MULTIRACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:
DEVELOPMENTAL CORRELATES AND THEMES
AMONG MULTIRACIAL ADULTS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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By

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This study examined some of the common experiences that have been theorized to characterize the racial/ethnic identity development of multiracial individuals. The construct of ethnic identity was examined along with factors identified in the literature as influencing racial/ethnic identity development such as family support of multiracial heritage, sense of belonging, coping with discrimination, and racial/ethnic legitimacy testing. An attempt was also made to explore how ethnic identity and other factors such as self-esteem, racial diversity of the community in which one was raised, and choice of self-label are related.

Seventy-three multiracial adults completed measures that assessed ethnic identity, self-esteem, racial/ethnic legitimacy testing experiences, family support of multiracial heritage and coping. Results indicated that a majority of participants had experienced racial/ethnic legitimacy testing from those racial groups which were part of their racial/ethnic heritage. While self-esteem was not found to be related to racial/ethnic legitimacy testing as predicted, statistically significant relationships were obtained between self-esteem and ethnic identity, and self-esteem and family support of multiraciality. Given these findings, it was proposed that family support of the individual's mixed heritage may have served as a buffer for the effects of racial legitimacy testing on self-esteem. Family support of multiraciality and racial diversity of neighborhood in which individual was raised were found to be significant predictors of ethnic identity. This finding is consistent with existing literature which has identified these two factors as having a positive impact on racial identity resolution. Participants were asked to identify a stressful situation in which they felt rejected due to some aspect of their multiracial heritage. A component of
ethnic identity labeled ethnic identity achievement was found to be related to coping strategies that involved attempts to either alter this stressful situation or create some positive meaning from it. No significant predictors of choice of monoracial or multiracial self-label were identified.

Methodological limitations of some of the measures, as well as the small sample size, were identified as reasons for interpreting these findings with caution. Further research using improved measures to assess the constructs of interest was recommended. Implications for counseling were discussed.
So many dreams seem unattainable
then, when you summon your will
they become inevitable

Christopher Reeve
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Multiracial or biracial identity development theory has been neglected in the empirical literature until fairly recently (Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson & Harris, 1993; Poston, 1990; Root 1992a). Some of this "neglect" has been fueled by our society's historical legacy of discouraging racial mixing (e.g., by prohibiting interracial marriage), and its efforts to render multiracial individuals invisible (e.g., by not including "Multiracial" or "Mixed" as one of the U.S. Census categories). Not surprisingly (given these historical and socio-political forces), the psychological study of biracial-multiracial identity development, or at least attempts to identify these individuals in our research samples, has lagged as well. The growing numbers of multiracial individuals in the United States, however, are helping to increase recognition and acceptance of multiracial persons (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). Based on information obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census for 1992, Root (1996) reported that the number of biracial babies in the U.S. appeared to be increasing at a rate faster than the number of monoracial babies. Root noted that while the 1992 Census data suggested that this trend was occurring across racial groups, it appeared especially evident when comparing the growth of monoracial White babies (15%) and monoracial Black babies (27%) with the growth rate of biracial Black/White babies (500%) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, cited in Root, 1996). She also noted that since 1970, the rate of interracial marriages had almost doubled in 1980 and again in 1990. Given the growing numbers of interracial couples and multiracial individuals, social scientists are being challenged to broaden existing conceptualizations of racial identity development, become more informed about what it means to be multiracial in this society, and
learn how individuals develop a multiracial identity -- especially in the face of occasional intense pressure to choose just one race with which to identify (Root, 1994).

One recent model of biracial identity resolution that addresses the complexities inherent in having multiple racial/ethnic identities was proposed by Root (1990). Unlike traditional identity development models that propose linear movement through fixed stages of development, Root’s model characterizes racial identity development as being more of a nonlinear and flexible process. One of the core assumptions of her model, which deviates from the basic tenets or theoretical framework of many mainstream psychological theories, is that there is more than one healthy identity resolution or option (Reynolds & Pope, 1991). While the empirical validation for multiracial identity theory remains in its infancy, several exploratory studies and theoretical articles have contributed to our knowledge base by identifying common themes and experiences of biracial/multiracial individuals. Two themes or issues that are frequently identified in the literature as characterizing the experience of multiracial persons and that will be explored in this study are: (a) multiracial persons' struggle to feel a sense of belonging to and acceptance by one (or more) of their racial group(s) (Hershel, 1995; Kich, 1992; Nakashima 1992), and (b) choosing a racial/ethnic self-label (Alipuria, 1994; Gibbs & Hines, 1992). This investigator approached the study of biracial identity and related issues with the assumption that multiraciality in and of itself does not lead to psychological stress, but rather that internal conflicts related to being multiracial are more likely a response to societal racism.

Hall (1992) reported that for multiracial individuals, processes such as developing a sense of belonging and choosing a racial/ethnic self-label are interconnected and complex. Several authors have suggested that our society's historical bias and press to keep the races, for example White and Black, separate is pervasive even today (Root, 1992a; Spickard, 1992; Wilson, 1992). This press is often experienced by the multiracial individual as a powerful (although at times subtle) pressure to identify with one or the other racial group of their
heritage (Motoyoshi, 1990). This forced either/or identity choice may often conflict with the multiracial person's desire to identify with multiple heritages and feel accepted as a legitimate member of more than one racial group. The concept of 'legitimacy' and the experience of racial/ethnic 'legitimacy testing' have been identified in the literature as characteristic of the experience of most multiracial persons (Anzaldúa, 1990; Nakashima, 1992; Wilson, 1992).

Anzaldúa (1990) noted that multiracial individuals are often subjected to ethnic legitimacy tests which must be "passed" before being accepted as full and legitimate members of a particular ethnic group. Failing these tests might occur, for example, if the self-identified Hispanic did not speak Spanish, or if the self-identified Black person's skin was perceived to be too light. Given this scenario, Root (1992a) observed that multiracial individuals frequently experience oppression and discrimination as people of color from anyone (including members of traditional racial communities) who defines race in an overly simplistic, dichotomous manner (e.g., White versus non-White).

Before further addressing the area of multiracial identity, it may be helpful to consider the concepts of race, biraciality and multiraciality, and ethnic identity. A popular contention among social scientists is that 'race' is primarily a social construct that has been defined differently according to varying historical influences and cultural zeitgeists (Spickard, 1992; Thornton, 1992; Zack, 1995). Given that there is no empirical data supporting a biological basis for 'race', Zack (1995) recommended that we cease categorizing individuals by race and instead help to create a society where "racelessness" or the absence of race were the social norm. In her chapter entitled "Life After Race," Zack refers the reader to the seventeenth century in Western Europe when the modern concept of race had not yet been formulated. Many would likely agree with the basis of Zack's argument that a biological basis for race is nonexistent; given the prominence of race in our society and how embedded and emotionally laden its meaning, however, we are unquestionably a long way from her "racelessness" ideal.
In this study, the terms 'biracial' and 'multiracial' will be used interchangeably. According to Root (1992b), the term 'biracial' is generally used to refer to someone with two socially and phenotypically distinct racial heritages, one from each parent. She noted that 'multiracial' is generally used to refer to someone whose parents are from two or more different racial groups, such as parents whose racial background includes African, Indian and European heritages. Given the term ‘multiracial’ is inclusive of all racially mixed persons, Root suggested that the term ‘multiracial’ is more accurate than ‘biracial.’ Also, it is fairly common in studies of multiracial individuals to find the terms “multiracial identity” and “ethnic identity” combined into one term (e.g., multiracial/ethnic identity). In keeping with the precedent set by previous research in the area of multiracial identity development, and because racial identity is such an integral part of ethnic identity (Root, 1992b), these terms will often be found combined in this study as well. Furthermore, Porter and Washington (1993) noted that combining the terms race and ethnicity, or using them interchangeably is evident in our tendency to view, for example, Hispanic and Asian American as both ethnic and racial categories. Hall (1992) cautions, however, that while race can contribute to ethnic identity, the physical appearance of the multiracial person is not necessary nor is it sufficient for determining ethnic identity. Ethnic identity has been defined as a multidimensional construct that can encompass such factors as ethnic identity formation, ethnic identification, ethnic behaviors and practices (Phinney, 1992), and cultural norms and attitudes (Phinney, 1996).

The empirical literature that has directly studied some of the normative processes identified as characterizing the racial identity development of multiracial persons is limited. An attempt was made in this study to examine these processes, namely, (a) developing a sense of belonging to and feeling accepted by multiple racial/ethnic groups, (b) coping with feeling rejected and/or discriminated against due to some aspect of one's multiple racial heritage, and (c) choosing a racial self-label. The role of family support of multiraciality was explored in
the context of developing a racial/ethnic identity. The extent to which the aforementioned
experiences affect self-esteem was also examined.

For many multiracial individuals, developing a sense of belonging to those racial
groups which are part of their racial heritage is a challenging experience moderated by factors
such as ethnic legitimacy testing (Anzaldúa, 1990), family support, family attention to racially
socializing the multiracial child (Greene, 1990), and racial diversity of the individual’s
community (Hall, 1980). A multiracial person's choice of either a monoracial or multiracial
self-label may be influenced by the multiracial person's sense of belonging to the racial groups
of their heritage and by the degree to which the individual has felt pressured to choose a
monoracial label (e.g., due to others’ perceptions about the racial group to which the
multiracial person should belong). Not experiencing a sense of acceptance and belonging can
lead to feeling excluded and experiencing a sense of "otherness" (Root, 1994) or feeling
vulnerable to being defined by others rather than self-defined (Comas-Díaz, 1996).
According to Hershel (1995), a continual lack of this type of social validation can create
difficulties in maintaining a consistent sense of self and lead to increased self-doubt and low
self-esteem.

With regard to racial/ethnic identity, the construct of self-esteem has been explored in
the literature in relation to the following variables: (a) ethnic identity formation in different
minority groups (Parham & Helms, 1985a; Phinney, 1989); (b) reference-group choice
(Rotheram-Borus, 1990); and (c) biracial and multiracial identity (Alipuria, 1994; Hall, 1992).
Rotheram-Borus (1990) found no significant relationship between self-esteem and reference-
group orientation in a group of adolescents who self-identified as either ‘mainstream,’
'bicultural' or ‘strongly ethnically identified.’ Similarly, Hall (1992) found no significant
differences between ethnic identity choice (or choice of self-label) and self-esteem using a
small sample of multiracial Black-Japanese adults. These findings are consistent with Root's
(1990) model, which suggests that choice of reference-group is not a determinant of a positive
identity resolution and healthy self-concept. The results from these studies were used to generate hypotheses for this study regarding the nature of the relationship between ethnic identity and both self-esteem and self-label in multiracial individuals.

Several authors have addressed the nature of coping strategies among racial minorities in dealing with discrimination (Chavira & Phinney, 1991, Richie, 1992). The empirical coping literature as it pertains to race is limited, but findings do suggest racial differences in coping styles (Richie, 1992), and differences in coping strategies according to stage of ethnic identity development (Chavira & Phinney, 1991). To date, however, the relationship between discrimination and coping has not been examined using a sample of persons identified as multiracial.

Finally, the influence of family support on multiracial identity will be examined in this study. Several authors have suggested that a family which openly communicates about the experience of being multiracial, including societal discrimination, can serve as a buffer to the multiracial child's and adolescent's self-esteem (Kich, 1992; Kerwin et.al, 1993; Root, 1992a). According to Root (1992a), multiracial children are less likely to reject part of their heritage if the parents are affirming of the child's racial heritage, as well as their own.

This study will examine experiences that have been theorized to characterize the racial identity development of multiracial individuals. More specifically, this study will assess the impact of experiences of racial discrimination and/or legitimacy testing (Anzaldúa, 1990) on the biracial person's sense of belonging to those groups which are part of his/her racial heritage. It is hypothesized that there is an inverse relationship between racial/ethnic legitimacy testing and willingness to self-label as multiracial. Family support of multiracial heritage and ethnic identity will be assessed in order to examine their impact on coping with racial discrimination (i.e., an experience involving rejection stemming from some aspect of a person's multiple racial heritage). The extent to which this type of rejection affects self-esteem and ethnic/racial identity will also be examined.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial Identity Development

Racial identity development has received increasing attention in the counseling literature. Much of the research in this area has focused on Black racial identity development, followed by an additional body of research on White racial identity development. Using Cross's (1971) Black racial identity conceptualization, and incorporating the Racial Identity Scale (Parham & Helms, 1981), researchers have found significant relationships between various stages of Black racial identity and mental health indices such as self-esteem (Parham & Helms, 1985a). Similarly, research that has focused on White racial identity development (Helms, 1984), has offered additional support for the relationship between stage of racial identity and self-actualization (Tokar & Swanson, 1991).

One area of racial identity that has been relatively neglected by researchers is the study of racial identity development in biracial/multiracial children (Kerwin et. al, 1993) and adults (Root, 1990). The aforementioned models have several shortcomings when applied to biracial and multiracial identity development (Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990; Root, 1992b). Root (1992b) is critical of what she identified as a monoracial and monocultural bias of the theories upon which these models are based. More specifically, she contends that many current theories of ethnic identity development, like our racial classification system, are dichotomous and do not allow for multiple ethnic identities, which leaves the multiracial individual with an either/or identity choice. Furthermore, even choosing just one racial group with which to identify becomes problematic, if, for example, the biracial person's choice is not congruent
with how he/she is perceived by others (Root, 1990). According to Poston (1990), another limitation of existing models is that they all require some acceptance into the minority culture of origin, particularly during the ‘immersion’ stage. He contends that this assumption does not hold for those biracial individuals who do not experience acceptance by either minority or majority parent cultures.

Unfortunately, it remains very difficult to estimate the number of biracial and multiracial persons in the United States. One reason for this is that the U.S. Census and most other forms (including research measures) ask respondents to check only one racial category. Notwithstanding these constraints, a review of the literature conducted by Root (1992a), revealed that 30-70% of African Americans could be considered multiracial (Clifton, 1989), most Latinos were thought to be multiracial (Fernandez, 1992), as were a majority of Native Americans (Wilson, 1992).

Multiracial identity has been identified in the literature as an ambiguous ethnic identity (Root, 1990, Thornton, 1992). Several authors have suggested that this is a result of the dichotomous categorization of race which historically has characterized American culture and often leaves the multiracial person with an either/or identity choice (Motoyoshi, 1990; Root, 1990). According to Nakashima (1992), the dominant perception in American society has historically been that race is something absolute, that each person is either one race or the other, and that races are mutually exclusive. Many social scientists contend, however, that race is not a dichotomous construct, but rather a pseudo-scientific construct whose meaning has often been determined by history, legislation and politics (Root, 1992a; Thornton, 1992; Zack, 1995). Thornton (1992) asserted that the significant distinctions among racial groups are socially constructed. Furthermore, he argued that the hierarchical color-based classification scheme which has emerged has contributed to society’s silence on biracialism. Root (1990) noted that the U.S. has had laws prohibiting interracial sex and marriage for most of its history, from the 1600’s to 1967. Following a Supreme Court ruling in 1967, the
remaining twelve states with anti-miscegenation laws were forced to overturn them. Given this historical context, it is not surprising that the biracial population has generally been ignored in the literature (Kerwin et al., 1993; Poston, 1990).

**Biracial/Multiracial Identity Development Models**

The first model of biracial identity development, the Marginal Person Model, was proposed by Stonequist (1937). It was based on the assumption that the identity development of people of "mixed race" was problematic and inevitably resulted in having a marginal personality (Poston, 1990). A significant flaw of this deficit model is that it placed identity problems solely within the individual, rather than acknowledging the role of societal prejudice.

Recognizing the limitations of existing racial identity models, several researchers have recently attempted to delineate the process of biracial identity development (Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990; Root, 1990). Poston (1990) posited that identity development in biracial individuals is a five-stage process. His model is similar to Cross's (1971), in that it has a life-span focus and views each of the five stages as changes in what Cross (1987) referred to as 'reference group orientation' (RGO) attitudes. The first, or Personal Identity, stage is generally characteristic of young children for whom membership in a particular ethnic group is just becoming salient. Poston theorized that reference-group orientation attitudes are not yet developed, and that identity is primarily based on Personal Identity factors (PI; Cross, 1987) such as self-esteem. The second stage, known as the Choice of Group Categorization, occurs when individuals are pushed to choose an ethnic identity, usually of one ethnic group. According to Poston, this is often a time of crisis and alienation because of a perceived either/or identity choice. He identified several factors that help influence this choice, including: (1) status factors -- group status of parent's ethnic background, ethnicity and influence of peer group; (2) social support factors -- parental and familial acceptance; and (3) personal factors -- physical appearance, knowledge of languages other than English (if any),
and cultural knowledge. The third, Enmeshment and Denial stage is an especially difficult one for the biracial individual. According to Poston, it is characterized by confusion and guilt stemming from a forced identity choice and a lack of acceptance from one or more racial/ethnic groups. During the fourth stage, Appreciation, individuals begin to develop an appreciation for being of mixed heritage. Poston noted, however, that at this stage, these individuals still tend to identify with one group. The final stage, Integration, is experienced when the individual recognizes and values all of his/her ethnic identities and experiences integration.

A strength of Poston's (1990) model is that it takes into account the influences of the biracial individual's socio-cultural context. Furthermore, his reference to factors contributing to choice of reference group is relevant to this study's attempt to assess the impact of factors such as family support, racial/ethnic legitimacy testing, and sense of belonging to multiple racial/ethnic groups on choice of self-label and multiracial identity development. There are, however, several limitations to Poston's model. First, it does not seem possible, for the biracial person to identify with multiple identities during stages 1 through 4. This runs contrary to findings in the literature which suggest that parental support for identifying as biracial can help decrease the biracial individual's experience of dissonance and serve as a buffer against societal (e.g., peer group) pressure to choose just one racial identity (Kich, 1992; Phinney, 1990; Williams, 1992). Second, a major premise of his theory assumes that there is only one type of healthy identity resolution for biracial individuals (i.e., identifying as biracial). Several authors have indicated that this is an inaccurate and limiting depiction of the process of identity resolution (e.g., Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Root, 1990).

Independent of Poston's model, Kich (1992) theorized that the process of biracial identity resolution occurs across three major stages. He suggested that the first stage is characterized by an initial awareness of differentness and dissonance between self-perceptions and others' perceptions, and generally occurs between the ages of three and ten. According to Kich, racism contributes to the devaluation of differentness in our society, which in turn often
contributes to the biracials' experience of not belonging. The second stage consists primarily of a struggle for acceptance from others. This search for acceptance can reportedly begin as early as eight years of age and continue into young adulthood. During this stage, biracial individuals often change their involvement in and alliance with different reference groups. Some individuals may bypass the racial dimension altogether by focusing on other factors more salient to their identity such as, nationality, intellectual or athletic ability, etc. Additionally, parental comfort or discomfort is hypothesized to play a major role in biracials' degree of isolation and embarrassment about themselves and their families' interracial differentness. According to the author, it is generally at the end of the second stage that biracial persons begin to recognize the limitations of standard racial categories. In the third and final stage, characteristic of late adolescence through adulthood, the biracial individual accepts her/himself. Self-acceptance and the assertion of a biracial identity are identified as lifelong processes, which recycle at varying levels of complexity during transition periods throughout the lifespan.

Kich's (1992) model, like Poston's (1990), emphasizes that the developmental process in biracial individuals progresses, for most persons, in a healthy fashion. It also challenges the notion of linear movement through the stages, which is found in traditional identity development models. Unfortunately, to date there has been little empirical validation of the major tenets of this model.

Root (1990) suggests that three assumptions can be made about the experience of biracial persons which significantly influence their process of identity resolution. The first assumption is that the biracial individual does not necessarily racially identify with the way she or he looks. Secondly, she noted that the biracial person will not have guaranteed acceptance by their racial reference groups. The third assumption is that there is more than one possible, positive resolution of racial identity for biracial persons.
Root's (1990) assumptions form the basis for her model of biracial identity resolution. According to her model, there are four potentially healthy resolutions of biracial identity. One possible resolution entails an acceptance of the identity society assigns. Individuals in this category believe that they have little control over how they are viewed by society, and no choice other than to accept the identity society assigns. Root theorizes that while this resolution entails passive acceptance and may stem from an oppressive process, it is possible for it to be a positive resolution if the individual feels that he or she belongs to the assigned racial group. A second form of resolution can occur when biracial persons actively identify with both racial groups to which they belong. The author suggests that this resolution of biracial status is most common in those parts of the country where biracial children exist in larger numbers and interracial marriages are generally more accepted by the community. A third option for resolution is identification with a single racial group. Unlike the first option, which is characteristic of individuals who do not experience having a choice about how to racially identify, this individual actively chooses to identify with a particular racial group. According to Root, this is a positive strategy if the individual does not deny the other part of his or her racial heritage. Root identifies the fourth option for resolution as involving identification as a new racial group. This identification suggests that the individual's strongest connection is with other biracial people. Again, Root suggests that this is a positive resolution if the person is not trying to hide or reject any aspect of his or her racial heritage.

According to Root (1992a), these strategies are not mutually exclusive and an individual may move among them at different points during a lifetime. She cautioned that all of these choices could be positive unless the individual was denying some aspect of his/her heritage (i.e., as a result of internalized oppression). Given this, it would appear that the first group of individuals whose racial/ethnic identity has been societally assigned and who have passively accepted the designated identity are at greatest risk of failing to develop a strong
sense of racial identity resolution. A major strength of this model is that it offers a flexible and fluid conceptualization of identity development within a nonlinear process.

**Racial/Ethnic Self-identification or Self-label**

Racial/Ethnic self-identification refers to the racial/ethnic label that is used to identify oneself; it is an important and complex aspect of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). Hershel (1995) noted that how the multiracial individual is perceived racially by others can have a powerful and lasting impact on how the individual comes to perceive himself/herself racially. Phinney & Alipuria (1996) posited that physical appearance is likely to influence choice of self-label, although the empirical research to support this hypothesis is lacking. Several authors have noted that the multiracial individual is often pressured to choose just one racial identity for the sake of society's comfort level, rather than being given the choice to claim membership to and identify with more than one racial or ethnic group (Hall, 1992; Root, 1994). According to Reynolds and Pope (1991), regardless of whether a racial/ethnic label is chosen or imposed, many multiracial individuals may feel that a single label is inaccurate, because they are part of two or more groups. Similarly, Phinney (1990) reported that selection of a label is often particularly problematic for multiracial individuals. She suggested that preferred labels range from ‘mixed’, ‘biracial/multiracial’, to what she identified as “monoethnic” labels such as ‘Hispanic’ or ‘White.’ According to Thornton (1992), racial labels often become political tools to measure strength of identity. For example, a biracial (say, Black/Asian) individual might be more likely to be perceived as not having as strong of an identity to or alliance with these racial groups, as someone who was “monoracial” (i.e., just Black or just Asian). Ironically, Thornton noted that it is a fairly common and accepted practice to make statements about one's multiple ancestry (e.g., acknowledging being part Irish, or Polish) in our society, while similar statements about identity are generally less well received (Thornton, 1992).
Phinney and Alipuria (1996) elaborated on and extended Alipuria's (1994) research findings in an effort to further examine ethnic/racial self-labeling across different contexts, and the relationship of choice of self-label to self-esteem. Participants consisted of 47 multiethnic/multiracial university students and a comparison group of 345 monoethnic/monoracial students. They attended one of two state universities in southern California; each of the campuses was identified as being either predominantly White or ethnically diverse, respectively. These investigators assessed self-label by asking participants to respond to an open-ended question regarding how they labeled themselves ethnically/racially. An interesting finding was that only one-fifth of multiethnic/multiracial students used a label indicating mixed heritage (19% on ethnically diverse campus, and 23% on predominantly White campus). According to these investigators, most multiethnic students (80%) provided a monoethnic label instead. Consistent with their predictions, there were no statistically significant differences between the self-esteem of multiethnic students and the self-esteem of the monoethnic comparison group. Additionally, no statistically significant differences were found between the self-esteem of multiethnic students who chose a multietnic/multiracial label and those who used a monoethnic/monoracial label.

Rotheram-Borus (1990) also examined the nature of the relationship between self-label in multiracial individuals and indicators of mental health (i.e., self-esteem) using a sample of three hundred-thirty Black, Hispanic, Asian, and White high school students. More specifically, she was interested in examining how adolescents' reference-group label was associated with ethnically related attributes, self-esteem, and adjustment. In her study, ethnic label was identified as a component of reference-group orientation. Students rated themselves on two questions and were then categorized as either 'strongly ethnically identified', 'mainstream' or 'bicultural'. The author reported that most of the minority adolescents labeled themselves as bicultural, suggesting that students identified with both their own ethnic group and that of mainstream White American culture. Furthermore, participants' reference-group
labeling was significantly associated with differences in ethnically related values, attitudes, and behavior patterns. As predicted, reference-group labeling was not found to be significantly related to self-esteem, offering further support for the notion that different reference-group labels can all be associated with positive outcomes.

According to Rotheram-Borus (1990) an ethnic label is based not only on seeing oneself as a member of a group with common ancestry, but also on being seen by others as belonging to that group. As mentioned previously, several other authors have also speculated that others’ racial perceptions are likely powerful determinants of one’s racial identity (Hershel, 1995) and choice of self-label (Phinney & Alipuría, 1996). An interesting follow-up to these studies’ findings would be to examine how choice of self-label, and self-esteem are affected when the racial group(s) to which the multiracial person wishes to claim membership is not accepting of that person’s choice (e.g., because that person’s appearance does not fit the racial stereotype of that group). This scenario is not uncommon for biracial individuals who seek acceptance from a particular racial/ethnic group, only to be rejected due to some aspect of their biraciality (Anzaldúa, 1990; Kich, 1992).

**Racial Legitimacy and Sense of Belonging**

The need to belong and feel accepted is another major theme in multiracial identity development. According to Hershel (1995), the process of identity formation begins with a sense of "belonging." Nakashima (1996) referred to the struggle for inclusion and legitimacy in the traditional monoracial communities as an important dimension of the experience of multiraciality. While she cautioned against disregarding individual differences, she suggested that there are certain commonalities that often characterize the experience of mixed race individuals. She identified these common experiences as: defining one's racial/ethnic identity across different contexts and across time, 2) experiencing a pressure to "choose" a monoracial identification, and 3) grappling with issues of group belongingness and loyalty.
Several authors have suggested that a sense of belonging or connection provides a foundation for positive self-esteem and identity (Kich, 1992; Root, 1994). Most multiracial people have had some experience of not belonging and feeling "outside" of one or more of their racial/ethnic groups due to some aspect of their physical appearance, family experience or cultural values. For instance, Root (1994) reported that many communities of color have narrow criteria for group membership, which can lead to the exclusion of the multiracial person because she or he does not either “look right,” “think right,” or “act right.” Kich (1992) makes reference to feeling like an “imposter” in response to rejection or conditional acceptance within a group. Given this, achieving a sense of belonging or connection to one or more racial groups can become very difficult for the multiracial person.

Some of the ways in which multiracial individuals might attempt to resolve issues of belonging and racial legitimacy may include actively or passively hiding their mixed heritage and engaging in "passing" as monoracial (Hershel, 1995). Others might wear and/or highlight different "badges" such as clothing, name, speech patterns, hairstyle, etc. in an effort to convince others to believe in their authenticity as full members of a particular racial group (Nakashima, 1996).

Kerwin et al. (1993) conducted an exploratory, qualitative study to determine issues salient to the development of racial identity for nine children of Black/White racial heritage who were between the ages of 5 and 16 years. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with the biracial children and their parents (a total of 6 families). Most of the families lived in neighborhoods with a high proportion of interracial families. Topics covered in both the parent and child interviews included: family's identity, use/nonuse of interracial label, family's coping skills and developmental issues and problems. Additional categories for the children included self-identity and racial awareness. Several major themes emerged from the interviews. One theme was related to the use/nonuse of racial/ethnic labels. Most parents were critical of what they perceived as society's demand that individuals label
themselves racially/ethnically. Preferred labels as stated by the parents were 'interracial,' 'mixed,' 'Black and White' and 'biculural.' Another emergent theme was preparation for anticipated discrimination. Most parents believed that their children, because of their ties to two cultures, were uniquely prepared to deal with issues related to differences between people and cultures, as well as societal discrimination. For all of the respondent children and adolescents, there was no reported sense of perceiving themselves as marginal in two cultures. Rather, their experience was reportedly more one of having an increased sensitivity to and understanding of both cultures.

Kerwin et al. (1993) noted that a potential limitation of their study was that they relied solely on qualitative interviews for data collection, which may have made it difficult for individuals to state what they perceived to be socially unacceptable viewpoints. Furthermore, the authors suggested that some parents appeared, on occasion, to be trying to present their child's experiences in an overly positive light. The authors hypothesized that this tendency may have resulted from a desire to counteract existing negative societal stereotypes regarding multiracial individuals.

Kerwin et al. (1993) suggested that future research explore issues more specifically related to peer pressure to choose one group, and reference-group orientation. This was based on their observations that the children experienced greater ease at seeing themselves as both connected to each race, and in the middle of a continuum of color between Black and White, than the adolescents. The adolescents' experience was reportedly more often characterized by peer pressure to choose one group with which to identify in order to be accepted. This study's findings regarding the adolescents' experience are consistent with Erikson's (1968) Stage 5 of development (beginning at age 12), during which the adolescent subculture is characterized by an intolerance of differences and the formation of "in-groupers" and "out-groupers." Erikson also noted that the absence of relationships characterized by
mutuality and love during Stage 6 (young adulthood) would lead young adults to form selective groups that exclude others.

Two inferences can be made from Kerwin et al.'s and Erikson's observations. First, their research suggests that pressure to choose just one racial/ethnic identity in order to 'belong' would be heightened for multiracial adolescents and young adults. Second, it seems likely that multiracial persons' inherent "differentness" would itself contribute to their experiences of being excluded from selective groups. It is expected that this study will contribute to a better understanding of the nature of these experiences in young adults.

Self-esteem in Relation to Racial/Ethnic Identity

Several authors have proposed that the negative experiences that frequently characterize the experience of multiraciality in the United States, such as racial rejection, being defined by others, and/or told to choose just one racial group with which to identify, may interfere with the development of a healthy self-esteem and self-acceptance in multiracial individuals (Hershel, 1995; Comas-Díaz, 1996). Research that has examined self-esteem in relation to the stage model of ethnic identity offers some support for the hypothesis that higher stages of ethnic identity or ethnic identity achievement (vs. ethnic identity diffusion) are associated with higher self-esteem in Black college students (Parham & Helms, 1985a; Parham & Helms, 1985b) and ethnic minority adolescents (Phinney, 1989). The research of other investigators, such as Porter and Washington (1989, cited in Porter & Washington, 1993), challenges some of the existing support for a reciprocal relationship between experiencing "personal self-esteem" and having a positive racial group image. Although the research is limited, self-esteem has also been examined in relation to self-label or racial/ethnic identity choice in an identifiable sample of multiracial/multiethnic individuals (Alipurúa, 1994; Hall, 1980).

In a study using 10th grade Black, Asian American and Mexican American adolescents, Phinney (1989) found that subjects at higher stages of ethnic identity had
significantly higher scores on all four subscales of a measure of psychological adjustment (self-evaluation, sense of mastery, family relations, and social relations), as well as on an independent measure of ego development. Parham and Helms (1985a) conducted a study using Black college students that was based on Cross's (1987) process model. Results indicated that low self-esteem was related to the earliest (pre-encounter) stage and to the immersion stage, whereas high self-esteem was associated with the encounter stage (which involves events that precipitate a search for identity) and the internalization stage. In a related study, the pre-encounter and immersion stages were found to be related to feelings of inferiority and anxiety (Parham & Helms, 1985b). These studies suggest that a positive self-concept may be related to the process of identity formation. The findings from Phinney's (1989) study offered support for the prediction that higher self-esteem would be related to ethnic identity achievement. In general, Parham and Helms' research also provided some strong support for a relationship between positive self-concept and racial identity formation. The positive relationship obtained between the 'immersion' stage and self-esteem, however, challenges the notion of an exact linear relationship between these constructs.

Alipuria (1994) conducted a study to assess the relationship between self-esteem and ethnic self-label in multiethnic/multiracial students. She defined multiethnic/multiracial students as persons who have parents from two different ethnic or racial groups. The sample was drawn from two universities with very different racial profiles. One campus had a two-thirds White majority, with about 10% Latino as the only other sizable group. The other campus was about one-quarter each Asian, Latino, and White and about one-eighth African-American. Approximately 50% of the multiracial students on each campus were White/Latino. The author found that the self-esteem of multiethnic subjects, as measured by a modified version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1986), was not significantly different from that of any of the monoethnic groups used for comparison. The author also explored the concept of “situational ethnicity,” which emphasizes the influence of
contextual variables or the social aspect of ethnic identification. She found that for students with one White parent, choice of self-label differed across the two campuses. Only one out of 17 students on the ethnically diverse campus used a "White" self-label, while 10 out of 22 did so on the predominantly White campus. She also found that only 20% of the multiethnic persons labeled themselves as such in response to an open-ended question of ethnicity, while 80% chose a monoethnic self-label of one or the other parent's heritage. The 80% of multiethnics who labeled themselves monoethnic were identified as multiethnic from their response to the question of the ethnic identification of each parent.

It is unclear from this study why a majority of multiethnic individuals self-identified as monoethnic. One could speculate, drawing from relevant literature (e.g., Kerwin et al., 1993; Gibbs & Hines, 1992) that these students' desire to experience a sense of belonging, combined with social pressure to choose only one racial/ethnic identity in order to be accepted, may have significantly mediated their choice of self-label. This finding also underscores the importance of obtaining parents' ethnicity when race and ethnicity are factors of interest to the researcher, to avoid inaccurate placement of subjects.

Hall (1992) conducted an exploratory study to further understand multiracial individuals' experiences of and attitudes about being racially mixed. Her sample consisted of 30 (15 women and 15 men) multiracial individuals of Black-Japanese heritage between the ages of 18 and 32. The author used two self-report measures of self-esteem and one interviewer-administered measure of her own design which assessed areas such as ethnic identity choice, cultural knowledge, racial resemblance to a particular group, acceptance of and by particular ethnic groups, and ethnic identity. She found that 18 (60%) of the subjects chose to self-identify as “Black,” 10 chose "Other" (7 of whom specifically identified themselves as Black-Japanese), and the remainder identified as “Japanese” (1) or no racial category (1). No significant correlations were found between ethnic identity choice and self-esteem or between ethnic identity choice and racial resemblance. Perceived acceptance by
Black peers and lack of acceptance by Japanese American peers showed moderate but nonsignificant correlations with ethnic identity. However, lack of acceptance by Japanese-Americans was a significant predictor in choosing to identify as Black. Three other variables were found to be significant predictors of Black ethnic identity choice. These were age (younger respondents had a greater tendency to identify as Black than older respondents), having Black friends and knowledge of Black culture. These four variables were also significant predictors of the "Other than Black" dependent variable. A regression analysis showed that those respondents with the opposite attributes -- older, less knowledge of Black culture, fewer Black friends, and acceptance from Japanese-Americans -- had a greater likelihood of choosing a category other than Black.

When asked about the negative and positive points of being racially mixed, the respondents made positive comments twice as often as they made negative comments, and most respondents agreed that being multiracial was more difficult for them when they were children. Fifteen of the respondents reported that one of the negative points of being biracial was feeling a lack of acceptance from one or both racial reference groups. Nine respondents reported not feeling totally accepted by either group; 3 reported not feeling totally accepted by Blacks, and 3 reported a lack of acceptance by Asians. Given her findings, the author suggested that the majority of racially mixed people probably choose one race over another. When allowed, however, to express the many facets of themselves, as they were in the interviewer-administered portion of this study, the respondents tended to identify highly with both of their racial and cultural backgrounds.

An overview of the aforementioned research offers some support for a positive relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem. These findings also indicated that there is no relationship between self-esteem and self-label. Further research using a multiracial sample is needed to clarify the relationships between these constructs and to improve the measurement of the complex and multifaceted construct of multiracial/multiethnic identity.
Racial/Ethnic Identity and Coping Strategies

The construct of general coping style or ability has been defined and measured in varying ways throughout the coping literature. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have generated considerable empirical support for their cognitive-transactional model which conceptualized coping as either problem-focused or emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping was defined as efforts undertaken to alter the problem or stressor, while emotion-focused coping was conceptualized as efforts undertaken to regulate emotional responses to a problem. Limited research exists in the literature that has examined the construct of racial/ethnic identity with respect to coping. A few studies were identified, however, that have examined potential racial differences in coping ( Richie, 1992) and the relationship between coping processes ( similar to those identified by Lazarus and Folkman) and racial/ethnic identity (Chavira & Phinney, 1991; Hall, 1980).

In a study conducted by Richie (1992), findings from a comparison of Black and White participants on a measure of coping revealed that Black participants were more likely than their White counterparts to use more diverse and flexible coping responses in stressful situations ( including greater use of prayer and informal social support networks). Black participants also tended to appraise stressful events as discriminatory in nature more frequently than White participants. In one of the first empirical studies to examine the ethnic identity of multiracial persons, Hall (1980) found that multiracial individuals often resorted to creative and varied coping strategies to deal with what she identified as mainstream society's dichotomous racial classification system, and the social ambiguity or sense of "otherness" ( Root, 1990) that often emerged for these individuals as a result of this system.

Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, (1986) addressed the influence of contextual variables on eight types of coping by examining the relationship between primary appraisal ( what is perceived to be at stake in the stressful encounter) and coping, and secondary appraisal ( what can be done to deal with the situation) and coping.
The Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) was used to operationalize coping; the sample consisted of 85 White, Protestant or Catholic, married couples. The two major primary appraisal indices generated by these investigators were: threat to one’s self-esteem or threat to a loved one’s well-being. These investigators found that when threat to self-esteem was high, participants tended to use more confrontive coping, self-control coping, accepting responsibility and escape-avoidance compared to when threat to self-esteem was low. With respect to the other primary appraisal index or threat to a loved one, participants used more confrontive and escape-avoidance coping, and less planful problem-solving and less distancing than when a loved one’s well-being was not at stake. Results pertaining to the relationship between secondary appraisal (or perceived options for coping) and coping indicated that in encounters appraised as “changeable,” participants used more problem-focused coping such as, confrontive coping, accepting responsibility, planful problem-solving and positive reappraisal; whereas in encounters appraised as having to be accepted or unchangeable, participants tended to use more emotion-focused coping such as distancing and escape-avoidance.

Chavira and Phinney (1991) conducted a study to explore how Hispanic adolescents between the ages of 16 and 19 deal with stereotypes, discrimination, and membership in two cultures. Their sample consisted of 26 adolescents (16 females, 10 males) who had been identified as either high (achieved) or low (diffused) ethnic identity based on their scores on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). In addition to the MEIM, the authors used a measure of self-esteem and conducted in-depth interviews. Four strategies for dealing with stereotypes and discrimination were identified and labeled as: (a) assert (affirming confidence in self or pride in group); (b) discuss (explaining why it is inaccurate or wrong); (c) disprove (proving negative images wrong); and (d) ignore (having no outward response). The most frequently reported strategy for dealing with discrimination was found to be discussion, with high ethnic identity subjects reporting this strategy more often than
those with low ethnic identity. Low ethnic identity subjects ignored discrimination more often than did the high group. The researchers also found that subjects with high ethnic identity had significantly higher self-esteem than those with low ethnic identity. Self-esteem was not found to be related to strategies for dealing with stereotypes and discrimination.

Other studies which have explored the relationship between self-esteem and coping ability have offered empirical support for an inverse relationship between self-esteem and a form of coping labeled 'overgeneralization'. Specifically, negative overgeneralization was defined as a tendency to generalize in an excessive manner resulting in misattributions, increased thoughts of personal inadequacy, and a reduction in self-worth (Carver, Ganellen & Behar-Mitrani, 1985). Using a sample of 149 students, Kernis, Brockner and Frankel (1989) found that self-esteem was mediated by the greater tendency of low versus high self-esteem persons to overgeneralize negative feedback to other aspects of their identities. One limitation of this study is that the ethnic/racial make-up of the sample was not reported or accounted for in any of the analyses. Further research is needed to verify these relationships in a racially and ethnically diverse group of people.

Racial Identity and Family Support

A number of studies have linked psychological adjustment to perceived support of parents and peers (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Cauce, Ptacek, Mason & Smith, 1991; Kerwin et al., 1993). Armsden and Greenberg (1987) found that the quality of parent and peer attachments in late adolescence was highly related to well-being, particularly self-esteem and life satisfaction. Cauce et al. (1991) suggested that the construct of attachment as defined by these authors was very similar to that of 'perceived social support.' In a measurement development study using a sample of 144 adolescents and their parents, Cauce et al. (1991) found the construct of perceived social support (from family and friends) to be positively correlated with several adjustment indices and negatively correlated with measures of anxiety and depression.
To date, however, there is only limited data regarding the influence of perceived family support on multiracial identity resolution. Several authors have suggested that a supportive family environment plays an important role in helping the multiracial youth understand and value his/her racial heritages (Kerwin et. al, 1993; Kich, 1992). Furthermore, a supportive family can provide a buffer between the children and racial discrimination within the larger society (Root, 1990, 1994). Greene (1990) asserted that given the insidious legacy of racism in the lives of Black mothers and their daughters, Black parents, and especially Black mothers, have the additional responsibility of racially socializing their children to deal with racial discrimination and prejudice. She defines racial socialization as a process which involves preparing Black children to deal with racial discrimination and teaching them to take pride in their cultural and racial heritage. Several authors have suggested that this socialization process may serve to offset some of the negative effects of racism such as shame and self-denigration, and in turn enhance coping skills and promote racial pride (Comas-Díaz, 1996; Greene, 1990; Root, 1992a; Spencer, 1987).

Despite the benefits of racial socialization, Root (1992a) observed that the stress experienced by interracial families often results in a lack of discussion by these families of race, discrimination and coping strategies for dealing with discriminatory treatment. Similarly, in his theory of biracial identity development, Kich (1992) suggested that the biracial child's experiences of dissonance are intensified when there is an absence of parental support and communication about racial and ethnic experiences. He identified parents as the primary facilitators of the biracial person's self-acceptance. Kich speculated that a lack of parental support would impair the biracial child's curiosity about parental heritages and her/his desire to explore differentness, and lead instead to an increased self-consciousness and sense of aloneness about her/his racial experience.

Hershel (1995) observed that given the high degree of importance placed on a person's color and race within U.S. society, 'belonging' to a family generally entails having
shared physical similarities and characteristics such as race and appearance. The biracial child who doesn't racially look like either parent may experience alienation from both family and others who may assume that the child doesn't belong to her family. According to Comas-Díaz (1996), the multiracial LatíNegra or African Latina will frequently experience this type of alienation and legitimacy test from family and non-family alike. This author noted that as a result, she is often at a disadvantage both within her family and the larger society with respect to developing racial pride, self-acceptance and defining herself racially and ethnically. Given our society's racist history and a resulting legacy among many Latinos to project more positive qualities onto lighter-skinned Latinos, Comas-Díaz suggests that the dark-skinned LatíNegra will often experience multiple rejections from her immediate and extended family who may not be dark-skinned themselves or considered African Latino. Even Latinos with African ancestry may find it difficult to accept their own blackness due to their internalized racism. Similarly, Greene (1990) suggested that the absence of racial socialization early in life, combined with family members' racial rejection (such as that experienced by the LatíNegra), can deeply affect the individual's self-esteem and put him/her at risk for other psychosocial difficulties. Furthermore, given our dichotomous racial classification system, the LatíNegra is often denied the opportunity to define herself as both Latina and African and instead receives the message that she must choose only one racial or ethnic group, and that it must be Black.

According to Root (1992a), a multiracial child is much less likely to reject part of her/his heritage if there are diverse ethnic communities within close proximity, if the parent with less racial social status has pride in him/herself, and if parents have equal social status within the family. More recently, Root (1994) noted that parents can further undermine oppressive societal attitudes toward multiracial individuals by educating their children about the stereotypes that people may have about multiracial people and interracial families, and teaching them empowering verbal defenses.
It is suggested by theory and the limited available research that the multiracial individual's perception of quality of family support will be associated with self-esteem, experience of perceived racial legitimacy, sense of belonging and identity resolution. This study attempted to clarify these relationships.

Objectives of the Study

At this time, only a limited amount of research has examined the critical issues of biracial/multiracial identity development discussed more fully in the conceptual literature. Given the early status of theory and research in the area, an overall goal of this study is to further our understanding of the developmental patterns and themes that characterize the experience of multiracial individuals. Several models have been developed to describe the racial identity development of multiracial persons. Unfortunately, there has been little empirical validation to date of the major tenets of these models. This research will seek to offer empirical support for one of the underlying assumptions of Root's (1990) model for biracial identity resolution, which suggests that the biracial person does not have guaranteed acceptance by those racial reference groups which are part of the biracial individual's racial heritage.

One theme that characterizes the experience of biracial persons is the feeling of not belonging to, or feeling rejected, by their racial reference groups. This theme has been identified both in theory as well as in the existing research as a common developmental experience for multiracial individuals. A second objective of this study is to examine the experience of not belonging and its relation to choice of racial/ethnic self-label and self-esteem.

Several researchers have noted that family support can act as a buffer between children and the effects of stress on their emotional well-being (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Root, 1992a). Similarly, some researchers have suggested that through racial socialization, families may be able to better equip their children to cope with racial discrimination and
prejudice (Comas-Díaz, 1996; Greene, 1990). Therefore, a third objective is to examine the relationships between family support with respect to having a multiracial identity, and other variables such as self-esteem, self-label and sense of belonging.

As mentioned in the review of the literature, several studies have addressed the relationship between racial identity development in different minority groups and coping styles. A final objective is to examine the relationship between coping and ethnic identity development using a sample of multiracial individuals.

**Hypotheses**

Both biracial identity development theory and recent empirical findings suggest that a common experience for multiracial individuals at different points in their development is that of not belonging or feeling accepted as a legitimate member of two or more different racial groups. Based on these findings and the exploratory nature of this study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Multiracial individuals will experience racial/ethnic legitimacy testing or discrimination by one or more racial/ethnic groups of their heritage.

2. Participants who have experienced a high degree of racial/ethnic legitimacy testing and family support of their multiracial heritage will be more likely to self-label as multiracial and will indicate higher self-esteem and ethnic/racial identity to both racial groups, while participants who have experienced a high degree of racial legitimacy testing and have low scores on family support of multiracial heritage will be more likely to use a monoracial self-label and will indicate lower self-esteem and ethnic/racial identity to both racial groups.

3. Participants who have experienced a high degree of racial/ethnic legitimacy testing will indicate lower self-esteem than those who experienced a low degree of racial/ethnic legitimacy testing.
4. Participants who report high family support of multiraciality and come from racially diverse neighborhoods will have high ethnic/racial identity scores on both mother's and father's racial group scales.

5. There will be significant differences in coping strategies between individuals who scored high on ethnic identity achievement and those who scored low on ethnic identity achievement.

6. Ethnic identity achievement will be positively correlated with self-esteem.

7. There will be a positive relationship between racial diversity of neighborhood and sense of belonging to both racial groups.

8. Racial/ethnic legitimacy testing will be negatively correlated with sense of belonging.

Additionally, the qualitative data pertaining to stressful situations that involved feeling rejected due to some aspect of the participants' multiracial heritage were analyzed using content analysis as described by Patton (1990) and Rothe (1994). Primary themes and subthemes were identified and the data were categorized accordingly.
CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Participants

The participants for this study were multiracial individuals between the ages of 18 and 45. The investigator was initially interested in recruiting participants between the ages of 18 and 25. During early data collection, however, it became apparent that it would be difficult to identify and recruit participants in this age range in a timely manner. A decision was made, therefore, to modify the initial procedures and broaden the age range to include individuals who were 18 years and older. A total of 73 participants were recruited, 45 female and 28 male. An attempt was made to include multiracial participants (parents are from two or more different racial groups) who used a variety of self-identifications or racial labels. It was expected that some participants would self-identify as biracial/multiracial, while other multiracial participants would self-identify monoracially (e.g., using a monoracial self-label or identifying with only one racial group). In order to identify and include multiracial individuals who self-labeled monoracially, all potential participants were asked to provide information regarding parents' racial heritage. Root (1992b) noted that research using multiracial individuals almost always results in very selective samples. For example, many multiracial persons may not identify as multiracial; they may feel a stronger connection with one racial group than the other(s), or they may be reluctant to identify as multiracial because it is perceived as negative in their social environment. It was hoped that the effort to include as part of the sample individuals who did not necessarily label themselves as multiracial would
help minimize some of the selection bias which has reportedly been difficult to avoid with this population.

Participants were recruited from a large geographical area within the United States, including Puerto Rico. In addition to using ‘snowball’ sampling or word of mouth, they were recruited from academic classes, minority student organizations (some of which specifically targeted biracial/multiracial students), the internet (including specific listserv groups, a mailing list for discussion of interracial issues, and an ad in a cyberspace magazine called Interracial Voice), campus newspaper ads, the Multiracial Solidarity March held in Washington D.C. on July 20, 1996, and national interracial support/advocacy groups. Approximately 200 questionnaires were distributed to participants and those who knew of potential participants. Most of the questionnaires were mailed and the return rate was approximately 32%. The majority of participants were recruited through the internet (55%), followed by minority student organizations (27%) and academic courses (14%).

Instruments and Materials

Solicitation Statement. All participants received a solicitation statement (Appendix B) which provided them with information about the nature of the study, the investigator conducting this study, and the measures being taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data. Participants were also informed that participation was voluntary and that they were free to end their participation at any time. Completion of the questionnaire booklet entitled all participants to enter their names in an optional drawing for (one of two) $50 U.S. Savings Bonds. Those who chose to participate in the drawing were asked to complete and return a lottery form that was attached to each questionnaire booklet.

The solicitation statement did not specify the race criteria necessary for participation, because in the majority of data collection scenarios this information was conveyed verbally by the investigator or by those in contact with the investigator who were assisting with data collection. In a few situations, however, the questionnaire booklets were sent to a third party
with whom the investigator had not had any contact. While it is likely that these individuals were informed of the criteria for participation (by the person in contact with the investigator), a cover letter was included that served as an additional safety measure to ensure distribution to race appropriate participants (Appendix C).

**Demographic sheet.** Participants completed a single page requesting demographic information such as: age, gender, and racial/ethnic diversity of the neighborhood in which the participant was raised (Appendix D).

**Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM).** The MEIM (Phinney, 1992) consists of 14 items assessing three aspects of ethnic identity: sense of belonging and affirmation, ethnic behaviors or practices, and ethnic identity achievement (Appendix E). The ethnic identity achievement subscale was conceptualized as a continuous variable which ranged from a high level of ethnic identity achievement or interest in exploring the role of ethnicity for oneself, to a low level of achievement or ethnic identity diffusion, characterized by a lack of exploration into and awareness of one's ethnicity. Items are rated on a 4-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). An ethnic identity score was derived by reversing negatively worded items, summing across items from the three subscales, and obtaining the mean; scores range from 1 (low ethnic identity) to 4 (indicating high ethnic identity). Three additional items (not contained in the measure) assessed racial/ethnic self-identification and race/ethnicity of parents. Also included in the measure, although not part of the ethnic identity score, were six items assessing what Phinney identified as “other-group orientation.” These six items were scored separately, and in essence constituted a separate but related scale.

In her scale development study, Phinney (1992) used a sample of high school and college students. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were calculated for each sample separately. Overall reliabilities of the 14-item measure were .81 for the high school sample and .90 for the college sample. For all subscales, reliabilities were consistently higher for the
college than for the high school sample; according to Phinney, this suggests that ethnic identity may become more consolidated with age. For the 5-item Affirmation/Belonging subscale, reliability for the college sample was .86. For the 7-item Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale, the reliability coefficient was .80 for the college sample. No coefficients were given for the third subscale, Ethnic Behaviors, because the scale consisted of only two items. However, correlations between the Ethnic Behaviors subscale and the Affirmation/Belonging and Ethnic Identity Achievement subscales were statistically significant ($r = .60$, and .59, respectively).

There appears to be a potential problem with the MEIM concerning the appropriateness of the measure’s use with multiracial persons. In her measure development study, Phinney (1992) reported that minority group members consistently showed higher ethnic identity scores than either White or ‘mixed subjects,’ with Black subjects scoring highest. Phinney speculated that this may have resulted because African Americans are likely to have a strong sense of belonging due to their racial distinctiveness (and factors associated with it) and history of oppression. Another explanation for mixed subjects' low scores may be more an artifact of how the measure was constructed. In her measure, Phinney consistently used the singular form of the term 'ethnic group' rather than the plural form to assess aspects of ethnic identity. For example, item 18, from the Affirmation and Belonging subscale, reads "I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group." Given that many multiracial individuals may feel a sense of attachment to more than one group, it wasn't possible to determine what group Phinney's multiracial participants were referring to based on how the questions are worded. Furthermore, the biracial individual may feel a strong sense of attachment to one racial/ethnic group but not the other. If a participant chose to respond to item 18 based on the group with which he or she feels least attached, his or her score on the Affirmation and Belonging subscale would be low. Given this limitation, and with permission of the author, several modifications were made to the MEIM to better accommodate a multiracial sample.
First, in order to more accurately assess the ethnic identity of multiracial persons, rather than using the singular form of terms like 'ethnic group' and 'ethnic background,' the plural forms were also included. Secondly, subjects responded to the measure twice, once for the racial group of each parent, in order to more accurately measure multiethnic/multiracial identity. The decision to have subjects respond to the MEIM twice by placing "Mother's Racial Group" adjacent to "Father's Racial Group" was modeled after the design of T. Cooke's dissertation research questionnaire booklet (personal communication, August 1996).

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), developed by Rosenberg (1965), is a well-validated 10-item measure of global self-esteem (Appendix F). Items are rated on a 4-point scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4), resulting in a scale range of 10-40 with lower scores representing higher self-esteem. Rosenberg defines high self-esteem as feeling that one is "good enough...a person of worth" (1965, p.31). Silber and Tippett (1965) obtained a 2-week test-retest reliability coefficient of .85 for 28 subjects. Fleming and Courtney (1984) reported a test-retest correlation of .82 for 259 male and female subjects with a 1-week interval, and a Cronbach’s alpha of .88. The RSE has also been shown to be associated with other indices of self-esteem. Demo (1985) found RSE scores correlated .55 with scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and .32 with peer ratings of self-esteem. Fleming and Courtney (1984) found the RSE to be negatively correlated with low self-regard. For example, they obtained correlations of -.64 and -.54 between the RSE and measures of anxiety and depression, respectively.

**Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ).** Research using the revised Ways of Coping Questionnaire (the version used in this study) was first reported by Folkman and Lazarus (1985). The WCQ contains eight coping scales, which are scored individually and describe various ways in which people cope with stressful events (Appendix G). The eight scales are: Confrontive Coping (Scale 1), Distancing (Scale 2), Self-Controlling (Scale 3), Seeking Social Support (Scale 4), Accepting Responsibility (Scale 5), Escape-Avoidance (Scale 6),
Planful Problem Solving (Scale 7) and Positive Reappraisal (Scale 8). On the WCQ, participants are asked to think of a recent stressful event and answer all items with that event in mind. For the present study, participants were asked to think of a stressful event involving discrimination related to their multiple racial heritage. Fassinger and Richie (1994), who also used the WCQ in their study of women's achieving styles, suggested asking subjects to rate the stress level of the conjectured stressful event. Following Fassinger and Richie's example, subjects in this study were also be asked to rate their stressful incident on a Likert scale ranging from 'not at all stressful' (1) to 'extremely stressful' (5). The stress rating of the event served as a one-item scale and was scored separately from the rest of the measure. For the 66 WCQ items, participants' responses ranged on a Likert scale from 'does not apply and/or was not used' (0) to 'used a great deal' (3). Scores were obtained by averaging the responses to the items that form a given scale. The mean scores described how often the subject used each of the eight types of coping, with higher scores indicating greater use of a given process. Folkman and Lazarus (1988) obtained alpha coefficients ranging from .61 to .79 for the eight scales of the WCQ. The authors also suggested that the WCQ has construct validity given the empirical support obtained (in two separate studies) for the theoretical predictions of their model of coping; a model which conceptualizes coping as consisting of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

Perceived Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT). A brief 8-item measure designed by this author was used to assess experiences of racial/ethnic 'legitimacy testing' (Anzaldúa, 1990). Racial/ethnic legitimacy testing is broadly defined as being treated as less than a full member or not as legitimate a member of a racial group due to one's mixed heritage. For each item, participants indicated on a 6-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) their agreement with positive and negative statements regarding their experience with legitimacy testing or discrimination due to some aspect of their multiracial heritage (e.g., "I have felt
discriminated against or rejected due to my appearance (e.g., skin tone, facial features) by members of one or both of my ethnic groups”; “I have felt like I didn't belong to one or both of my ethnic groups due some aspect of my multiracial heritage”). A total score was obtained by summing the scores across the 8 items. Total scores ranged from 8 to 48, with lower scores indicating more experiences of racial/ethnic legitimacy testing, and higher scores indicating less experiences of racial/ethnic legitimacy testing (Appendix H).

Perceived Family Support of Multiracial Heritage (FSM). The Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM) measure was developed for purposes of this study. The family support construct is defined as the cognitive appraisal of family acceptance and affirmation of a person's multiple racial heritages. Six items assessed perceived family support of a multiracial/multiethnic heritage (e.g., “My family has been accepting of both/all of my ethnic heritages”; “My parents encouraged me, either directly or indirectly, to choose one ethnic identity over the other”) (Appendix I). For each item, participants indicated on a 4-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) their agreement with positive and negative statements regarding family support of multiraciality. Items 3 and 5 were reversed scored. For this measure, lower scores indicated more perceived family support of multiraciality. An additional single item, constructed using a 6-point Likert scale (very dissatisfied to very satisfied), was included to assess overall satisfaction with family support of racial identity. Higher scores for this item indicated more perceived family support.

Social Support Rating Scale-Revised (SSRS-R) The SSRS-R (Cauce et al., 1991) is a measure of perceived support from family members, friends or peers, and formal/school personnel (Appendix J). Perceived support is defined as the subjective appraisal of the quality of supportive relationships. The SSRS-R provides both a measure of emotional support (Part I), and help and guidance (Part II). Aspects of support such as 'help' and 'guidance' have been found to be most important for children and young adolescents as they transition from child to adult, while emotional support has received empirical support for being the most
universally needed aspect of support (Cauce et al., 1991). Given this study's use of a sample of adults, only the emotional support scale of the SSRS-R was used. Participants were asked to indicate, on a five point scale ranging from 1 (not at all helpful) to 5 (very helpful), how helpful each of several potential providers were in terms of their caring and emotional support. Participants could also check “do not have or rarely see” if a particular person was not part of their support network. At the end of the list there was an additional question to assess support satisfaction.

Cauce et al. (1991) conducted three separate studies to determine the psychometrics of the SSRS-R. Study One used a sample of 438 high school athletes. Three of the subscales (Family, Friends and Formal/School providers) were found to have high levels of both internal and test-retest reliability. Cronbach alpha coefficients for each subscale ranged from .75 on the Friend Support subscale to .82 on the Formal Support subscale. One week test-retest data were collected on a separate sample of 37 men and 60 women with an average age of 19.17 years. Test-retest correlations for these three scales were $r = .87$ (Family scale), $r = .91$ (Friends scale), $r = .83$ (Formal scale). Test-retest reliability was also high for Support Satisfaction ($r = .71$). In her third study, convergent and discriminant concurrent validity data for certain items in the Family and Friend Support subscales were obtained by correlating these items with similar item groupings from the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armden & Greenberg, 1987). Each support item was significantly correlated with the attachment subscale for the same provider, providing evidence for both convergent and discriminant validity.

**Procedure**

The following sampling procedures were used to recruit participants for this study. Some participants were given a short screening questionnaire (Appendix A) in which they were asked several questions, including their name, phone number, address, race and race of their parents. Of these participants, those who either self-identified as biracial/multiracial or
who indicated that they had parents from two or more different racial groups received a follow-up call from the investigator asking them if they'd like to participate in the second phase of the study. Potential participants were informed that the 'second phase' of the study would entail responding in writing to a questionnaire booklet. Those who agreed to participate were mailed a questionnaire booklet, along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Completion of the booklet required approximately 25 minutes of participants' time. The screening forms of respondents who did not meet the criteria to participate were destroyed by the investigator. Most of the participants who responded to the screening form were recruited from academic courses or minority student organizations. The yield of biracial individuals obtained though the screening forms, however, was quite low. Due to the difficulties encountered collecting data through more traditional sampling means, the researcher also utilized ‘snowball’ sampling (Williams, 1996), which did not require the use of the screening forms. This procedure consisted of either sending questionnaire booklets to individuals who had heard about the study (e.g., through a newspaper ad) and self-identified as meeting the criteria to participate, or sending the booklet to someone who knew of potential participants.

Additionally, the investigator used the internet to post messages asking for assistance in identifying and distributing questionnaires to potential participants. These messages were posted on different listserv groups. Respondents to these internet messages could generally be divided into two major groupings. One group of respondents consisted of individuals offering to distribute the questionnaire booklets to multiracial individuals with whom they were in contact. The other major group of respondents were biracial/multiracial persons (many of whom acknowledged a personal investment in this topic area) who were interested in responding to the questionnaire themselves.

The solicitation statement, demographic sheet, Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, Ways of Coping Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Social Support Rating Scale-
Revised, and the Racial Legitimacy Testing and Family Support of Multiraciality measures were combined into questionnaire booklets in a fixed order. The investigator did not feel that the order of instrument presentation would bias participants’ responses or contribute to response sets. Therefore, as both carryover effects between the materials and participant fatigue were predicted to be minimal, the materials were not counterbalanced. The debriefing statement (Appendix K) was placed at the end of the questionnaire booklet on a separate sheet of paper so that participants had the option to retain it.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

A total of 73 multiracial individuals participated in this study. Forty-five (61.6%) of the participants were female, and 28 (38.4%) were male. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 45, and while the mean age was 23 years, 60% were 22 and younger. Most participants were undergraduate students (57.5%), with the remaining respondents identifying as graduate students (28.8%) and non-students (13.7%). When asked to choose from a list of racial/ethnic labels how they self-identified, most participants (74%) chose a Biracial/Multiracial label. The remaining 19 participants chose a monoracial label such as Asian/Asian American (5.5%), Black/African American (5.5%), Hispanic or Latino (12.3%), White (1.4%) or Other (1.4%). Most participants (76.1%) had one White parent; and the most common racial mix was Black/White (27.4%) followed closely by Asian/White (26%). Please refer to Table 1 for a more detailed summary of participants' racial/ethnic groups. The racial heritages of respondents' mothers were identified as 31.5% White, 28.8% Asian, 19.2% Hispanic, 13.7% Black, and 6.9% for Multiracial/Mixed groups. The racial heritages of respondents' fathers were the following: 45.2% White, 27.4% Black, 9.6% Asian, 6.9% Hispanic, 5.5% Multiracial, 4.1% Other, and 1.4% Native American. Table 2 summarizes the racial/ethnic mix of participants' mothers and fathers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Heritages</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/White</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Asian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Multiracial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Multiracial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Multiracial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Multiracial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab/Black</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab/White</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Native-American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/West Indies *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander/Japanese *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 73. * Both Pacific Islander and West Indies were generally counted as either “Asian” or “Black,” respectively. One exception to this was made for two multiethnic participants who self-identified as Pacific Islander/Japanese and Black/West Indies. The racial/ethnic groups to which these participants claimed membership were counted as two distinct groups because both participants reportedly found the differences in their ethnic heritages to be more salient than race.

Table 1: Racial/Ethnic Mix of Participants
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Mother Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Father Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** N = 73. “Other” for father = Arab (2) and West Indies (1)

Table 2: Racial/Ethnic Mix of Participants’ Parents

**Descriptive Data on the Measures**

Descriptive statistics were computed for the measures representing the variables of interest in this study. Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). As mentioned previously, in an effort to make the MEIM a more appropriate measure for use with a multiracial sample, the investigator had participants respond to the measure twice in order to assess racial/ethnic identity with respect to more than one racial group. As a result, two sets of scores were obtained for each participant and are displayed under the column headings of “mother’s racial group” and “father’s racial group” in this and subsequent tables. A mean item average ethnic identity score of 2.87 was obtained for the mother’s racial group with a standard deviation of .56, and a mean item ethnic identity
score of 2.93 with a standard deviation of .63 was obtained for the father's racial group. These means are comparable to means obtained by Phinney (1992) in her scale development study (M = 2.94, high school sample; M = 3.04 college student sample). In this study, Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency reliability) was computed at .86 for both mother's and father's racial group. These alpha coefficients are slightly lower than the alpha of .90 reported by Phinney (1992) in her study using college students, and slightly higher than the alpha of .81 obtained using high school students.

Additionally, descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients were obtained for the two MEIM subscales that were of interest to this study and are contained in Table 3. The means obtained for the Affirmation and Belonging subscale (M = 3.2, mother's racial group; M = 3.12 father's racial group) were slightly lower than means obtained by Phinney (1992; M = 3.36, college students; M = 3.32, high school students). The mean obtained for the Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale (mother's racial group, M = 3.03) was slightly higher than means obtained with Phinney's sample of high school (M = 2.78) and college students (M = 2.90). The mean obtained for this subscale on the father's racial scale (M = 2.83) was about the same as means obtained by Phinney. The reliability coefficients obtained for the Affirmation/Belonging subscale were .84 (mother's racial scale) and .81 (father's racial scale), respectively. Internal reliability coefficients for the Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale were .73 (mother's scale) and .76 (father's scale). The reliability coefficients obtained for the Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale were higher than the reliability coefficients obtained by Phinney using her high school sample, and slightly lower than the reliability coefficients she obtained with her college sample.

Walsh and Betz (1985) recommended reliability coefficients of .90 or above for tests of ability or selection tests, and suggested that reliability coefficients of .80 or above were desirable for most other kinds of psychological tests. While the reliability coefficients
obtained for the Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale fall below the alpha of .80 identified as “desirable” by these authors, they still appear to fall within an acceptable range and are fairly consistent with reliabilities obtained in previous research using this subscale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mother’s Racial Group</th>
<th>Father’s Racial Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM Total</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation/</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Achievement</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ethnic Achievement = Ethnic Identity Achievement

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the MEIM

Descriptive statistics for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE), Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) and Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM) measures are contained in Table 4. For the RSE, the obtained mean item average score suggested that participants tended to “agree” with items that implied high self-esteem and self-worth (M = 1.79, SD = .61). The potential item range was from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree), and the actual sample item average range was from 1 to 3. Higher scores reflected lower self-esteem. An alpha coefficient of .85 was obtained which is slightly lower than the alpha coefficient of .88 obtained by Fleming and Courtney (1984).

For the Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) measure, the mean item average score suggested that participants tended to “somewhat agree” with items that reflected racial/ethnic
legitimacy testing experiences ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.18$). The potential and actual sample item range was from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Cronbach's alpha was computed at .80.

For the measure of perceived Family Support of Multiracial Heritage (FSM), the obtained mean item average score suggested that participants tended to “agree” that they had experienced support from their family regarding their multiraciality ($M = 2.19$, $SD = .65$). The potential and actual sample item range was from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Lower scores on this measure indicated greater family support of multiraciality. The alpha coefficient obtained in this study was .76. This measure was also highly correlated with a separate one-item scale which assessed "overall satisfaction" with family's support of racial/ethnic identity, with higher scores indicating increased satisfaction ($r = -.67$, $p < .001$). This correlation provides additional support for the reliability of the measure.

The Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) contained eight coping scales, each of which were scored individually. Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for the WCQ. The potential and actual scale range was from 0 (does not apply or not used) to 3 (used a great deal). Eight of the 73 participants who participated in this study did not respond to any portion of this measure. Prior to responding to the scale items, participants were asked to identify a stressful situation in which they felt rejected due to some aspect of their multiracial heritage, and to report when the stressful event occurred. Participants were directed to keep this stressful situation in mind while responding to the rest of the items. Their responses to the item that assessed when the event occurred were categorized into the following six groupings: 1 = 0 to 1 month; 2 = 1.1 to 3 months; 3 = 3.1 to 6 months; 4 = 6.1 to 12 months; 5 = 1.1 to 3 years; 6 = 3.1 years and later. On average, participants’ self-identified stressful event occurred six to twelve months prior to their participation in this study ($M = 4$, $SD = 1.82$). Alpha coefficients obtained for all eight scales ranged from .47 to .72, which is a greater range than previously reported.
The Social Support Rating Scale-Revised (SSRS-R) which was originally included in the questionnaire booklet, was not used in these analyses. The investigator decided that the information obtained from this measure would not address this study’s hypotheses as well as the measure of Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM), created for this study. Furthermore, given the adequate psychometric properties obtained for the FSM, the SSRS-R did not appear to be needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSE</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLT</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** RSE = Rosenberg Self-Esteem; RLT = Racial Legitimacy Testing; FSM = Family Support of Multiraciality.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the RSE, RLT and FSM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confrontive</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distancing</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Controlling</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Social Spt.</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting Responsib.</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape-Avoidance</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solving</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Reappraisal</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for the WCQ

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were run in order to determine whether there were significant mean differences on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) total score and subscale scores for mother’s racial group and father’s racial group. Analyses were also conducted to test for mean gender differences across all measures.

Three analyses of variance (ANOVA’s) were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences between the mother’s and father’s racial group scale for the MEIM total Ethnic Identity score and both the Affirmation and Belonging and Ethnic Identity
Achievement subscales. Each of the tests was conducted at an alpha of .05 divided by 3 to control for Type I error. For the MEIM scores, the only significant differences found were between mother’s and father’s racial group scales for the Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale, $F(1,70) = 10.24, p < .005$; eta squared = .13. In this case, the difference was in the direction of significantly greater ethnic identity achievement for mother’s racial group scale ($M = 3.03, SD = .66$) than for father’s racial group scale ($M = 2.84, SD = .67$).

A series of five independent t-tests were conducted to test for gender differences across all measures, including the MEIM (for which two t-tests were conducted), Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE), Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM), and Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) measures. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between how female ($N = 45$) and male ($N = 28$) participants responded to these measures. **Hypothesis 1**

It was hypothesized that multiracial individuals would experience racial/ethnic legitimacy testing or discrimination by one or more racial/ethnic groups of their heritage. The mean obtained from participants’ scores on the Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) measure lends limited support for this hypothesis. The mean score suggests that on average, participants tended to "somewhat agree" that they had experienced racial legitimacy testing from members of those groups which were part of their racial/ethnic heritage ($M = 3.18, SD = 1.18$). Both the obtained item range (1 to 6) and standard deviation indicate that there was a fair amount of dispersion of scores around the mean. A frequency distribution of RLT scores indicated that on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree), over 50% of the sample scored a 3.0 (somewhat agree) or lower. Lower scores suggest a greater likelihood of experiencing racial legitimacy testing from those racial/ethnic groups to which one belongs.

Figure 1 shows the shape of the distribution of RLT scores.

The qualitative data obtained from this study also offers support for this hypothesis. Given the opportunity to identify a “particularly stressful and troubling situation” in which
participants felt rejected due to some aspect of their multiraciality, 55 (85%) of the 65 participants who responded to the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) identified stressful situations which this researcher categorized as racial legitimacy testing experiences (Table 13). Given these results, the data offer some preliminary support for the hypothesis that some racial legitimacy testing by one's racial/ethnic groups may characterize the experience of multiracial individuals.
Figure 1: Distribution of Racial Legitimacy Testing scores
Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that family support of multiraciality would moderate the effects of racial legitimacy testing on the following variables: self-esteem, self-label and ethnic identity. Before testing this hypothesis, an attempt was made to first determine whether these variables were significant predictors of choice of monoracial and multiracial self-label. Self-esteem, ethnic/racial identity, racial legitimacy testing, and family support of multiraciality were used as predictors for the categorical dependent variable (self-label). A total of 73 participants were used for this analysis; 19 chose a monoracial label and 54 chose to label themselves as multiracial. The results of the discriminant analysis are contained in Table 6. The discriminant function was not found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 5.82, p > .05$). The squared canonical correlation indicated that 8% of the variance was accounted for by the predictor variables. Additionally, five independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether there were significant mean differences among participants who used a monoracial versus a multiracial self-label on all variables. The Levene’s test for Equality of Variances was conducted for each of the predictor variables. The null hypothesis, which assumes that the two population variances (monoracial label and multiracial label) are equal was not rejected, so the pooled-variance (equal variances assumed) t-test was used for comparing the means for each group. Only one out of the five t-tests that were conducted was found to be statistically significant. The mean scores on the Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) measure were found to be significantly different among participants who chose a monoracial versus a multiracial self-label, ($t (71) = 2.11, p < .05$), with participants who chose a monoracial label scoring higher. Table 7 contains the results of this analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Canonical Corr.</th>
<th>Wilks’ Lambda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** For racial labels, monoracial labels were coded 1 and multiracial labels were coded 2.

Table 6: Discriminant Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Label</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.11*</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Equal variances assumed. RLT = Racial Legitimacy Testing

* $p < .05$

Table 7: Independent Samples t-test for RLT
Hypothesis 3

To test the hypothesis that racial legitimacy testing was related to self-esteem, a
correlational analysis was run with the two variables. The Pearson product-moment
correlation was nonsignificant, indicating that racial legitimacy testing and self-esteem were
not related in this sample. An additional correlational analysis was conducted to determine the
relationship between self-esteem and family support of multiracial heritage. The Pearson
correlation coefficient between these two variables was significant ($r = .30$, $p < .01$)
suggesting that as family support of multiraciality increased, so did self-esteem. Table 8
contains the results of these analyses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RSE</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RLT</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. FSM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. RSE = Rosenberg Self-Esteem; RLT = Racial Legitimacy Testing; FSM = Family
Support of Multiraciality. High scores on the RSE indicate low self-esteem; high scores on
the FSM indicate low family support of multiraciality.

*p < .01

Table 8: Correlations between RSE, RLT and FSM
Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis proposed that racial/ethnic identity would be predicted by family support of multiraciality and racial diversity of neighborhood. To test this hypothesis, two simultaneous multiple regression analyses were conducted with ethnic/racial identity entered as the dependent variable and family support of multiraciality and racial diversity of neighborhood entered as the predictor variables (Table 9). The reader is reminded that the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure yielded two sets of ethnic/racial identity scores, each of which was analyzed separately. Using scores on the mother's racial group scale, the regression analysis yielded a Multiple R of .43, which was significant, $F(2, 68) = 7.5, p < .001$. T-tests revealed that both the Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM) scores and racial diversity of neighborhood scores uniquely contributed to the variance in mother's racial identity group scores ($\beta = -.28, t(68) = -2.51, p < .01$; $\beta = .27, t(68) = 2.45, p < .02$).

Using scores on the father's racial group scale, the regression analysis yielded a Multiple R of .38, which was also significant, $F(2, 67) = 5.59, p < .005$. T-tests revealed that both the FSM and the racial diversity of neighborhood scores uniquely contributed to the variance in the racial identity of father's racial group ($\beta = -.23, t(67) = -2.0, p < .05$ and $\beta = .26, t(67) = 2.30, p < .05$). The more conservative estimate explained variance, or the Adjusted $R^2$, indicated that the full model accounted for 16% of the variance ($R^2 = .18$; Adjusted $R^2 = .16$) using scores on the mother's racial group scale, and 12% of the variance ($R^2 = .14$; Adjusted $R^2 = .12$) using scores on father's racial group scale.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Mother’s Racial Group</th>
<th>Father’s Racial Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-2.51**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>2.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.43****</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. FSM = Family Support of Multiraciality; Neighborhood = Diversity of Neighborhood.  
* $p < .05$    ** $p < .01$    *** $p < .005$    **** $p < .001$

Table 9: Simultaneous Multiple Regressions

**Hypothesis 5**

It was hypothesized that ethnic identity achievement would predict coping strategies used to deal with a stressful event involving feeling rejected due to some aspect of one’s multiracial/ethnic identity. To test hypothesis five, several simple bivariate linear regression analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which ethnic identity achievement was related to eight different types of coping strategies. The results from these regression equations are presented in Tables 10 and 11. Using scores on the mother’s racial group scale, ethnic identity achievement was found to be a significant predictor of four coping strategies. Ethnic identity achievement was a significant predictor of Planful Problem-Solving ($F(1, 62) = 6.7, p < .01$). Furthermore, it accounted for 8% of the variance in Planful Problem-Solving (Adjusted $R^2 = .08$). For each of the bivariate regression equations, the investigator chose to report the more conservative estimate of $R^2$ or the Adjusted $R^2$, which is a function of $R^2$ adjusted by the number of variables in the model and the sample size. The Adjusted $R^2$ is designed to compensate for the inflated value of $R^2$ or the overestimation of variance.
accounted for (SPSS Applications Guide, 1996). Ethnic identity achievement was also found to account for a statistically significant amount of the variance in a second coping strategy labeled Positive Reappraisal ($F (1, 62) = 5.73, p < .05$; Adjusted $R^2 = .07$). In addition to accounting for 7% of the variance in Positive Reappraisal, ethnic achievement also accounted for 7% of the variance in a coping strategy labeled Seeking Social Support ($F (1, 62) = 5.49, p < .05$; Adjusted $R^2 = .07$). Lastly, while there appeared to be less overlap between the ethnic achievement variable and Confrontive coping, ethnic identity achievement did account for a statistically significant amount of the variability in Confrontive coping ($F (1, 62) = 4.89, p < .05$; Adjusted $R^2 = .06$). The beta weights for these four regression equations revealed that higher scores on ethnic achievement predicted higher Problem-Solving coping, Positive Reappraisal, Seeking Social Support and Confrontive coping, respectively. The results of these analyses are contained in Table 10.

Using scores on the father’s racial group scale, ethnic identity achievement was found to be a significant predictor of the following two coping strategies: Planful Problem-Solving ($F (1, 61) = 23.34, p < .0001$; Adjusted $R^2 = .27$), and Positive Reappraisal ($F (1, 61) = 6.65, p < .01$; Adjusted $R^2 = .08$). The beta weights for both of these equations revealed that higher scores on the ethnic achievement subscale (for father’s racial group) predicted higher Problem-Solving coping and Positive Reappraisal coping. The results of these two regression analyses are contained in Table 11.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>6.70*</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *$p < .01$; \(^a\) Denotes Adjusted $R^2$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>5.73*</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *$p < .05$; \(^a\) Denotes the Adjusted $R^2$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>df</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>5.49*</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *$p < .05$; \(^a\) Denotes the Adjusted $R^2$

Table 10: Simple Bivariate Regressions: Mother’s Racial Group
Table 10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²a</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity Achievement</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>4.89*</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  *p < .05;  "Denotes Adjusted R²

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²a</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity Achievement</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>23.34*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  *p < .0001;  "Denotes Adjusted R²

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²a</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity Achievement</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>6.65*</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  *p < .01;  "Denotes Adjusted R²

Table 11: Simple Bivariate Regressions: Father’s Racial Group
Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis six proposed that ethnic identity achievement and self-esteem would be positively correlated, with an increase in ethnic identity achievement corresponding with an increase in self-esteem. The hypothesized relationship between ethnic identity achievement and self-esteem was supported by the data. When interpreting the Pearson correlation coefficients involving the RSE, it is important to remember that self-esteem and RSE scores are inversely related; a low score on the RSE indicates a high degree of self-esteem. A high score on the achievement subscale suggests a more achieved ethnic identity. The correlations between self-esteem and ethnic achievement on mother's racial group scale ($r = -.46$, $p < .0005$) and on father's racial group scale ($r = -.33$, $p < .005$) suggest that as participants' ethnic identity achievement tended to increase, their self-esteem also tended to increase. Similarly, a positive correlation was also found between ethnic identity and self-esteem. The results from these analyses are presented in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mother's Racial Group</th>
<th></th>
<th>Father's Racial Group</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. RSE</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.46***</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>.86***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. RSE = Rosenberg Self-Esteem; high scores on the RSE indicate low self-esteem. $^*p < .05$ $^{**}p < .005$ $^{***}p < .0001$

Table 12: Correlations between RSE and Ethnic Identity Achievement and Ethnic Identity
Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis seven proposed that there would be a positive relationship between racial diversity of neighborhood in which one was raised and sense of belonging to both racial groups. Consistent with this hypothesis, racial diversity of neighborhood was found to be positively correlated with sense of affirmation and belonging to both mother’s and father’s racial groups. A statistically significant relationship was also obtained between racial diversity of neighborhood and ethnic identity. The results from the correlational analyses are presented in Table 13. The Pearson correlation coefficients for diversity of neighborhood and Affirmation and Belonging for mother’s and father’s racial groups were both significant, respectively ($r = .29, p < .005; r = .35, p < .005$). Racial diversity of neighborhood was also found to be significantly correlated with ethnic identity on mother's racial group scale ($r = .33, p < .01$) and father's racial group scale ($r = .31, p < .01$), suggesting that the racial/ethnic diversity of the neighborhood in which one is raised may have a positive effect on one's multietnic/multiracial identity development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mother’s Racial Group</th>
<th>Father’s Racial Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Diversity of Neighborhood</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Affirmation &amp; Belonging</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .01  **p < .005  ***p < .0001

Table 13: Correlations between Diversity of Neighborhood, Affirmation and Belonging, and Ethnic Identity
Hypothesis 8

To test the hypothesis that racial/ethnic legitimacy testing would be negatively correlated with sense of belonging correlations were obtained between Racial Legitimacy and the Affirmation and Belonging variable. Again, two scores were obtained for the latter variable, one for each parent's racial group. Racial Legitimacy and Affirmation and Belonging were not found to be significantly correlated at the .05 level for either racial group. A significant relationship was obtained, however, between Ethnic Identity Achievement for mother's racial group and Racial Legitimacy ($r = -.303, p < .01$). A negative but non-significant relationship was obtained between Racial Legitimacy and Ethnic Identity Achievement for father's racial group. The results from these analyses are presented in Table 14. The negative correlation suggests that at least for this sample, discriminatory experiences such as those stemming from racial legitimacy testing may have contributed to the process of developing a more secure racial/ethnic identity, and deeper appreciation for and understanding of the role of race and ethnicity in one's life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mother’s Racial Group</th>
<th>Father’s Racial Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. RLT</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ethnic Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. RLT = Racial Legitimacy Testing. A low score on the RLT measure indicates more legitimacy testing than a high score on the RLT.

$*p < .01$

Table 14: Correlations between RLT and Ethnic Identity Achievement
Analyses of Qualitative Data

Participants were asked to describe a stressful situation in which they felt rejected due to some aspect of their mixed heritage or multiracial/ethnic identity. Sixty-five participants (89%) responded to this item. Most of the remaining eight participants who did not respond to this item indicated that they were not aware of having experienced a stressful situation of this nature. The procedure used to analyze these data was content analysis, as described by Patton (1990) and Rothe (1994). The first step used in the analysis involved a thorough review of all 65 responses. Following a second review of the data, the investigator categorized the responses into primary themes. The investigator also identified several sub-themes within the primary themes. Once the data were categorized into themes and/or sub-themes, the responses in each theme and sub-theme were counted. The themes and sub-themes that emerged, along with the number of participants that fell into each category, are contained in Table 15.

Three primary themes were identified, which included: 1) racial legitimacy testing, 2) difficulties encountered with dating, and 3) family racism. Of these three stressful types of experiences, racial legitimacy testing emerged as the most commonly reported stressful event. A total of 55 participants (85%) reported stressful experiences that could be characterized as racial legitimacy testing. Racial legitimacy is broadly defined as being treated as less than a full member or not as legitimate a member of a racial group due to one's mixed heritage; it often involves having one's legitimacy as a member of a specific racial group put into question because of skin color (e.g., being told, "you don't look Hispanic" or "you're too white to be Black"), language (e.g., not speaking Japanese despite Japanese heritage), or attitude (e.g., "you don't act or talk Black enough"), among other things.

Within the broad theme of legitimacy testing, several related sub-themes were also identified. For example, the type of legitimacy testing which most often emerged was related to the multiracial individual's appearance. A total of 16, or 25% of participants reported that
their legitimacy as a member of a particular racial group had been questioned due to some aspect of their physical appearance (e.g., being told that they didn’t “look” Asian, Black, or Hispanic, etc.), while 5 participants (8%) experienced legitimacy testing because they didn’t speak the ‘requisite’ language or didn’t have the ‘right’ ethnic attitude (5%) to be considered a legitimate member of a particular group (e.g., a Hispanic/White participant reported feeling “frustrated because on a weekend trip to visit my mom’s family, [they] spoke Spanish the whole time and I only know English. They can speak English, but they only did so when they spoke directly to me. I felt lost and angry.”).

Another form of legitimacy testing to emerge was more broadly identified as experiencing racism (22%). The racism was most often experienced in the form of others making racist remarks directed at the multiracial individual's minority heritage. Within this group, several of the participants (all of whom had one White parent) commented that they often felt as if others made offensive remarks about minorities in their presence either because they were not aware that they were multiracial and were perceived as White (e.g., a White/Black participant reported that while working at a store a woman walked up to the participant and proceeded to say that “Black people are mean... segregation was wonderful...” the participant informed the woman that “I am half Black and what you are saying to me is offensive...”.), or because they were perceived as different from and not really belonging to the racial group to which the racist comments were being directed (e.g., a participant whose mother was White and Father was Black, stated that at father’s family reunion, the “men were sitting ragging on White people. My cousin pointed out that [my sister and I] were half-white. My father’s reply was: ‘not in my eyes.’ It really stung, I felt I had to deny myself in front of him.”).

Another sub-theme accounting for 15% of the responses was not feeling a sense of belonging or acceptance or not fitting in (e.g., "feeling caught between Hispanic and White rivalries"); being referred to by friends as "half-breed"; or being introduced as a "half Black
Finally, feeling pressured to choose just one racial group with which to identify (11%) was another sub-theme involving a form of racial legitimacy testing (e.g., one Japanese/White participant stated that “A secretary was filling out information about me for a new job [I’d been offered], when she got to ‘race’ she looked at me questioningly; I shrugged and said whatever, unless there’s a mixed category. Unenlightened by my answer, she proceeded to name off each category, hoping I’d affirm one of them. When I didn’t, she was not pleased and the situation was very tense. I think she put me down as Hispanic or something, which I’m not at all.”).

Two other themes to emerge from the data included: difficulties encountered with dating (8%), for instance, having doubts and questions about “within which racial group to date”; and family racism (8%), experiencing animosity and rejection from family due to mixed heritage (e.g., maternal grandmother (White) commenting to her biracial (Black/White) granddaughter that "it's the kids that I feel sorry for; no group wants them.").
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Racial Legitimacy Testing</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Physical appearance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Don’t speak language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Attitude</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Experiencing racism</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Lack of acceptance and belonging</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Choose one racial group</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dating</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family Racism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 65

Table 15: Themes for Stressful Event
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

We live in a very race conscious society where the meaning assigned to race has had powerful political and socio-economic implications, especially for those individuals identified as racial minorities. Historically our racial classification system, theories of racial/ethnic identity, and social perceptions have treated “race” as a dichotomous construct (i.e., either you are of one race or another). Multiracial individuals, however, are by their very existence and growing numbers challenging some of the limiting and faulty beliefs about race and racial identity. It is hoped that research efforts such as this study will further this challenge and open the way for a more flexible and dynamic conceptualization of “race” and “racial identity development.”

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to further our understanding of biracial/multiracial identity development. Some of the common experiences and themes that have been theorized to characterize the identity development of multiracial persons were examined in this study. The existing literature suggested that a common struggle for many multiracial individuals was that of developing a sense of belonging to, and feeling accepted by, those racial/ethnic groups which are a part of the multiracial individual’s heritage. An attempt was made in this study to examine the construct of ethnic identity, along with factors identified in the literature as having a direct influence on multiracial/multiethnic identity, such as family support of multiraciality, coping with discrimination, and racial/ethnic legitimacy testing. An attempt was also made to
explore how racial/ethnic identity and other factors such as self-esteem, racial diversity of the community in which a person was raised, and choice of self-label are related.

Findings of the Study

Previous research has suggested that the struggle of the multiracial individual to be perceived as legitimate and to be included as a member of a racial/ethnic community is a core dimension of the experience of multiraciality (Nakashima, 1996). Consistent with the literature reviewed for this study, the first hypothesis, which predicted that multiracial individuals would indicate having experienced racial/ethnic legitimacy testing from one or more racial/ethnic groups of their heritage, received some support from the data; most participants agreed that they had experienced racial/ethnic legitimacy testing. The data obtained from the content analysis of participants’ responses to an open-ended question also lend support to these findings. The emergent themes and sub-themes from the qualitative data reflect some of the common difficulties encountered by multiracial individuals. Many of these racial legitimacy testing themes, such as experiencing a forced identity choice and lack of acceptance, are also identified in current models of biracial identity development (Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990). Implicit in these models is the notion that racial legitimacy testing could, and often does, interfere with the process of racial identity resolution.

The devaluation of differentness in our society and the internalization of external oppression are factors contributing to racial/ethnic legitimacy testing and what Anzaldúa (1990) and others have referred to as “othering people.” According to Anzaldúa, when people of color don’t measure up to set standards of ethnicity, or cannot “pass as 100% ethnic,” they are often pushed away and ostracized; they become the “Other.” She observed that for people of color, the internalization of negative images of themselves is frequently the driving force for this rejection and alienation of their own.

Given the potential negative impact of legitimacy testing experiences on emotional well-being, the construct of self-esteem was also examined in this study. While it was
hypothesized that racial/ethnic legitimacy testing would be inversely related to self-esteem, the results of this study did not support this hypothesized relationship; racial/ethnic legitimacy testing was not found to be significantly related to self-esteem. One possible reason for this may have been that the effects of racial legitimacy testing were mitigated by family support. Results from previous research had indicated that family support with respect to multiracial identity can serve to undermine oppressive racial attitudes toward multiracial individuals (Root 1994), offset some of the negative effects of legitimacy testing such as low self-esteem and self-denigration (Comas-Díaz, 1996, Greene, 1990), and in turn heighten racial pride (Kerwin et al., 1993). The mean score on the Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM) measure indicated that participants tended to “agree” that they had experienced family support of multiracial heritage. Additionally, on a separate one-scale item assessing overall satisfaction, participants on average reported feeling “moderately satisfied” with the overall amount of emotional support received from their family with respect to their racial/ethnic identity.

Finally, a significant positive relationship was obtained in this study between family support of multiraciality and self-esteem. It appears that participants’ emotional well-being was indeed enhanced by their family’s support of their mixed heritages, and that despite the lack of statistical significance between racial/ethnic legitimacy and self-esteem, this support may have served as a buffer for the negative effects of racial legitimacy testing on self-esteem.

The relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity remains somewhat mixed in the literature. In an effort to further understand the relationship between these constructs using a multiracial sample, self-esteem was examined in relation to ethnic identity and ethnic identity achievement. Consistent with some of the existing research and this study’s hypotheses, a significant positive relationship was obtained between self-esteem and both ethnic identity constructs in this study. For example, several researchers have found that progression through the identity stages toward an “achieved identity” is associated with a linear increase in self-esteem (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990).
Parham and Helms (1985a), however, found that individuals in encounter and internalization stages reported higher self-esteem, whereas the preencounter stage and immersion stage (which occurs following the encounter stage) were associated with lower self-esteem. Future research is needed to help clarify the exact nature of the relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity.

The results from this study indicated that factors such as racial diversity of the neighborhood in which one is raised and family support of multiracial heritage were statistically significant, although not very powerful, predictors of multiethnic/multiracial identity. These two factors have been identified in the conceptual literature as playing an important role in positive racial identity resolution (Comas-Díaz, 1996; Greene, 1990; Root, 1992a). To date, however, limited empirical research exists which has examined the influence of these factors on multiracial identity. Despite potential limitations of the measure of family support of multiraciality and the racial diversity of neighborhood scale (which will be discussed shortly), these two measures emerged as significant predictors of multiethnic/multiracial identity. Given these preliminary findings and previous reports regarding the importance of these variables in the development of a positive ethnic/racial identity, additional research is needed to further clarify the nature and strength of the relationship between these variables.

In this study, four types of coping strategies labeled, confrontive coping, planful problem-solving, positive reappraisal and seeking social support, were found be related to ethnic identity achievement. The results of these analyses should be interpreted with caution, however, given the relatively low alpha reliability coefficients obtained for these four coping strategies. The alphas obtained for the four coping strategies ranged from .61 to .72. Similarly, the alphas obtained for these scales in the measurement development study fell mostly in the .70 range. The relatively low alphas may have been a result of the individual
coping scales having too few items (most had a total of 6 items), or they may be a reflection of problems with actual internal consistency (e.g., items not having enough in common).

With the aforementioned cautionary note in mind, the coping strategies best predicted by ethnic achievement and identified as being used to cope with racial/ethnic stress, were consistent with strategies identified by Folkman and Lazarus (1988) as involving attempts to either alter the stressful situation (e.g., confrontive coping and planful problem-solving) or create some form of positive meaning or experience from it (e.g., positive reappraisal or seeking social support). In a study that used the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) to operationalize coping, Folkman et al. (1986) found that in stressful encounters perceived as changeable, participants tended to accept more responsibility, use more confrontive coping, planful-problem-solving, and positive reappraisal to cope; in encounters appraised as having to be accepted, participants were more likely to use distancing and escape-avoidance. Three out of the four strategies they reported as being used to cope with situations perceived as “changeable” coincide with strategies found to be significantly related to ethnic identity achievement in this study. In light of Folkman et al.'s (1986) findings, one could interpret the results of this study to mean that in general, high ethnic achievement participants tended to use coping strategies associated with situations perceived as “changeable.” This finding might also be interpreted as suggesting that at least for these high ethnic achievement participants, the self-reported “stressful event” was perceived as a situation that could be altered in some way by their efforts, rather than as a situation which they were powerless to do anything about.

Additionally, Chavira and Phinney (1991) found that of four coping strategies labeled “assert”, “disprove,” “ignore” and “discuss,” the latter (discuss) was the most frequently reported strategy for dealing with discrimination. They also found that “discussion” was used more often by high than by low ethnic identity subjects. Consistent with these results, planful problem-solving, which appears similar to their coping construct of “discuss”
(explaining why it is inaccurate or wrong) was found to be highly correlated with and strongly predicted by ethnic identity achievement.

It was difficult to predict choice of self-label (i.e., monoracial or multiracial) given the small number of participants who chose a monoracial label (N = 19). Despite this limitation, a significant difference in Racial Legitimacy Testing mean scores was obtained between participants who self-labeled monoracially and those who labeled multiracially, with participants who chose a monoracial label scoring higher (experiencing less racial/ethnic legitimacy testing). This finding would suggest that the more participants experienced racial/ethnic legitimacy testing from one or more of their racial/ethnic groups, the less likely they were to choose a monoracial label. Similarly, participants who perhaps had not experienced the same degree of threats and challenges to their racial/ethnic identity as their multiracially labeled counterparts, were more likely to choose a monoracial label. Given the small number of subjects from which these results were derived and limited empirical research in this area with which to compare these findings, these results should be interpreted with caution. Future research is needed to further examine the relationship between racial/ethnic legitimacy testing and self-label.

The lack of significant findings regarding choice of self-label may have also resulted from how choice of self-label was assessed. Participants were asked on the first page of the questionnaire booklet to choose from a list of labels the one that most applied to them. In addition to the five standard options, the list included choices such as “Mixed, Biracial, Multiracial” and “Other.” Participants who checked either the “Multiracial” or “Other” category were directed to “please specify” the racial/ethnic group(s) with which they self-identified. Since this investigator was interested in how participants usually self-identify, it would have been helpful to have included (in addition to the multiple choice question) an open-ended question such as “What label do you typically use to identify yourself racially/ethnically?” at the outset. Given the option of checking a Multiracial category (a
choice not usually available to multiracial individuals), how subjects usually self-identify may have gotten obscured. It is possible that the aforementioned open-ended question placed at the beginning of the questionnaire booklet may have elicited more “monoracial” choices.

Limitations of the Study

One significant limitation for any research involving the study of complex constructs such as racial/ethnic identity is the inherent difficulty in operationalizing them (Field, 1996; Root, 1992b). While the concepts of race and ethnicity were defined at the outset as not necessarily meaning the same thing, they were frequently used interchangeably throughout this study. The interchangeability between the concepts of race and ethnicity is a fairly common occurrence throughout much of the literature pertaining to multiracial identity. This may in part reflect the ambiguous nature of the term ‘race’ and the ongoing socio-political debate about the true meaning and validity of ‘race’ as a concept. It is likely that some of the apparent contradictions in this study (such as implying that a Hispanic person with parents from the same racial group would not be considered multiracial), are not unique to this study, but rather reflect contradictions inherent in how race has been defined at the broader societal level across history (Zack, 1995).

There are several issues pertaining to this study’s sample that also warrant mention. First, given the small sample size, it is possible that some of the analyses conducted lacked the statistical power to detect differences that actually do exist in the population. Secondly, the use of snowball sampling to enlist participants for this study likely resulted in a very select and non-random sample. For example, participants in this study had a high level of education. Most were either college or graduate students, which may have moderated certain relationships (e.g., the self-esteem of participants in this study might be greater than a sample of non-students because this study’s participants may feel like they’ve achieved success). Furthermore, participants’ SES was not assessed; therefore, differences attributed to “race”
may actually be attributable to SES. Given these potential limitations, the generalizability of the findings to the larger multiracial population is limited.

Finally, one other sample characteristic that limits generalizability is that this investigator chose to include multiracial participants from very different racial groups rather than focusing on certain racial groups, or only including a particular racial mix. This decision was based on the exploratory nature of this research and its focus on understanding the general constructs of multiraciality and multiracial identity development. Inclusion of such diverse racial mixes in the sample, however, precluded being able to incorporate into the interpretation of the findings information about the unique histories, cultural values/beliefs, and experiences of specific racial groups.

Several other limitations of this study involve methodological issues. An attempt was made to rectify some of the inherent limitations of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), which was utilized to operationalize ethnic identity. For example, as mentioned previously, there appeared to be some problems with using the MEIM to measure the ethnic identity of multiracial/multiethnic persons given how the measure was constructed. For example, an underlying assumption appeared to be that most respondents would be monoethnic (solely members of one ethnic group), or if multiethnic that they would perceive their ethnic identity through a monoethnic lens. The modifications made to the measure for purposes of this study were an attempt to make it more appropriate for use with a multiethnic/multiracial sample, as it allowed participants to acknowledge multiple racial/ethnic heritages.

One of the benefits of having two scores to measure multiracial/multiethnic identity and related constructs was that it was possible to determine whether there was any variance in an individual’s scores across subscales according to which ethnic group he/she had in mind when responding to the MEIM. Having two ethnic identity scores and two scores for each of the subscales, however, also presented challenges in interpretation of the results.
Furthermore, it was not clear how to interpret the responses of participants who had a multiracial parent. It’s possible that these participants responded to the relevant parent racial group scale with only one of that parent’s racial groups in mind; alternatively, the racial reference group for that participant may have been a “multiracial” group. It may have been helpful to ask participants to specify which racial reference group they had in mind when responding to the multiracial parent’s racial group scale. It is possible that their ‘sense of belonging’ and ‘ethnic identity’ was not with both parent groups but rather with a new racial group composed of other multiracial individuals (Thomton, 1996). This possibility is consistent with Root’s (1990) model of biracial identity resolution, which proposes that one possible identity resolution entails identification with a new racial group and implies that the individual’s strongest connection is with other biracial people.

Two of the constructs of interest to this investigator, racial/ethnic legitimacy testing and family support of multiraciality, had not been previously operationalized in the existing empirical research. In an effort to examine the relationship of these variables to multiracial identity, the investigator developed the Racial Legitimacy Testing and Family Support of Multiraciality measures. While the obtained alpha coefficients for both measures were adequate, it is possible that these measures failed to tap all the dimensions of the racial/ethnic legitimacy and family support constructs. Given this possibility, the lack of significant findings in analyses using these measures may have stemmed more from methodological issues than from an absence of a relationship between the variables. Recommendations for improving the two aforementioned measures will be discussed in the next section.

Eight of the 73 participants chose not to respond to the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ). The first item in the WCQ was an open-ended question asking participants to identify a stressful situation that involved “feeling rejected due to some aspect of their dual heritage or multiracial/ethnic identity.” Participants were then asked to keep this “stressful event” in mind when responding to the remaining WCQ items which assessed how they coped.
with that situation. Most of the 8 participants who did not respond to the WCQ stated that they had not experienced a stressful situation of this nature, and thus were unable to respond to the measure. Consistent with their reasons for not responding to the WCQ, these participants’ mean score on the Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) measure fell midway between “somewhat disagreed” and “disagreed” that they had experienced racial/ethnic legitimacy testing. It remains unclear why these participants unlike the majority of participants in this study, reported few racial/ethnic legitimacy testing experiences. It seems noteworthy that all 8 of these participants had one White parent, and 5 of the 8 were White/Asian. An interesting follow-up study would be to assess how physical appearance, and/or having one White parent might influence a person’s experience of racial/ethnic legitimacy testing.

A final word of caution regarding the use of the WCQ in this study concerns the low Cronbach’s alpha (internal consistency reliability) coefficients obtained for several of the coping scales. The coping scales that were found to be related to the constructs of interest in this study had alpha coefficients ranging from .61 to .72; reliabilities obtained for some of the other coping scales, however, were as low as .47 and .57. These low alphas suggest that, individually, some of the coping scales were tapping into more than one construct. Additional psychometric validation appears to be needed for this measure.

Another limitation of this study included using only one method of collecting data (i.e., self-report), which Cook and Campbell (1979) refer to as “mono-method bias.” This study’s sole reliance on self-report measures, and failure to use other methods such as qualitative interviews, may have limited the interpretations that could be made about the data, and compromised the depth of understanding which may have been achieved regarding numerous complex relationships. In addition to including qualitative interviews, several of the self-report instruments might have yielded richer and more meaningful information with the addition of open-ended questions to the measures. For example, it would have been interesting to have added a question to the Family Support of Multiraciality measure asking...
participants to talk about “messages received from family members about being multiracial or mixed race.” While the construct of belonging was examined in this study, little specific information was obtained about how others, especially strangers, perceived participants racially/ethnically. Following Rodríguez’s (1989) example, it would have been interesting to determine if how participants were seen (“objective perceptions”) corresponded with how they saw themselves (“subjective perceptions”).

Directions for Future Research

While the empirical study of multiracial identity development has moved out of its infancy, it is still experiencing growing pains. Although the theoretical and conceptual literature on multiracial identity development has evolved considerably in the last five years, the empirical study of the relevant theoretical concepts is still fairly limited. Given this gap, future research could serve to further refine some of the existing measures, including those used in this study to operationalize multiracial identity and related factors (i.e., family support of multiracial heritage, racial diversity of community, racial/ethnic legitimacy testing, etc.).

For example, refinement of the Family Support of Multiraciality (FSM) measure, which was one of the two measures created by this investigator, could occur in three stages. First, it would be helpful to conduct some qualitative interviews to obtain more information about how racial socialization patterns of multiracials’ parents compare to those of other parents. Secondly, a factor analysis could be conducted to determine which factors loaded most strongly onto the FSM construct. Finally, additional research could be conducted to obtain reliability and validity data to further determine the usefulness of the measure.

In addition to adding an open-ended question to the FSM concerning family messages received about one’s multiracial heritage (as mentioned in the previous section), it may also be helpful to have participants provide additional qualitative information about their family. For instance, it would be interesting to ask participants to identify who they perceived as the primary members of their family. For each item on the FSM, participants might also be asked
to elaborate on the degree of support of multiraciality received from individual family members. For example, it would be interesting to know if the support received from a participant’s mother was significantly different from that received by the participant’s father. Given the great variability in the make up of individual families, these modifications would help identify any within group variation.

The following modifications to the measure of perceived Racial Legitimacy Testing (RLT) are suggested for future research using this measure. First, given how the individual items of the RLT are currently worded, it is not possible to determine whether the respondent experienced racial legitimacy testing from “one” or “both” ethnic groups of their heritage. For example, item one reads, “I have felt discriminated against or rejected due to my appearance (e.g., skin tone, facial features) by members of one or both of my ethnic groups.” In order to avoid this confound, generate more specific data and increase the validity of the measure, it is suggested that a ‘fill in the blank’ space in which respondents could provide the names of the relevant racial groups be provided for all 8 items of the RLT. Participants would be instructed to use only those racial/ethnic groups which were part of their multiracial heritage when filling in the blanks. Using the aforementioned item one as an example, the modified version of this item would instead read: “I have felt discriminated against or rejected due to my appearance (e.g., skin tone, facial features) by: ” and participants would then fill in the blank.

Furthermore, it is possible that not all of the RLT items are universally applicable across multiracial groups. For instance, according to Nakashima (1996), certain types of legitimacy testing may be more prevalent in some racial communities than others. She noted that within the Asian community, legitimacy testing often comes in the form of tests about physical appearance and surname, in the African-American community a person’s lifestyle and cultural behavior are often strongly scrutinized, and in the Latino community legitimacy tests frequently involve whether and/or how well the individual can speak Spanish. The
aforementioned modifications to the RLT would further assist the investigator in determining the relevance of certain types of racial legitimacy testing across racial groups.

One of the methodological limitations inherent in most measures of racial/ethnic identity is a failure to adequately recognize and in turn assess the concept of “situational ethnicity” (Stephan, 1992) or situational racial identity. Situational ethnicity as conceptualized by Stephan implies that a person’s ethnicity and identity are interactive and evolving, and as such are subject to vary across different situations or contexts. Further research in this area using a multiracial sample might help us better understand the ways in which perceived external expectations (i.e., are others supportive of or resistant to multiple ethnic/racial identification) and other situational factors influence racial/ethnic identification.

Implications for Counseling

Being able to self-designate racially/ethnically and develop one’s own personal racial identity has been identified as being important to self-empowerment (Hershel, 1995) and self-acceptance (Root, 1990). Findings from this study indicated that external oppression in the form of racial/ethnic legitimacy or authenticity tests, is a common experience for many multiracial individuals. Internalized oppression may further interfere with self-esteem and the process of racial/ethnic identity resolution (Phinney, 1992; Root, 1990). Given the emotional toll that is frequently exacted on the multiracial person’s well-being, these findings have important implications for counselors working with these individuals. For example, the multiracial individual who chooses to identify as such may experience resistance from persons who subscribe to dichotomous racial classifications and are unwilling to entertain the possibility that a person could be, say, Black and White (Root, 1996). In her study of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S., Rodriguez (1989) observed that statements such as “You don’t look Puerto Rican” or “Are you 100% Puerto Rican?” are heard by virtually all mainland Puerto Ricans at some point in their lives. The lack of social validation that comes with being
perceived and/or labeled in ways that are not congruent with how the multiracial individual sees himself/herself can lead to increased self-doubt and low self-esteem (Hershel, 1995).

As counselors working with individuals of mixed racial heritage, it becomes very important to develop an understanding of the social climate (family, peer, community) in which the multiracial individual lives and interacts. In the context of a frequently hostile racial climate, many multiracial individuals find it a struggle to assert and embrace their multiple identities. Others may react to the racial backlash by retreating from learning about and exploring their racial/ethnic identity, and instead passively accept the racial identity which society assigns them (Root, 1990). Counselors who are knowledgeable about multiracial identity development and informed about the ways in which the development of a healthy racial/ethnic identity is often thwarted, will be better prepared to help multiracial individuals who are being hurt by racial oppression.
LIST OF REFERENCES


This study is being conducted by Jessica Adams, under the supervision of Dr. Don Dell, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in the Department of Psychology at The Ohio State University. This study will examine the racial/ethnic identity development of college students.

Participation in this study will take place in two phases. In order to locate people who are appropriate for the second phase of this study, we are asking you to answer the five questions listed below which represent the first phase. The second phase will entail responding in writing to several questionnaires. More specifically, you will be asked about your ethnic/racial identity, your self-esteem, your experience coping with perceived rejection, and the role of family support in the development a racial/ethnic identity.

The researcher recognizes that some of the information being requested may be perceived by some as personal; therefore, several measures will be taken to ensure that your responses remain confidential. First, the information obtained during the first phase from students who do not meet the criteria for participation in the second phase of the study will be destroyed by this researcher. Those of you for whom participation in the second phase is an option will receive a follow-up call requesting your participation. Once you have been contacted your responses to the five questions listed below (including your name and phone number) will also be destroyed. You will not be asked to put your name on the questionnaire booklet. Also, your responses to all questions will remain in the sole possession of the researcher, Jessica Adams and secured in a locked file cabinet when the collected data is not being used.

Your participation is voluntary and you may end your participation at any time. Participants who participate in phase two may enter their name into a drawing for one of two $50 U.S. Savings Bonds. As a participant you will have two chances of winning one of the Savings Bonds. If you have any questions or concerns, please give Jessica Adams a call at 409-821-6266. Thank you for taking the time to respond to the following questions.

1. Name: ________________________________

2. Phone number: ___________________________ e-mail (if used): ______________

3. My race is (circle the number that most applies)
   (1) Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
   (2) African American or Black
   (3) Hispanic or Latino (specify group: ____________________________)
   (4) White, Caucasian, not Hispanic
   (5) Native American
   (6) Multiracial, Biracial, Mixed; parents are from two or more different groups (specify: ____________________________)
   (7) Other (write in): ____________________________

4. My father's race is (use numbers above; if #6 please specify) ____________________

5. My mother's race is (use numbers above; if #6 please specify) ____________________
This study is being conducted by Jessica Adams, under the supervision of Dr. Don Dell, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in the Department of Psychology at The Ohio State University. This study will examine the racial and ethnic identity development of individuals with parents from two or more different racial groups.

You will be asked about your ethnic/racial identity, your self-esteem, your experience coping with perceived rejection, and the role of family support in the development of your racial/ethnic identity. The researcher recognizes that some of the information being requested may be perceived by some as personal; therefore, measures will be taken to ensure that your responses remain confidential. First, you will not be asked to provide your name on the questionnaires, so your responses will be anonymous. Second, your responses to all questions will remain in the possession of the researcher, Jessica Adams, and secured in a locked file cabinet when the data are not being used. Because your participation is voluntary, you may end your participation at any time.

Participants who complete all the questionnaires may enter their name into a drawing for one of two $50 U.S. Savings Bonds. As a participant you will have two chances of winning one of the Savings Bonds. If you have any questions or concerns, please give Jessica Adams a call at 409-821-6266.
APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER
Dear Participant,

I'm a counseling psychology doctoral student from The Ohio State University conducting my dissertation research under the supervision of my adviser, Dr. Don Dell. I'm writing to request your assistance with this research. This is exciting research, (although I admit that I'm biased in this respect), which will examine experiences that may characterize the racial identity development of many biracial/multiracial individuals. The criteria for participation are that participants be biracial/multiracial (although they may not identify as such) or that they have parents from two or more different racial groups.

If you meet the criteria and are interested in participating, I'd appreciate it if you'd please respond to the attached questionnaire. It only takes about 20-25 minutes to fill out and you will not be asked to provide your name on the questionnaire. As a participant you will also have the opportunity to win one of two $50 U.S. Savings Bonds!

Thank you in advance for your participation, it's much appreciated! If you'd like me to send you a summary of the results of this study, please indicate this on the lottery form. The summary should be available some time in March.

If you have any questions or concerns about any part of this study, please feel free to call Jessica Adams collect at (409)821-6266.

Sincerely,

Jessica Adams, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET
Please answer the following questions:

1. Sex (circle one)  M  F

2. Age ______

3. Are you currently a student?  ____ Yes  ____ No (if no, go to question # 7)

4. What year of college are you currently in? (i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, grad. student, etc.)

5. Name of college or university: ______________________________

6. State where school is located: ______________________________

7. How racially/ethnically diverse was the neighborhood that you grew up in: ______

   not at all diverse                                        very diverse

   1...........2...........3...........4...........5

8. What percentage of your neighborhood was:

   Hispanic or Latino                                  ______
   Black or African American                           ______
   Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander           ______
   White, Caucasian (not Hispanic)                    ______
   Native American                                    ______
   Mixed, Multiracial                                  ______
   Other (specify: ______________________)             ______
APPENDIX E

MULTIGROUP ETHNIC IDENTITY MEASURE
You have been selected to participate in this study either because you have identified as multiracial and/or multiethnic or because you have identified your parents as belonging to two or more different racial/ethnic groups. For the following questionnaires, please read each statement and respond based on how you identify yourself racially/ethnically.

1. My race is (circle the number that most applies)
   (1) Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
   (2) Black or African American
   (3) Hispanic or Latino (specify group: _____________________________)
   (4) White, Caucasian (not Hispanic)
   (5) American Indian
   (6) Mixed, Biracial, Multiracial; parents are from two or more different groups (specify: _____________________________)
   (7) Other (write in): _____________________________

2. My father's race is (use numbers above; if #6 please specify) _____________________________

3. My mother's race is (use numbers above; if #6 please specify) _____________________________

Please circle the number on the scale below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. For instance, if you feel that you have spent time trying to find out about both parents' racial groups, you would circle a "4" under your mother's and father's racial group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mother's Racial Group</th>
<th>Father's Racial Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group(s), such as its/their history, traditions, and customs.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group(s).</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it/they mean(s) for me.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by membership in my ethnic group(s).</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am happy that I am a member of the group(s) I belong to.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>(Mother's Racial Group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group(s).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group(s).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I understand pretty well what membership in my ethnic group(s) means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group(s) and other groups.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group(s).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group(s) and its/their accomplishments.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group(s), such as special food, music, or customs.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I feel a strong attachment towards the ethnic group(s) of which I am a part.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background(s).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please read each statement and indicate how much you agree or disagree, using the following scale:

   strongly agree (1)  ...  agree (2)  ...  disagree (3)  ...  strongly disagree (4)

___  1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
___  2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
___  3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
___  4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
___  5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
___  6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
___  7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
___  8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
___  9. I certainly feel useless at times.
___ 10. At times I think I am no good at all.
APPENDIX G

WAYS OF COPING QUESTIONNAIRE
To respond to the statements in this questionnaire, you must have a specific, particularly stressful situation in mind. Take a few moments and think about a recent stressful event when you felt rejected due to some aspect of your dual heritage or multiracial/ethnic identity.

By "stressful" we mean a situation that was difficult or troubling for you, either because you felt distressed about what happened or because you had to use considerable effort to deal with the situation. Before responding to the statements, think about the details of this stressful situation, such as where it happened, who was involved, how you acted, and why it was important to you.

1. How long ago did this event take place: ______________

2. In a few words, describe the stressful situation:

As you respond to the following statements, please keep this stressful situation in mind. For each statement indicate by choosing a 0, 1, 2, or 3, to what extent you used it in the stressful situation.

0 = Does not apply or not used  
1 = Used somewhat  
2 = Used quite a bit  
3 = Used a great deal

_____ 1. I just concentrated on what I had to do next -- the next step.

_____ 2. I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better.

_____ 3. I turned to work on another activity to take my mind off things.

_____ 4. I felt that time would make a difference -- the only thing was to wait.

_____ 5. I bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.

_____ 6. I did something that I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something.

_____ 7. I tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mood.

_____ 8. I talked to someone to find out more about the situation.

_____ 9. I criticized or lectured myself.

_____ 10. I tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat.

_____ 11. I hoped for a miracle.

_____ 12. I went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck.

_____ 13. I went on as if nothing had happened.
0 = Does not apply or not used  
1 = Used somewhat  
2 = Used quite a bit  
3 = Used a great deal

____ 14. I tried to keep my feelings to myself.

____ 15. I looked for the silver lining, so to speak; I tried to look on the bright side of things.

____ 16. I slept more than usual.

____ 17. I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem.

____ 18. I accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.

____ 19. I told myself things that helped me feel better.

____ 20. I was inspired to do something creative about the problem.

____ 21. I tried to forget the whole thing.

____ 22. I got professional help.

____ 23. I changed or grew as a person.

____ 24. I waited to see what would happen before doing anything.

____ 25. I apologized or did something to make up.

____ 26. I made a plan of action and followed it.

____ 27. I accepted the next best thing to what I wanted.

____ 28. I let my feelings out somehow.

____ 29. I realized that I had brought the problem on myself.

____ 30. I came out of the experience better than when I went in.

____ 31. I talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.

____ 32. I tried to get away from it for a while by resting or taking a vacation.

____ 33. I tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or medications, etc.

____ 34. I took a big chance or did something very risky to solve the problem.

____ 35. I tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.

____ 36. I found new faith.
0 = Does not apply or not used  1 = Used somewhat  2 = Used quite a bit  3 = Used a great deal

___ 37. I maintained my pride and kept a stiff upper lip.

___ 38. I rediscovered what is important in life.

___ 39. I changed something so things would turn out all right.

___ 40. I generally avoided being with people.

___ 41. I didn't let it get to me; I refused to think too much about it.

___ 42. I asked advice from a relative or friend I respected.

___ 43. I kept others from knowing how bad things were.

___ 44. I made light of the situation; I refused to get too serious about it.

___ 45. I talked to someone about how I was feeling.

___ 46. I stood my ground and fought for what I wanted.

___ 47. I took it out on other people.

___ 48. I drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.

___ 49. I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work.

___ 50. I refused to believe that it had happened.

___ 51. I promised myself that things would be different next time.

___ 52. I came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.

___ 53. I accepted the situation, since nothing could be done.

___ 54. I tried to keep my feeling about the problem from interfering with other things.

___ 55. I wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt.

___ 56. I changed something about myself.

___ 57. I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in.

___ 58. I wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.

___ 59. I had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.

___ 60. I prayed.
0 = Does not apply or not used   1 = Used somewhat   2 = Used quite a bit   3 = Used a great deal

___ 61. I prepared myself for the worst.

___ 62. I went over in my mind what I would say or do.

___ 63. I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation and used that as a model.

___ 64. I tried to see things from the other person's point of view.

___ 65. I reminded myself how much worse things could be.

___ 66. I jogged or exercised.

Please rate by circling 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 the overall stress level of the situation about which you were thinking:

not at all stressful

1..........................2..........................3..........................4..........................5

extremely stressful
APPENDIX H

RACIAL LEGITIMACY TESTING
Please read each statement and indicate how much you agree or disagree, using the following scale:

strongly agree (1) ... agree (2) ... somewhat agree (3) ... somewhat disagree (4) ... disagree (5) ... strongly disagree (6)

Place a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 to the left of the statement.

_____ 1. I have felt discriminated against or rejected due to my appearance (e.g., skin tone, facial features) by members of one or both of my ethnic groups.

_____ 2. I have at times felt like an imposter when I have tried to fit in/gain acceptance from one or both of my ethnic groups.

_____ 3. I have felt a lack of acceptance from one or both of my ethnic groups.

_____ 4. I have felt like I didn't belong to one or both of my ethnic groups due to some aspect of my multiracial heritage.

_____ 5. I have felt like I did not have an "ethnic" enough name to be perceived as a legitimate member of one or both ethnic groups.

_____ 6. My lack of knowledge of a language other than English has interfered with my ability to feel accepted by one or both of my ethnic groups.

_____ 7. I have found it hard to feel like I belong to both of my ethnic groups.

_____ 8. One or both of my ethnic groups has/have accepted me less because of the region in which I grew up.
APPENDIX I

FAMILY SUPPORT OF MULTIRACIALITY
Please read each statement and indicate how much you agree or disagree, using the following scale:

strongly agree (1) ... agree (2) ... disagree (3) ... strongly disagree (4)

_____ 1. My family has been accepting of both/all my ethnic heritages.

_____ 2. In my family, we have talked about the positive aspects of being multiracial.

_____ 3. My parents have encouraged me, either directly or indirectly, to choose one racial/ethnic identity over the other.

_____ 4. I have learned healthy ways of coping with societal discrimination/racism from my family.

_____ 5. In my family, there has been little communication about racial and ethnic experiences.

_____ 6. My family has been supportive of my multiracial heritage.

7. Circle the number on the scale below to indicate how satisfied are you overall with the amount of emotional support you have received from your family with respect to your racial/ethnic identity.

very dissatisfied  dissatisfied  moderately dissatisfied  moderately satisfied  satisfied  very satisfied

1...................2...................3..........................4....................5...............6
APPENDIX J

SOCIAL SUPPORT RATING SCALE
There may be people in your life who provide you with caring and emotional support. These are people whom you can count on to care about you, regardless of what is happening to you, and who accept you totally, including your good and bad points. They are ready to help and support you when you are upset, and they are genuinely concerned about your feelings and welfare.

Please rate each of the family members below in terms of how helpful they would be in providing you with caring and emotional support if you needed it.

Circle the appropriate number to indicate your rating. Place an X to indicate family who are not part of your social network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Do not have or rarely see</th>
<th>Not at all helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Father</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Step-father</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Step-mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Brothers, Sisters</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cousins</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Aunts, Uncles</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Grandparents</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Spouse</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Other family (specify: ____________)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Overall, how satisfied are you with the amount of caring and emotional support you receive from the family members listed above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. In general, when the occasion arises, are you the type of person who turns to others for caring and emotional support?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
The purpose of this study is to investigate the racial identity development of individuals who have parents from two or more different racial heritages. Some of these individuals may identify themselves as biracial or multiracial, and others may not. It is hoped that this study will help us learn more about some of the experiences that may characterize the racial identity development of multiracial individuals.

Specifically, we hope to learn how feeling like you sometimes don't belong to a specific ethnic group affects self-esteem and the ways you label yourself. We also hope to learn more about ways in which participants have coped with stressful situations in which they experienced some form of racial discrimination. You were asked about your family because we wanted to examine the role of family support with respect to being biracial in developing a sense of belonging to one or more racial/ethnic groups. It is also believed that family support may serve as a buffer against stressful experiences such as discrimination. We hope that this study will help us develop a better understanding of these relationships. This research is being conducted by Jessica Adams under the supervision of Dr. Don Dell, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in the Department of Psychology at The Ohio State University.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please call Jessica Adams collect at (409)821-6266. If the process of participating in this study has led you to become more interested in the topic of multiracial/multiethnic development and related topics, a good resource is: Racially mixed people in America (1992), M.P.P. Root (Ed.), Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. If your participation has brought up any difficult feelings or experiences, you may want to meet with a counselor either at your institution or in your community for additional support. The drawing for the two $50 U.S. Savings Bonds will take place after all participation has been completed, at which time the winners will be notified.