! [https://jmu.questionpro.com/t/AR5PPZkkG3]

Appendix C

The following is a consent form for a research study on second-generation African Students' identity development and belongingness to the Black community.

Web Consent for Participation in Research

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study by Muna Yusuf, M.A. from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to gather information about ethnic identity and sense of belonging of second-generation African students. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her Ed.S. thesis.

Research Procedures
This study consists of an online survey that will be administered to individual participants through QuestionPro. At the end of the survey, participants will have the option of submitting their contact information to participate in a follow-up interview. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to ethnic identity and sense of belonging of second-generation African students. Should you decide to participate in this confidential research you may access the anonymous survey by following the web link located under the "Giving of Consent" section.

Time Required
Participation in the survey will require about 10 minutes of your time. Participation in the follow-up interview, if you choose to provide your contact information, will require about 30 minutes.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study.

Benefits
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal benefits from your involvement in this study

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to peers and the thesis committee. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through QuestionPro, data is kept in the strictest confidence. Responding participant's email addresses will be tracked using QuestionPro for follow-up notices, but names and email addresses are not associated with individual survey responses. The researchers will know if a participant has submitted a survey, but will not be able to identify individual responses, therefore maintaining anonymity for the survey. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. Aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Muna Yusuf	Tiffany Hornsby
School Psychology	School Psychology
James Madison University	James Madison University
yusufmx@dukes.jmu.edu	hornsbtc@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. Taimi Castle
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-5929
castletl@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I understand that I can email the investigator for a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By answering I consent to the question below, and completing and submitting this confidential online survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

_____   _____

Muna Yusuf   1/19/21

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # #21-1927

Appendix D

Verbal Consent for Telephone or Web-based Interviews

VERBAL CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PARTICIPATION.

SUBJECT: Am I Black Enough? – Identity and Belongingness of Second-Generation African Students

Oral consent serves as an assurance that the required elements of informed consent have been presented orally to the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative.

Verbal consent to participate in this telephone interview has been obtained by the participant's willingness to continue with the telephone interview by providing answers to a series of questions related to what the participant feels about their Black identity.

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by *Muna Yusuf* from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to provide more information about the identity second-generation African students in relation to their Black identity; provide more information about the changes in perceived sense of belonging between high school and college; and provide awareness on the levels of perceived levels of belongingness of second-generation African students.

This study consists of an interview that will be administered to individual participants over the telephone or through a web-based platform. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to gather information about ethnic identity and sense of belonging of second-generation African students

Participation in this study will require about 30 minutes of your time.

We do not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

We do not perceive more than minimal benefits from your involvement in this study.

The results of this research will be presented at with peers and thesis committee. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. We retain the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, data will be presented in aggregate form. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to us, the researchers. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up your with your answers *(including audio recordings)* will be destroyed.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Do you have any questions about the study, your participation, or your rights as a participant?

Do you give consent to be audio recorded during your interview?

I attest that the aforementioned written consent has been orally presented to the human subject and the human subject provided me with an oral assurance of their willingness to participate in the research.

_____   _____
_____

Surveyor's Name (Printed)   Surveyor

_____   _____

Federal requirements mandate that informed consent shall be documented by the use of a written consent form and in the case of oral presentation must also be witnessed in circumstances where human subjects are blind or illiterate.

Appendix E

<u>Eligibility questions:</u>
1. Were you born in the U.S. or have you spent a majority of your life in the U.S.?
2. Do you have at least one parent that was born and raised in Africa?
3. Are you currently attending a four-year public university in Virginia?

<u>Demographic Questionnaire</u>
1. Age
2. Gender identity
3. University
4. Classification
    a. First year
    b. Sophomore
    c. Junior
    d. Senior

<u>Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R)</u>
You will be asked to fill out this survey twice. The first time you fill out the survey, please think about how you currently identify. The second time you fill out this survey, please think about how you felt in high school and how you would have responded to these questions then.

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Mexican-American, Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, American Indian, Anglo-American, and White. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their ethnicity is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behaviors is affected by it. These questions are about your ethnicity group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in:
In terms of ethnic group(s), I currently consider myself to be

_____

1. I currently have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. I currently have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
3. I currently understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
4. I currently have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.
5. I currently have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.
6. I currently feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

Response scale:
(1) Strong disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree

_____

Currently, when presented with these options, which ethnic group do you most identify with:
(1) Asian/Asian American
(2) Black or African American

(3) Hispanic or Latino
(4) White, Caucasian, European, not Hispanic
(5) American Indian
(6) Mixed: parents are from two different groups (write in): _____
(7) Other (write in): _____

My father's ethnicity is: _____

My mother's ethnicity is: _____

Please think about who you were in high school. How would you respond to these questions then.
In terms of ethnic group(s), in high school I considered myself to be

_____

1. In high school, I spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. In high school, I had a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
3. In high school, I understood pretty well what my ethnic group membership meant to me.
4. In high school, I often did things that would help me understand my ethnic background better.
5. In high school, I often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.
6. In high school, I felt a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

Response scale:
(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree

_____

In high school, when presented with these options, which ethnic group would you most identify with:
(1) Asian/Asian American
(2) Black or African American
(3) Hispanic or Latino
(4) White, Caucasian, European, not Hispanic
(5) American Indian
(6) Mixed: parents are from two different groups (write in): _____
(7) Other (write in): _____

Appendix F

<u>Interview</u>

<u>Introduction: Early this year/semester, you took a brief survey. As a reminder,</u> in this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Mexican-American, Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, American Indian, Anglo-American, and White. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their ethnicity is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behaviors is affected by it. This interview is to follow up on questions about your ethnic identity, experiences, and belongingness to the Black community.

1. On the survey you indicated that you identify as [identified ethnic group]. What does being [identified ethnic group] mean to you?

2. What does it mean to be Black?

3. Do you view yourself as Black?

   ○ Why or why not?

4. Do you feel like your experiences are highlighted in the Black community?

5. Has your feeling of being Black changed since you first started college?

   ○ Has anything during your time in college contributed to that?

   ○ How did you feel about being Black in high school?

6. What supports did you have in high school that helped you develop your identity in high school?

   ○ What supports did you have in college that helped foster belongingness within the Black community in college?

7. What do you think would've been helpful for you to develop your identity in high school?

   ○ What do you think would've been helpful for you to foster more belongingness within the Black community in high school?

8. Has your view of your ethnic identity changed as you've moved from high school to college?

9. In what situations do you consider yourself Black versus [identified ethnic group]?

10. Do you think that others see you as a Black?

    ○ Why or why not?

Appendix G

Participants Demographics

Table 3

Participants Demographics

	Participants	Percentage
Gender		
Male	11	27.5%
Female	29	72.5%
Age		
18	3	7.5%
19	6	15%
20	10	25%
21	11	27.5%
22	6	15%
23	2	5%
24	2	5%
Classification		
First Year	4	10%
Sophomore	6	15%
Junior	14	35%
Senior	16	40%
Race		
Asian or Asian American	0	0%
Black or African American	38	95%
Hispanic or Latino	0	0%
White, Caucasian, European, not Hispanic	1	2.5%
American Indian	0	0%
Mixed: parents are from two different groups	0	0%
Other (write in)	1	2.5%

Appendix H

Participants Personal Ethnic Identifications

Table 4

Participants Personal Ethnic Identification

Ethnicity	Number of Participants	Percentage
African	2	5%
African American	14	35%
African European	1	2.5%
Afro Arab	1	2.5%
American	1	2.5%
Black	8	20%
Cameroonian	1	2.5%
Eritrean	3	7.5%
Ethiopian	3	7.5%
Ghanaian	1	2.5%
Middle Eastern	2	5%
Nigerian	1	2.5%
Nigerian American	1	2.5%
North African	1	2.5%
Sierra Leonean	1	2.5%
Somali	5	12.5%
Sudanese	6	15%
Yemeni	1	2.5%

**Some participants identified as multiple ethnic groups