



Exploring raceless identity as an additional protective factor in promoting individual resilience: "Resilience patterns in British ethnic minority youths"

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ABSTRACT

As resilience has gained momentum over the past few decades, little effort has been made to understanding the protective factors that are specific to the needs of disadvantaged minority ethnic groups that are considered at risk. This study sought to determine firstly, if the ethnic social identity type developed by Black minority youths act as a protective factor that help promote resilience – using educational involvement as an indicative measure for resilience. This study also examined the claim that the ethnic identity type developed by Black male youths can precipitate psychological problems. Empirical evidence and relevant theories of identity development reviewed in the current paper suggests that links exist between ethnic social identity type and educational involvement. As such, it was concluded that the ethnic social identity type developed by British Black male youths can act as a protective factor in a manner that promote better resilience. The evidence reviewed also indicated a potential link between social identity development and the risk of development of psychological problems among British Black male youths. Indications for further studies were also discussed.

KEY WORDS:	RESILIENCE	RACIAL IDENTITY	EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT	SOCIAL IDENTITY	ETHNIC IDENTITY
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1.0. Introduction

Psychology as a discipline is one dominated by a focus on psychopathology. However, the writer, through his undergraduate study has become increasingly drawn to and enthused by theories of resilience due to its focus on delineating factors that promote the health and wellbeing of human individuals. Whilst resilience acknowledges that a link exists between environmental risks and challenges faced by vulnerable individuals and the development of behavioural and psychopathological problems, its focus however is not on the problems precipitated by such risks and challenges, but rather on understanding variations in how different individuals respond when exposed to such risks and adversities. While some individuals manage to overcome adverse influences and mature into well adapted individuals, others are not so lucky. It is this latter group of individuals that are of major interest and focus in resilience studies. Resilience helps to illuminate the types of experiences, conditions, qualities and characteristics which enable resilient vulnerable individuals to successfully withstand the potentially debilitating effects of exposure to risks and adversity. Such an understanding would help improve better chances of normal and successful adaptation in other more vulnerable individuals.

On a more sobering note, however, as resilience studies have burgeoned over the last six decades, major works in the field appears to assume that accepted findings are cross-cultural (Werner & Smith 2001). The writer's thesis as a member of an ethnic minority group is that this view is inaccurate as it presupposes social hegemony. This assertion is based on the writer's opinion that ethnic minority groups, particularly 'Black youths' living in Britain, face experiences and challenges specific to their ethnic groups which render them to become more susceptible to psychological difficulties and chronic under-achievement, particularly when compared to the majority population. It is the writer's view that resilience theories appear to by-pass or indeed underestimate the effects of such additional challenges faced by Black youths, making the claim of cross-cultural applicability rather misguided. The literature that follows will summarise and explore:

- The four primary phases and propositions of resilience research to date, which are assumed to be 'cross-cultural'.
- The circumstances, experiences and challenges which are specific to minority ethnic Black males which have the potential to constrain their development and which appear to be by-passed by resilience theories.
- How the social identity of ethnic minority Blacks may or may not be a factor in resilience.
- The reasons why it is appropriate to explore the links and or relationship between racial and raceless identity, and participation in higher education (seen as one of the major measures for illustrating resilience).

2.0. Review of literature.

2.1 Resilience: Definitions

A great deal of ambiguity exists in defining resilience which means that there is no universally acceptable definition of the concept (Richman & Bowen, 1997). The common definitions and themes appear to be: unusually good adaptation (Beardslee, 1989), the ability to develop positive adaptation despite facing negative environmental challenges, disadvantage, or stress, which has the potential to lead to behavioural and psychological difficulties (Luthar & Zigler, 1991), good coping abilities under adverse conditions (Werner, 1995), *“positive adaptation during or following exposure to adversities that have the potential to harm development”* (Masten, 2007, p.923). For more definitions, see, (Rutter, 1987; Gordon, 1995; Luthar et al., 1991; Smith & Prior, 1995; Zunz, Turner, & Norman, 1993). A definition that best encapsulates the common theme across all the definitions is one provided by Garmezy (1991), which highlights the qualities of resilience as the ability to rebound, recoil, spring back, or successfully recover from adversity. It is important to highlight that most of the difficulties involved in defining resilience surrounds the inherently inferential nature of the concept as it depends on identifying adaptive functioning in relation to conditions of risk. All the definitions above highlight two essential elements required in order to be considered resilient: adversity and subsequent successful adaptation despite adversity.

2.2 Resilience: The Four Phases

As the discipline of psychology is majorly interested in the aetiology of psychopathology, it is no great surprise to learn that the study of resilience emerged from the same confluence of forces that gave rise to developmental psychopathology in the 1960's and 1970's (Masten, 2007; Luthar, 2006; Obradovic & Masten, 2007). With deeply developmental orientations, early pioneers of resilience research like Emmy Werner, Norman Garmezy, Ann Masten, and Michael Rutter, set out on a mission to understand the aetiology of mental illness and other major threats (divorce, premature birth, poverty, domestic or neighbourhood violence, and parental psychopathology or illness) to human development (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Luthar, 2006). They embarked on prospective longitudinal studies of young people they believed to be at high risk of maladaptive development and soon made an unexpected observation. They discovered that some of the children they studied were able to develop positive adaptation despite all the odds stacked against them. It was this common observation among the researchers that positive adaptation was possible despite exposure to risks which inspired the first generation / phase of resilience research. The investigators recognised the significance of such unexpected outcomes for future intervention and development of scientific theory (Garmezy, 1971; Werner & Smith, 1982; Anthony, 1974; Murphy & Moriaty, 1976; Rutter, 1979; Masten, 1989). Put simply, if a group exposed to risks and adversities develop well despite the potential threat posed to their development, it is a natural question to ask how and why some and not others? Rutter (1979) indicated this by arguing that *“many children do not succumb to the effects of deprivation, and it is important that we determine why this is so and what it is that protects them from the hazards they face”* (p.70).

The first phase of resilience research helped challenge early ideas of resilience, risk and vulnerability which encompassed biological levels of consideration that saw successful high-risk individuals judged as possessing extra-ordinary abilities. Early resilience publications described such individuals as ‘invulnerable’ and ‘stress-resistant’. Using behavioural methods, the first phase focused on finding ways of measuring the phenomenon of resilience in different forms and situations to help identify possible correlates of resilience (Masten & Obradovic, 2006). Identifying correlates of resilience requires translating a definitional concept of resilience into operation, an issue that generated considerable debate and controversy and continues to do so to date (Luthar, 2006; Curtis & Cicchetti, 2003). However, some correlates of resilience have appeared with striking regularity in findings from diverse literature. These can be grouped into; positive behaviours and developmental tasks. Positive behaviours include things like the presence in an individual of social and academic achievement, happiness or life satisfaction, the absence of mental illness, emotional distress, risk-taking behaviours or criminality. Developmental tasks, basically refers to the attainment of certain social and or cultural developmental milestones that are believed to guide socialisation practices. Although they are believed to vary from one culture to the next, it is argued that they are generally broad tasks which are widely shared across cultures (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009). Examples include: obeying instructions, getting along with other children, following rules at school, home, and community at large, successful graduation from school, gaining necessary occupational skills necessary to gain employment and so on (Elder, 1998; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

The second phase was focused on identifying critical elements in the development of resilience by attempting to identify general predictors of positive outcomes (protective-factors) that could predict positive adaptive development in a consistent manner and across different levels of risks. It was argued that while these processes, like attachment type, good learning skills and family interaction, might predict better outcomes generally, they seem to appear to be extremely potent under certain conditions of higher risks (Masten & Schaffer, 2006; Davies & Cummings, 2006). Other studies looked at the human self regulating system for emotion, attention behaviour, and arousal as potential protective moderators of risks and adversity (Cicchetti & Curtis, 2006; Rothbart & Bates, 2006).

While the third wave focused on direct application of resilience ideas gathered from the first and second wave through prevention and intervention programmes (see Cicchetti, Rappaport, Sandler & Weissberg, 2000; Wang & Gordon, 1994), the fourth wave generated interest in multi-level analysis of resilience variables, raising questions about how to define positive adaptation at different levels. (See Nelson, 1999; Romer & Walker, 2007; & Dahl & Spear, 2004). A detailed discussion of these levels is beyond the scope and purpose of the current paper. For a more in-depth and historical review of resilience see Masten (2007).

Of major interest in this current paper is the underlying assertion of resilience theories. Theories of resilience suggest that measures which have been used to assess potential protective moderators of risks, positive adaptation and good developmental outcomes are “...*widely shared across cultures...*” (Masten et al., 2009, p.3). It is the writer’s

opinion that such a view is inaccurate, especially when the experiences of Black ethnic minority youths living in Britain are considered. Although the body of research on resilience has grown significantly over the last sixty years, very little of the literature regarding resilience has been influenced by the perspectives of those outside Western Eurocentric cultures. Most if not all resilience studies to date have relied wholly on data based on the normative values of western middle class white homes and families in defining positive adaptation and good developmental outcome (Howard, 2000). This view is supported by Garmezy (1991), who expressed a similar concern by indicating, that resilience investigations in disadvantaged ethnic minority youths have been wholly ignored by resilience investigators. Even though youths from ethnic minority groups appear to be at more risk of multiple psychosocial problems, few studies have investigated resilience patterns within this group (Luthar, Doernberger, & Zigler, 1993; Brookes, 1994).

2.3 *Experiences of minority ethnic groups*

An essential element in describing an individual or group as vulnerable is their exposure to risk factors (Rutter, 1993). The presence of risk factors potentially increases the likelihood of maladaptive development in individuals or groups (Grizenko & Pawliuk, 1994). This study conceptualises a Black ethnic minority youth living in Britain as being 'at risk'. Typical measures of good outcome in studies of resilient youths assess: "academic achievement (grades and test scores, staying in school, graduating from high school); peer acceptance and friendship and so on as resilience indicators. The results of a research carried out by REACH, in (2007), – (an independent group commissioned by the government with a focus on raising the aspirations and achievement of young Black men), concluded amongst other things that, *"Black boys are among the least likely to obtain 5 A* to C GCSEs, good A' levels, and entry to the more established universities. They are also (at least) three times more likely than other groups to be excluded from school"*. A similar view was also expressed in the results of a research carried out by the UK Department for Education and Skills in (2006), titled *"Ethnicity and Education"*. The conclusion was that, minority ethnic pupils are more likely to experience deprivation than White British pupils and continue consistently to perform below the average for pupils on every scale of the foundation stage profile.

These damning conclusions clearly represent a high risk for ethnic minority youths living in Britain (particularly Black males), as educational attributes and success are important in securing adult employment and also associated with adult health and well being. Potential educational failure can have serious long term social and individual consequences for Black youths (Bynner, Butler, Ferri, Shephard, & Smith 2000; Keating & Hertzman, 1999). Other studies have also expressed similar views, Rutter (1979), explained that educational resilience appears to have a protective effect on children, while, Peng, Lee, Wang, & Walberg (1992), concluded that resilient students had greater educational aspirations than did non-resilient students.

There are many more examples of Black male underachievement than word restrictions within this dissertation would allow. However, it is not Black male youth underachievement that is the focus of the current paper, but rather, the need to delineate the factors that contribute to the disproportionate underachievement of Black

youths. Another area of particular interest in the current paper is to investigate how successful Black male youths are able to achieve by considering evidence available in social identity and developmental theories.

2.4 *Social Identity*

It is the writer's view that for so long, resilience research has focused attention on individuals in 'at risk' contexts, while spurning advances and or extending questions to social groups who can be demonstrated as 'at risk' in a different form. By its focus on protective factors within the individual or in the social context, resilience research seems to bypass the role played by social identification to specific groups when it comes to deciding the cross-cultural applicability of accepted findings. The writer expresses the view that there exist needs for additional research to help provide a better understanding of protective factors that are unique to the needs of specific groups, particularly Black ethnic minority populations.

An individual's social identity provides him or her with status that can enhance (or not) his or her sense of self-esteem. Social identity in this sense can powerfully predict psychopathology or positive human adaptation (Howard, 2000). Black male youths are believed to undergo a complicated and challenging process of identity formation when compared with the majority population (Phinney, 1990; Bee & Boyd, 2010). This has been mostly attributed to the disproportionate levels of negative social experiences that Black youths are exposed to. Does this, therefore, imply a link between Black male underachievement and their ethnicity? What does the difficult process of identity development highlight with regards to why Black minority youths might underachieve when compared with youths from the majority population?

All children during their elementary years possess a general tendency to identify or describe their self-qualities as positive no matter what context they are in (Harter, 2006b). As they get older, self definition becomes more complex and comparative to include both positive and negative elements (Eccles & Roeser, 2005) as focus shifts to feelings and ideas. It is argued that the beliefs children develop during this early process of self assessment play an important role in the development of a positive (or not) self-concept, strong (or not) sense of academic self-efficacy, and positive (or not) mature sense of self and social identity. It is important to understand how the early beliefs developed by Black minority children through comparative self-assessment with children from the majority population might affect their academic self efficacy. This is of particular importance in the current paper as such an understanding can provide insight into why Black minority ethnic youths underachieve in education, particularly considering that educational attributes and success are highly regarded as important in securing adult employment and also argued to be associated with adult health and well being.

Academic self-concept is believed to evolve from internal comparisons of one's performance to a self-generated ideal that is based on external comparisons to peer performance (Bong, 1998). This is very important as it suggests that Black males compare their performance to a self generated ideal based on the performance of peers. As Black males are a minority group in Britain, it is assumed that their peers would be mostly from the majority population (except in cases of all Black school), and as Black

males underachieve in comparison with the majority population, such self comparisons are likely to result in the potential development of a weak academic self-concept. Self-concept is argued to be hierarchical, particularly in adolescence, as perceived competency in one domain affects teenager's feelings about ability in other areas.

According to (Marcia, 2002 cited in Bee & Boyd, 2010), all adolescents go through two key stages in the process of developing identity: a period of '*Crisis*' – which is believed to be characterised by some sort of upheaval. This is often a decision-making period where old choices' and earlier acquired values that have previously served the adolescents through their early periods of childhood become re-examined and or re-evaluated. Marcia argues that the outcome of this evaluation phase leads to the second stage which is '*Commitment*'. It is during this second period that adolescents are believed to begin to commit to some particular ideologies. Although Marcia assumes that this difficult period of crisis before commitment is both normal and healthy in all adolescents, the negative stereotypes that exist about Blacks often mean that the crisis period tends to be more highlighted and exaggerated among Black youths, with potential detrimental consequences for their psychological functioning.

Phinney (1990) suggested that the process of developing a complete ethnic identity moves through three rough stages during adolescence. The first stage is a period of unexamined identity. This refers to common negative images and stereotypes that exist in the wider culture about a specific minority ethnic group (in the case of this paper, Black minority ethnic group). As Black male adolescents grow older, their cognitive ability to reason, reflect, and interpret situations increase and they start to become keenly aware of the negative stereotypes associated with their proximal ethnic group and how they are perceived by the majority population (Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

The next stage is an exploration stage which is believed to be triggered by experiences that make one's ethnicity become relevant. As Simon & Hastedt (1999) noted, being a part of a numerical minority does not often lead to identification unless the in-group – out-group categorisation is situationally meaningful. Tajfel's (1970) minimal group paradigm provides an explanation for why there is often a reluctance to identify with minimal / minority groups. Examples of experiences that could bring ethnic identification to the cognitive foreground of Black youths can be blatant prejudice or experience offered at school. Evidence indicates that even teacher's perceptions and evaluations are influenced by the negative stereotypes that exist about Blacks. They use comparative judgements based on fixed standards or norms which favour the majority population, rather than making comparisons based on effort and work habits (Rosenthal, 1994). Teachers tend to perceive Black students as automatically low ability and disruptive agitators, expect less from them and offer them less encouragement than the other students (REACH, 2007). It is at this stage that Black youths are believed to start to arrive at personal judgements. It is hardly surprising that Black youths live up to the lack of expectation of their teachers through fulfilling a self-fulfilling prophecy of underachievement (REACH, 2007). The types of personal judgements that Black males make can potentially lead to the development of a weak academic self-concept, and as evident in literature, teens with weak academic self concept are more likely to get into

trouble in school than those with more confidence in their ability to succeed academically. They are also more likely to be expelled from school due to their non-conforming behaviours (Piesco, Wristers, Swank, Silva, & Baker, 2001). The REACH report (2007) cited low expectations from teachers as a key contributor to the underachievement of Black boys and men.

According to Phinney (1990), the third stage is often a difficult process for Black youths as they are by this time aware of the devalued nature of their social group and become involved in a process of resolution of conflicts and contradictions. By this stage, Black youths are aware of what Miller (2002) refer to as 'home grown stereotypes' this is a form of 'unwritten code' of how Black youths are supposed to present themselves to other members of the same in-group. This fosters a sense of some form of collective identity, with beliefs and values that are at variance with those of members of the out-group. The development of ethnic identity requires Black youths to self-identify and be committed to the group values and attitudes. According to Phinney (1990), some minority youths come to learn that in order to continue to be accepted as a member of a minority in-group, they must act in a certain way towards members of the out-group, in other words they develop a form of a collective social ethnic identity to differentiate them from the out-group.

Tajfel (1978), defined social identity as *“that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of his or her membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”* (p.63). However, from an evolutionary point of view, we are motivated to evaluate ourselves positively, and therefore are more likely to locate ourselves as members of collective categories on the basis of positive and personally important aspects of ourselves (Simon et al., 1999). According to Howard (2000), this demonstrates a relationship between categorisation and evaluation that points towards more successful attainment of a positive social identity for members of dominant social groups. *“This process is a challenge for members of stigmatised, negatively valued groups, who may attempt to dissociate themselves, to evaluate the distinguishing dimensions of in-groups as less negative, to rate their in-group as more favourable on other dimensions, or to compete directly with the out-group to produce changes in the status of the groups”* (p.369).

It is this multi-dimensional nature of identity development in Black youths that the writer argues is by-passed by theories of resilience. Tajfel’s definition has prompted attempts to represent three component measures of social identity; awareness of group membership; group evaluation; and the emotional aspects of belonging (Brown, Condor, Mathew, Wade, & Williams, 1986; Hinkle, Taylor, Fox-Cardamone, & Crook, 1989; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson, 2002). Cameron (2004) proposed that social identity can be represented in terms of three factors; Centrality – referring to how strongly one is ready to perceive and act in terms of their social category based on the salience of their social categorisation (Oakes, 1987; Gurin & Markus, 1989; In-group affect – which is an evaluative facet of social identity, referring to specific emotion (being glad or regretful) that arise from group membership; and In-group-Ties – concerning psychological ties that binds the self to an in-group (Phinney, 1992, Hinkle et al., 1989; Brown et al., 1986, Cameron & Lalonde, 2001).

The remaining parts of this literature review explore a relevant line of research that has attempted to explore the psychological consequences of identification with ethnic in- and out- groups and how social identity can affect academic success and involvement in Black minority ethnic youths.

2.5. The relationship between Racial / Raceless identity and educational involvement.

Turning from general literature regarding issues of social identification to how the social identity of Black minority youths might act as a protective factor (or not) in combating the negative stereotypes associated with Blacks and promoting better educational success, it soon becomes evident how little is known about factors that promote resilience in Black minority youths.

A relevant line of research that has explored the psychological consequence of social identification in promoting (or not) resilience in Black Minority youths have suggested that academic underachievement among Blacks represents a desire to maintain their racial identity and solidarity with their own culture. Fordham & Ogbu (1986) help provide insight into the relationship between the social identity of Black male youths and potential educational success (or not). They highlight the manner in which ethnic identification can influence behaviour and psychological state. Fordham and Ogbu associate educational underachievement among Black youths with the negative stigma, marginality, and discrimination they experience. They argue that, the cultural discontinuities that exists between Blacks and the institutionalised structure of schools which tended to value the cultural norms of the mainstream middle class majority more, creates an environment that potentially allows for Black youths underachievement, leading them to view academic involvement as futile. According to Fordham and Ogbu (1986), Black youths may subsequently interpret educational underachievement as a form of personal identification and begin to see failure as a way of demonstrating their distinctiveness from the dominant majority culture.

Conversely, ethnic minority youths who are high achievers educationally, potentially employ a strategy of minimising their relationship to their racial community in order to avoid the stigma and negative stereotypes attached to them. They are argued to sometimes regret being Black and adopt a raceless persona in order to pursue academic success and upward socioeconomic mobility (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988; 1996). Although this view is consistent with some of the identified coping skills of resilient children (the ability to distance themselves from family or friends in order to accomplish constructive goals, Cowen & Work, 1988), the adoption of raceless behaviours or and or attitudes have been argued to have negative psychological consequences as these high-achieving Black youths become alienated by their peers as they are accused of 'acting white'. This results in increased feelings of depression, anxiety, and identity confusion. However, going by the results of personality studies using mixed ethnic samples of adolescent boys (Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996), those with resilient personality profiles are described as self-confident, assertive, personable and verbally expressive, all characteristics that are believed to lead to educational success and significantly minimise psychopathology. If the notion that racelessness promotes resilience as proposed by Fordham & Ogbu is to be taken seriously, then Black youths with raceless profiles should be less likely to be

delinquent, and relatively free of psychopathology in addition to achieving educational success.

The results from a series of studies that have explored the relationship between racelessness, educational achievement, and psychological functioning within the framework of the racelessness construct proposed by Fordham and his colleagues have not produced results that indicate that racelessness acts in a way that promotes the resilience pattern of black youths, particularly in the area of educational achievement, or involvement. These studies posit that it is actually the development of a strong racial identity that helps to promote educational success in Black youths (e.g., Weinberg, 1977, Anderson, 1988, Edwards & Polite, 1992). According to Hemmings (1988), a strong racial identity also leads to fewer psychological problems in Black youths. Bowman & Howard (1985) argued that the development of a positive racial identity and the awareness of stigma and negative stereotypes associated with being Black, contributes to a positive achievement ethos among Blacks. The injustices that Black youths perceive to exist against their ethnic group leads them to identify a collective struggle which motivate them to continue to excel (Sanders, 1997).

In a study by Miller & Macintosh (1999), which looked at resilience and protective factors among 131 minority African adolescents, they concluded that ethnic identity has a protective function as it enables Blacks to maintain positive school achievement & psychological health (also see; Sanders, 1997; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003).

In another study by Arroyo & Zigler (1995), which explored the relation between racial identity and personal psychological functioning and academic success, it was concluded that, the behaviour and attitudes described by the racelessness construct of Fordham & Ogbu (1986), are not specific to minority ethnic groups but to high-achieving adolescents cross-culturally. However, results from the study did indicate that racelessness may have important psychological consequences for minority African American adolescents.

The results from a recent study by Harris & Marsh (2010), which sought to determine whether blacks with a raceless identity have better educational outcomes than blacks who do not have a raceless identity concluded that racelessness was not an effective strategy for achieving favourable academic outcomes for Black youths. And that Black youths with strong connections to their race fare better than raceless youths. The findings from this study also highlighted several key points that strongly questioned the underlying arguments for the racelessness construct. The researchers reported that, Blacks who are happy to be Blacks, value school and are less detached than those who are not happy to be Black. Finally, the researchers reported that Blacks with strong feelings of shared fate with their proximal ethnic group have high educational aspirations and are less detached from school.

However, while there are several studies that provide possible explanations for the patterns reported above about the protective nature of a strong racial identity for Black youths (McCreary, Slavin, & Berry, 1996; Wong et al., 2003; Smith & Lalonde, 2003), an important point to note is that most if not all of the studies cited in this study were conducted in America. The writer is of the view that due to the devalued status of Blacks

in Britain and the subsequent educational-underachievement that is highlighted to be prevalent and characteristic of Black minority ethnic group in literature, British Black youths lack role models to aspire to. Most Black boys interviewed for the REACH report (2007) said that they would welcome lessons on Black achievers so that they could learn more about their cultural identity and history, take pride in it and have a broader spectrum of role models to look up to. The writer considers this to be of particular importance given the context that many Black boys were being brought up in single parent households with an absence of male role models within the family. According to Burke (2005), the lack of father figure in the lives of most Black youths means that there is a lack of masculine role models for Black male youths to aspire to.

The REACH report also reported the result of a survey of 400 young people encompassing all ethnic groups across London on role models. The results revealed that the majority of young people interviewed favoured role models who were everyday citizens over celebrities, with 97% of 12 to 16 year surveyed seeking positive influences from everyday, hard-working citizens, rather than famous people. When asked 'what is a role model', the most common answers by the young people surveyed were 'someone you look up to and respect' and 'someone who impacts your life in a positive way'. Most likely identified role models were businessmen, doctors, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and those who generally strive to succeed. Black male youth culture was argued to be epitomised by rap stars as role models, a group consistently reinforced with negative stereotypes in the media.

Evidence indicates that in areas where there are significant numbers of Black youth population, violence and crime tend to be very high. The Metropolitan police claim that Blacks constitute the largest groups of gangs particularly in areas like Hackney (east end of London) which possess a significant black population (BBC News, 2007). This raises the issue of whether or not developing a strong sense of racial identity or cognitive centrality (which makes black youths chronically readier to perceive and act in terms of their proximal ethnic group norms) in an area like Hackney is likely to predict positive outcomes (Gurin & Markus, 1989). Or is it likely that the weaker the psychological ties that binds black males to their proximal ethnic group in situations characterised by violence, crimes, and underachievement, the more likely the chance of a positive outcome as they release themselves to a broad range of role models to aspire to?

It is the need to address the opposing views that exist in literature of what social identity type best predict resilience and better educational involvement particularly in Black British male youths that is the main rationale for this current paper. Both racial and raceless identity has been argued to both possess attributes that can be linked theoretically to the notion of resilience, and thus positive psychosocial adaptation. The present study will test the hypothesis derived from Fordham's (1988; 1996) racelessness perspective with the aim of supporting or refuting in a sample of Black ethnic minority youths the claims that distancing one's self from a devalued social group can foster (or not) better educational-involvement and minimise (or not) reports of depressive experiences.

2.6. Hypothesis

Consistent with the arguments in the literature review, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: There will be a significant difference between the University and Non-University population in ethnic identity type, with the University population showing significantly weak or no ties towards being black than the Non-University populations. It is also hypothesised that the University population will significantly perceive and act less in terms of their social category, and show significantly less affect towards their ethnic group than the Non-University populations.

Null hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference between the University and Non-University population in ethnic identity type, with the University population showing no significantly weaker ties towards being black the Non-University populations. It is also hypothesised that, there will be no significant difference between both the University and the Non-University sample with regards to perception and identification with their ethnic group, and finally, there will be no significant difference between the University and Non-University population in affect towards their ethnic group.

As Fordham (1998) argues that Blacks who wish to pursue academic success distance themselves from their ethnic group, it would be expected that Black youths who have less ties, less affective feelings, and think less about their proximal ethnic group, would be associated with high academic involvement.

H2: There will be a significant difference between the University and Non-University population in reports of depressive experiences, with the University population reporting significantly more depressive experiences than the Non-University population.

Null hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference between the University and Non-University population in reports of depressive experiences, with the University population not reporting more depressive experiences than the Non-University population.

Arroyo and Zigler (1995) suggested that students who distance themselves from their proximal ethnic group to pursue educational success potentially risk psychological problems. This hypothesis helped to explore whether Blacks who achieve academic success by continued educational involvement, report more depressive experiences than Blacks with lower educational involvement.

H3: There will be a significant difference between the University and Non-University population in resilience profile, with the University population being more resilient than the Non-University population.

Null hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference between the University and Non-University population in resilience profile.

Cowen et al., (1988), argued that the ability to distance self from families and friends in order to accomplish constructive goals is a coping skill employed by resilient children, while Robins et al., (1996), posit that Black youths with resilient personality profile possess characteristics that foster educational success. This hypothesis explored whether Black male youths with raceless personality profiles are more resilient and possess qualities that foster better educational involvement than Black youths with strong sense of racial identity.

3 Methodology

3.1 Design, Variables, and instruments.

This study used a between Subjects quasi-experimental design to compare two distinct population samples

In other to test the first hypothesis, the difference between University and Non-University samples was explored on three measures of social identity to find out whether or not Racial or Raceless Identity in black ethnic minority male youths had an effect on their educational involvement. The Independent Variable (IV) was level of education. There were 2-levels of the IV: experience of university education; and no experience of University education. An 18-item scale of ethnically-derived social identification measure by Cameron, Sato, Lalonde, & Lay (1997) was used to measure social identity. The social identity scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .73. The scale comprised of three different subscales and sub-scale items, which acted as the indicator of how respondents felt about relationship with their proximal ethnic group. The Cronbach's alpha for the first subscale is .91 and consists of 6-subscale items which measure the level of in-group ties as reported by the respondents. The Cronbach's alpha for the second sub-scale is .95 and consist of 7-subscale items measuring respondent's cognitive centrality to their in-group. The third sub-scale has a cronbach's alpha of .87 and consists of 5-subscale items which measure the level of affect respondents reported having towards their in-group. All items on the 3-subscales were scored from 1 to 6, with 1 = strongly disagreeing with a scale item and 6 = strongly agreeing with a scale item. The literature posits that higher value on the subscales would indicate greater identification with an In-group (Cameron, 2004).

The Dependent Variable (DV) for this study was scores on the social identity questionnaire. There were 2-levels of the DV, which were: scores from the In-group ties subscale; the Centrality subscale scores; and the scores from the In-group affect subscale.

As two groups (University vs. Non-University population), were compared on a range of different characteristics, a Two-Way Multivariate Analysis Of Variance (MANOVA) was used to compare both groups in other to ascertain whether the mean differences between both population samples on the combination of the dependent variables occurred by chance or indeed indicative of an actual difference between both groups.

The second hypothesis explored if differences exist between University and Non-University samples in reports of depressive experiences. The IV was level of education. There were 2-levels of the IV: experience of university education; and no experience of university education. A 48-item scale Depressive Experiences Questionnaire (DEQ-R) developed by Santor & Coyne (1997) was used to measure reports of depressive experiences. The DEQ scale was based on an inverse matrix and therefore the Cronbach's alpha could not be computed. (The scoring routine code for the DEQ scale is attached in the appendix, titled Appendix vii). The scale items are scored from 1 to 7, with 1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

The literature posits two forms of depression – anaclitic and introjective. The version of the DEQ used is a revised version of the original by (Blatt, D'Aflitti, & Quinlan, 1976; 1979). Anaclitic depression is characterised by interpersonally oriented concerns. High scores on the anaclitic / dependency scale, express feelings of loneliness and a desire for love and acceptance. They attempt to ward off personal rejection by remaining sensitive to others behaviours (Luthar & Blatt, 1993). Introjective depression is characterised by feelings of ambivalence towards one's-self and others. They are self-critical and often with a sense of personal failure for not having achieved individual aspirations. Introjective depression has also been found to be associated with increased concerns about losing others approval (Luthar & Blatt, 1993).

The DV for this study was the DEQ scores. There were 2-levels of the DV, which were: Dependency scores; and Self-Critical scores.

A two-way MANOVA was used to explore the differences in reports of depressive experiences between both groups

The third hypothesis explored if differences exist in resilience between the University and Non-University samples. The IV for this study was level of education. There were 2-levels of the IV: Experience of university Education; and no Experience of University Education. A 26-item scale Resilience Questionnaire developed by (Wagnild & Young, 1993) was used to measure the resilience qualities of the respondents. The Resilience scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .84. The scale items are scored from 1 to 7, with 1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. The literature posits that higher scores on the resilience questionnaire imply a resilient personality profile characterised by self-confidence, assertiveness, and other qualities that are believed to foster better educational involvement.

The DV was the Resilience questionnaire scores.

An independent sample T-test was used to explore if an overall significant difference exist between the two population samples tested.

An additional multiple regression was carried out to address two further questions;

1. How well do the three measures of social identity (in-group ties, in-group affect, and centrality, affect the prediction of resilience in both population samples?

2. Which is the best predictor of resilience: in-group ties; centrality; or in-group affect?

3.2. *Participants*

A total of one hundred ethnic minority male youths participated in this study. Half of the samples were undergraduate students recruited from the campus of Bucks New University and made up the University experience population sample. The other half were recruited from the streets of High Wycombe town centre and made up the Non-University experience population sample. All the participants were males, with an average age of 22 years.

3.3. *Instruments*

The instruments that were used in the present study include:

- An 18-item scale of ethnically-derived social identification measure (Three-Factor Model) by Cameron et al., (1997). The scale draws items from existing measures of social identity, collective self-esteem, and other works that have been carried out on the social identity of ethnic minorities (Phinney, 1992; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Luthanen & Crocker (1992). See Hutnik (1991) for example of how the Three-Factor Model has been used by participants to select the most important identities from measures of spontaneous self-concept.
- A 48-item scale Depressive Experiences Questionnaire (DEQ) developed by Santor et al. (1997). When used with adults and adolescents, this scale has been shown to have adequate construct and discriminant validity (Luthar & Blatt, 1993; Blatt, Quinlan, Chevron, McDonald, & Zuroff, 1982).
- A 26-item scale Resilience Questionnaire developed by (Wagnild & Young, 1993).

These are all included in the appendix and titled appendix – i, ii, and iii respectively

4.0 . **Procedure**

A purposive sampling method was used to identify the hundred ethnic minority male youths who participated in this study. As the main focus of this study was to explore difference between 2 – distinct groups of ethnic minority black male youths, it was important that the entire sample comprise black male youths, and fit only one of the criteria for belonging to either of the population samples. Once a potential respondent was identified, their consent and agreement were obtained by the use of a consent form – attached in the appendix and titled appendix – IV. Once consent was obtained to participate from the respondent, they were given an information leaflet (attached in the appendix as appendix-V), which explained what they were expected to do. Once participants acknowledged affirmatively that they understood what they were expected to do, data were then collected through 3- questionnaires that were administered one

after the other. To minimize any potential confounding variables, the respondents were required to complete the questionnaires alone and without any assistance from a third party. Completed questionnaires were then collected and respondents thanked for offering their time to take part in the study. Every respondent who took part in the study were given a debrief form (attached in the appendix as, appendix –VI) which explained what the study was about. All respondents were further assured verbally, that their data was to be used solely for this study and that they would be destroyed once the study had been concluded.

4.1. Ethical considerations

As a member of an ethnic minority group, the writer was strongly aware of the potential for induced anxiety in the respondents due to the ethnically sensitive nature of this study. Although the writer happens to be a member of an ethnic minority group, there is the potential for respondents to feel intimidated as he could be viewed as a member of academia and an authority figure, an issue compounded with people's inherent suspicions about the true motives behind psychological research. It was hoped that by conducting the experiment in a calm and friendly manner and by the subsequent debrief and suggestions on where to find further support on issues to do with racism and further education for young people, which would be provided to participants after the experiment, they can be protected from any anxiety and other potential ethical issues that this research may raise.

5.0. Results

Table 1

This table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for both the University and the Non-University population samples using the Three-Factor Model social identity questionnaire.

	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
In-group-ties -- University	50	18.1	4.4
In-group-ties -- Non University	50	29.2	4.9
Centrality -- University	50	18.3	5.1
Centrality – Non University	50	33.1	6.5
In-group-affect – University	50	24.6	3.4
In-group-affect – Non University	50	15.6	4.6

N=100: Lower limit for in-group ties score is 17, the upper limit is 31

Lower limit for centrality score is 17, upper limit is 35

Lower limit for in-group affect scores is 15, upper limit is 26

The results from the above table would indicate a similar difference in the standard deviation scores between both population samples on the in-group ties subscale. (Average difference in scores from the mean on the in-group ties subscale). The variance was fractionally smaller for the University population (4.4) compared with the Non-University population (4.9). The table also suggests a large range in mean scores

between both populations on the In-group Ties subscale, with the mean scores for the University population being lower (18.1) compared to (29.2) for the Non-University population. The results indicate that the Non-University population had stronger in-group ties to their proximal ethnic group.

The table also reveals a moderate difference in the standard deviation scores between both population samples on the centrality subscale. The variance was smaller for the University population (5.1) compared with the Non-University population at (6.5). The table also suggest a significantly large range in mean scores between both population samples on this subscale, with the mean scores for the University population being lower (18.3) compared to (33.1) for the Non-University population. Based on the literature, the results from the table suggests, that the Non-University population sample would be more likely to possess a strong sense of racial identity and likely to be chronically readier to perceive and act in terms of their in-group.

The table also indicates a moderate difference in the standard deviation scores between both population samples on the in-group affect subscales. The variance was smaller for the University population (3.4) compared with the Non-University population at (4.6). Table 1 also indicate a large range in mean scores between both populations on the In-group affect subscale, with the mean scores for the University population being higher (24.6) compared to (15.6) for the Non-University population. Contrary to literature, the results from the table indicated that the University participant sample would be more likely to evaluate belonging to their proximal group more positively than the Non-university sample.

A two-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the difference between University and Non-university group based on social identity type. Three dependent variables were used: In-group Ties, Centrality, and In-group Affect scores. The independent variable was Educational-involvement.

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted except for the in-group-affect subscale that failed the homogeneity of variance test $<.05$ at .034. There was a statistically significant difference between the University and Non-University sample on the combined dependent variables $F(3, 96) = 60.25, p = .01$; Wilk's Lambda = .35; partial eta squared = .65. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, all three reached statistical significance: In-group Ties, $F(1, 98) = 145.6, P = .01$; Centrality, $F(1, 98) = 156.8, P = .01$;

In-group Affect, $F(1, 98) = 123.8, P = .01$.

Complete SPSS output for the above Two-way MANOVA attached in the appendix titled appendix VIII.

Table 2

This table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for both the University and the Non-University population samples using the Depressive Experiences questionnaire (DEQ).

	Number	Means	Standard Deviation
Self-Critical -- University	50	136.0	10.2
Self-Critical --Non-University	50	114.7	10.4
Dependency – University	50	485.5	74.3
Dependency –Non-University	50	701.1	90.1

N=100: Lower limit for self-critical score is 111.8, the upper limit is 138.9

Lower limit for dependency score is 462.3, upper limit is 724.4

The results from table 2 indicate a similar difference in the standard deviation scores between both population samples on the Self-Critical subscale. The variance was fractionally smaller for the University population (10.2) compared with the Non-University population (10.4). The table also suggests a large range in mean scores between both populations on the Self-Critical scale, with the mean scores for the University population being higher (136.0) compared to (114.7) for the Non-University population. The results would indicate that the University population reported more experiences of introjective depression.

Table 2 also indicate a larger difference in the standard deviation scores between both population samples on the dependency subscale. The variance was significantly larger for the Non-University sample (90.1) compared with the University sample (74.3). The table also suggest a large range in mean scores between both populations on the dependency scale, with the mean scores for the Non-University population being higher (701.1) compared to (485.5) for the University population. The results would indicate that the Non-University population reported more experiences of anaclitic depression.

A two-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the difference between University and Non-university group based on self-report of depressive experiences. Two dependent variables were used: Self-Criticism, and Dependency scores. The independent variable was Educational-involvement. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. There was a statistically significant difference between the University and Non-University sample on the combined dependent variables $F(2, 97) = 88.0, p = .01$; Wilk's Lambda = .36; partial eta squared = .65. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, all two reached statistical significance: Self-Criticism, $F = (1, 98) = 108.6, P = .01$; Dependency, $F = (1, 98) = 170.5, P = .01$.

Complete SPSS output for the above Two-way MANOVA attached in the appendix titled appendix IX.

Table 3

This table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for both the University and the Non-University population samples using the Resilience scale questionnaire.

	Number	Means	Standard Deviation
University	50	147	1.18
Non-University	50	129	1.09

N=100. Lower limit for resilience score is 14.8 upper limits is 21.2

The results from table 3 indicate an average difference in the standard deviation scores between both population samples on the scores from the resilience questionnaire. The variance was smaller for the Non-University population (1.09) compared with the University population (1.18). The table also indicate a large range in mean scores between both populations, with the mean scores for the University population being higher (147) compared to (129) for the Non-University population. The results would indicate that the University population appear to be more resilient than the Non-University population.

The results of an independent sample t-test to compare the resilience scores for the University and Non-University population indicated a significant difference in scores, $t(98) = 11.1$, $p = .01$ (one-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 18, 95% CI: 14 to 21) was average ($\eta^2 = 0.6$).

A complete SPSS output for the above independent sample t-test is attached in the appendix titled appendix X.

A multiple regression carried out to explore how well the three factor model (measures of social identity; in-group ties, centrality, and in-group affect), affect the prediction of resilience. The results from the regression model which included all three subscale measures of social identity was found to explain 72.2 percent of the variance in resilience between the University and the Non-University sample, indicating a strong positive correlation between the three measures of social identity and resilience.

$r = .722$, $n = 100$, $p < .0005$

The multiple regression was also used to explore which of the three measures of social identity best predicted resilience: in-group ties; centrality; or in-group affect. The results indicated that in-group affect made the largest unique contribution of 40 percent to predicting resilience when the other 2 variables; centrality, and in-group ties were controlled for ($\beta = .410$). This was found to be a statistically significant contribution;

$r = .410$, $n = 100$, $p = < .0005$.

According to the results, centrality was responsible for predicting 26 percent of resilience and only just reached a level of statistical significance;

$$r = .257, n = 100, p = .05$$

The results indicated that in-group ties did not make a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of resilience;

$$r = .232, n = 100, p = > .05$$

A complete SPSS output for the above multiple regression is attached in the appendix titled appendix XI.

6.0. Discussion

This study sort to determine whether the development of a raceless personality profile (achieved through the distancing of 'self' from a devalued and negatively stigmatised social group) can act as a protective factor in promoting resilience and better educational involvement in ethnic minority Black male youths living in Britain who are considered as at risk of educational underachievement. The current study specifically examined the effect of three measures of social identification (in-group ties, centrality, and in-group affect), in determining whether the connection British Black males have with their proximal ethnic group affect their level of educational involvement. This study also examined whether Black male youths with raceless persona living in Britain (that is, those who distance themselves from their ethnic group) report more psychological problems than those with a strong sense of racial identity - as measured by self reports of depressive experiences. Finally, as resilience is argued to foster better educational success, the personality profile of the Black youths who took part in this study was assessed in order to identify if Black youths with raceless personality profiles also possess strong resilient personality profiles. Of the two groups who took part in the experiment reported in this paper, the University sample were conceptualised as having better educational involvement than the Non-University sample due to the fact that they were either still in education or have had a longer period of continuous involvement in education than the Non-University group. The results showed several noteworthy findings.

The findings indicate racelessness to be an effective strategy for promoting better educational involvement among Black youths in the sample tested. Black youths in the University sample have less psychological ties that bind them to their racial ethnic group. They are also less ready to perceive and act in terms of their social category. This sort of distancing of the self from Black ethnic group by the University sample is consistent with Fordham & Ogbu's (2006) assertions that high achieving Black youths minimise their relationship with their racial community in order to avoid the stigma and negative stereotypes attached to them. These findings challenge the results of the research carried out by Harris & Marsh (2010) which asked the question of whether or not raceless identity was an effective strategy for academic success among blacks.

Their study concluded that racelessness is not an effective strategy for promoting success, and that it is the development of a strong sense of racial identity (that is, feelings of shared fate among Black youths) that is positively associated with higher educational aspirations and less detachment from education.

Another interesting finding from the current study was that the affective feelings of Black youths in the University sample towards their racial group, relate to the outcomes differently than is posited by both the racial and racelessness perspectives. For example, several studies that have found strong racial identity to be associated with better academic outcomes have argued that Black youths who are happy to be Black attribute more value to education and are less detached from education than those who are not (Sellers et al., 1988; Bowman & Howard, 1985; Harris & Marsh, 2010). Fordham and Ogbu (2006), also posit that the alienation that Black youths suffer from distancing themselves from their racial group leads to psychological problems that make them regret being Black. However, Fordham and her colleague argued that racelessness promotes better educational success among Black youths. The findings from this study show that Black youths in the University sample have stronger affective feelings for their racial group than the Non-University sample. Considering that the University sample in this study were shown to distance themselves from their racial group, this finding challenges current beliefs that Black youths with raceless personality regret being Black. Going by the findings reported here, of the strong affective feelings shown by Raceless Black male youths, it is plausible to argue that Black youths who distance themselves from their racial group in order to pursue academic success and upward socioeconomic mobility (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988; 1996) are more likely to be motivated to strive for success, considering that they are making a conscious effort to sacrifice relationships in order to achieve their goals. This is consistent with Cowen & Works assertions about the coping skills of resilient children (that is, their ability to distance themselves from family or friends in order to accomplish constructive goals). Considering that the results of this study indicate the University sample (conceptualised in the current study as having better educational success due to their continuous involvement in education) to have a raceless persona, it is plausible to argue that the educational success achieved by the raceless Black youths has a positive effect on their self-esteem that perhaps leads them to become proud of their Blackness as they see it as the motivating factor, the driving force that motivate them to strive for success. When looked at from this point of view, it is easy to understand Bowman & Howard (1985) arguments that awareness of the stigma and negative stereotypes associated with being Black contributes to a positive achievement ethos among Blacks. The writer expresses the view that it is perhaps the success associated with racelessness that lead Black youths to in-turn appreciate rather than regret being Black, in other words, racelessness can potentially lead to the development of a positive racial identity.

Conversely, for Black youths with strong sense of racial identity, Fordham & Ogbu (2006), argue that they are more likely to adopt behaviours that reinforce Black culture – a culture that negatively sanctions Black youths who attempt to perform well in school, accusing them of acting white. As Phinney (1990) argued, Black youths come to realise that in order to continue to be accepted as part of the Black ethnic in-group, they must

act in ways that differentiate them from the majority out-group. Based on this, one can argue that Black youths with strong sense of racial identity are more likely to underachieve educationally. Considering that Potential educational failure can have serious long term social and individual consequences for Black youths (Bynner, Butler, Ferri, Shephard, & Smith 2000; Keating & Hertzman, 1999), Black youths who underachieve educationally are more likely to regret being Black as they associate their lack of success to their Blackness and the fact that Blacks are always seen or expected to be less successful than the majority population.

The explanation for the patterns of results that have argued that a strong sense of racial identity fosters better educational success, posit that Black youths with strong sense of racial identity cope more successfully with stress, and have lower rates of participation in problem behaviours - characteristics that potentially promote educational success (McCreary et al., 1996). According to Smith et al., (2003), strong affinity among Blacks can be psychologically protective. These arguments are similar to those which argue that the adoption of raceless behaviours or attitudes by Black youths can have negative psychological consequences (Fordham & Ogbu, 2006; Arroyo & Zigler, 1995). The findings from the current study shows that Black Males with raceless persona had higher educational involvement, and did not report more psychological problems than Black Males with strong sense of racial identity. However, the raceless Black Males in the sample tested, reported more introjective forms of depressive experiences than non raceless Black males. This shows that they are more self critical in their self evaluations, and show increased concern about others approval (Luthar & Blatt, 1993). On the other hand, Black males with strong racial identity reported more anaclitic forms of depressive experiences than Raceless Blacks. This indicated that Blacks with strong connections with their racial group in the sample tested express more feelings of loneliness and desires for love and acceptance (Luthar & Blatt, 1993). What this shows is that, contrary to the assertions of prior studies, the development of a strong sense of shared fate among Black youths do not minimise psychological problems any more than the development of a raceless persona. Going by the conclusions from prior studies, it would be expected that Black youths with raceless persona in the sample tested will report more introjective and anaclitic forms of depressive experiences. However, what the results reported here shows is that, the types of psychological challenges faced by Black youths can differ, depending on their social ethnic identity type.

Another significant finding from the current study was that Black youths in the University sample who were indicated to have raceless persona, were also more resilient than the Non-University sample that were indicated to have a strong sense of racial identity. According to Robins et al., (1996), those with resilient personality are described as self confident, assertive, personable, and verbally expressive. It makes rational sense to assume that the possession of these resilient qualities by Raceless Black males in the sample tested in the current study would confer advantages that are likely to promote better educational involvement, and minimise psychopathology.

The affective feelings of Black youths in the sample tested were shown to be the best predictor of resilience ahead of psychological ties, and feelings of shared fate with other

Blacks. The University sample that were indicated as having raceless persona, also showed stronger affective feelings towards their racial group. This clearly highlights the important role played by racelessness in promoting resilience in Black minority ethnic youths. Racelessness, inspires confidence and encourage Black youths to become more assertive about their choices. The subsequent success inspired by racelessness in turn promotes a positive sense of racial identity as Black youths come to appreciate, be proud, and attribute their success to their Blackness.

7.0. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the need for further studies aimed at understanding protective factors that are unique to and promote resilience in Black ethnic minority youths living in Britain. This echoes a similar view by Garmezy (1991), who stated that investigations in disadvantaged ethnic minority youths have been wholly ignored by resilience investigators. The current study shows that cross-cultural applicability of resilience theories and accepted findings should be treated with great caution. The interconnected literature provided in the preceding literature review, helps to highlight the difficult developmental challenges that Black minority youths face in developing identity, how this affects the self-esteem they develop, and the subsequent link to underachievement (or not), particularly with regards to educational involvement. To assume that all children in a multicultural society like Britain will reach certain age related developmental milestones irrespective of cultural differences is naive and albeit unrealistic. This is more so when one considers that the values and norms from which these milestones are developed are based on the beliefs and values systems of the majority ethnic population.

Evidence gathered so far about ways of promoting resilience in Black males or Black youths in general, appear to be patchy and piecemeal. The current study used educational involvement in Black male youths living in Britain to help understand the underlying problems associated with educational under-achievement among Black youths and also to explore racelessness as a unique protective factor that can promote individual resilience in Black youths. While racelessness has not been presented in the study reported in this paper as a workable solution for Black male underachievement, it however, highlights the idea that dissociating from a social category that is devalued and devoid of positive role models (REACH, 2007), can promote better educational success. A lesson to be learnt from this study is that Black male youths living in Britain require more positive role models to help reverse the negative perceptions of Blackness that currently prevail in the society. As the results from this finding shows, Black youths who distance themselves from their racial group don't do so because they regret being Black, they do so because they aspire to be successful and because there are more role models to aspire to cross-culturally than the very few that exist among the Black community.

Future research needs to study the resilience patterns of Black youths as a long-term longitudinal process. This is necessary as much of the earlier work on resilience from which correlates of resilience were identified were conducted with longitudinal studies. The identification of additional protective factors that promote resilience in Black youths, like Racelessness for example is largely post-hoc as they seem to be identified after resilience has been established. It is also important for future research to explore whether the conditions under which the patterns observed in the current study differ by gender. Another interesting area for further research would be to explore if racelessness works as an effective strategy for most minority racial groups. Addressing these questions would help further the literature on understanding unique protective factors that foster better individual resilience in Black minority ethnic youths and minority groups in general.

8.0. References

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