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How the Labeling of “Acting White” Manifests itself Among People of Color: The Life Experiences of Cultural Straddlers

Norah Owens

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How the Labeling of “Acting White” Manifests itself Among People of Color:
The Life Experiences of Cultural Straddlers

Norah Owens

Submitted to the Faculty at National Louis University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Community Psychology Degree in the Department of Psychology

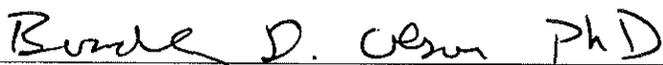
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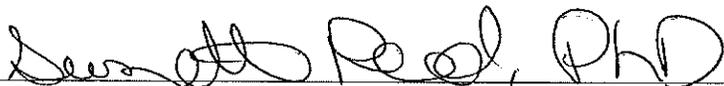
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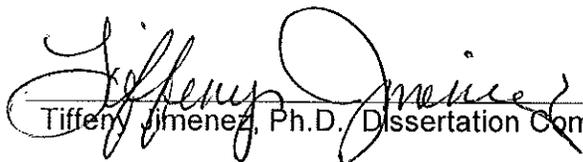
Certification: In accordance with the departmental and University
policies, the above named candidate has satisfactorily
completed a dissertation as required for attaining the
Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Community
Psychology Doctoral Program (College of Professional
Studies and Advancement) at National Louis University.



Brad Olson, Ph.D. Dissertation Chair



Suzette Reed, Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Member



Tiffeny Jimenez, Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Member

5/11/18

Date

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Abstract

The purpose of Study 1 (quantitative) and Study 2 (qualitative) was to understand whether the acting white label can either positively or negatively affect a cultural straddler's decision to assume certain lifestyles. The quantitative study examined how sociocultural norms, the acting white hypothesis, and cultural transmission relate to the academic attitudes of young adults. The study found a significant relationship between a cultural straddler and academic attitude showing a significant relationship within the qualitative study. Study 2, was conducted, consisting of in-depth interviews with four parts. The goal of these studies was to understand this societal phenomenon of people of color cynically categorizing other people of color based on their cultural openness, high academic prowess, or extracurricular activity, which is too often considered as "acting white." The quantitative results and themes that emerged from the qualitative study suggested that the acting white hypothesis impacts youth of color and that while peers have a strong influence the participants of the study frequently conformed but ultimately rose above the critiques of peers. The project ends with conclusions from both studies and implications for further research and future community interventions.

How the Labeling of “Acting White” Manifests itself Amongst People of Color:
The Life Experiences of Cultural Straddlers

Research suggests that people of color in the U.S. (African and Hispanics Americans) perceive fewer returns on education and more limited occupational opportunities (Darnell & Downey, 2002), and that this, cyclically, leads to a greater lack of interest in higher education. With a particular focus on the African American experience, researchers have set out to better understand racial disparities in education, and of most interest, some have here centered on the “acting white hypothesis.” The acting white hypothesis assumes ethnic disparities in academic responsibility or school performance are partly attributable to a cultural resistance among some racially oppressed minorities to conform not only to the dominant American culture but in a reaction against it to conform to a reaction formation against the dominant narrative. In other words, African Americans doing well in school has become associated with ‘acting white’, and this has therefore prevented some students from performing well in school (Downey et al., 2002). Ogbu (1986) hypothesized that acting white reflects a deviation from resistant cultural norms within the African-American community, thereby turning young African American adults from thriving within their educational experience.

Research on Cultural Norms

African and Latino-Americans who live in socioeconomic declined neighborhoods may not embrace the same educational values as those in more affluent areas. Carter (2003) posed survey questions to African American and Latino students, such as how they: (1) negotiate the boundaries between schools and peer group contexts; (2) how those negotiations vary; (3) what their expectations are in relation to race and ethnicity; 4) how they feel about certain rules within one’s

culture; and 5) whether ethnicity has an impact on one's success in their lives. The study consisted of 68 African-American and Latino American students, ranging in age from 13 to 20 (59% female). This quasi-experimental study (68 African Americans and 68 Latino Americans) lasted 10 months, with interviews lasting at least 90 minutes per participant. They also implemented the Mickleson's Educational Measurement scale (1-strong pessimism to 5-very strong optimism) in order to assess their attitude toward education and how they should behave based on their cultural identity.

The students from minority cultures were found to be at diverse levels of cultural assimilation and resistance. A significant number maintained a more oppositional attitude toward mainstream culture. Carter (2003) categorized students as either cultural assimilators (those who assimilated themselves into the mainstream culture: 5 of 68) or cultural straddler (those who moved between their culture and another culture drawing on numerous cultural codes; 21 of 68). There was also a group listed as "noncompliant", meaning they maintained their own cultural styles and they intentionally or unintentionally ignored mainstream ways: 38 of 68). There is obviously greater diversity in the way youth of color perceive their ethnic ideology—beliefs, opinions, and attitudes.

Carter's (2003) review of the ways African and Latino Americans embrace their culture centered on (1) language and speech codes; (2) racial and ethnic in-group/out-group signifiers centered on cultural style via dress, music, interaction, and tastes; (3) the meanings of group solidarity symbolized by the racial composition of student friendship and social networks at school; and (4) interracial dynamics about beliefs of superiority of whites and the sub-ordination of racial and ethnic minority groups. Insight into this research revealed four important findings.

First, black and Latinos students were seen as cultural straddlers if they traversed differently within their peer and school environments. Straddlers were seen to be more cultured when communicating between dominant and non-dominant cultures. Second, students who classified

peers as “acting white” had more inconsistent achievement ratings. Yet the students who were seen as “acting white” had more optimistic frames of mind. For this last group, those who might be considered as “cultural straddlers” were often seen by ingroup peers as “acting white.” Nevertheless, these straddlers were typically seen as being high achieving, and yet they actually showed reluctance given the criticisms directed toward them. In other words, they did not see academic work as “acting white.” Third, high achieving minority students were seen as acting white if they were critical of their own ethnicity or were implicitly derogatory to classmates or friends. Fourth, researchers (Moody, 2002) proposed that high achieving students might be more exposed to European culture.

The concept or labeling of acting white, within some sub-groups of African Americans, has been a longstanding belief, targeted, in particular, at individuals seen to deviate from the cultural concept of what black means for some people of color. Tatum (1997) believes, in order for one to understand the "Acting White" phenomenon correctly, a person's racial makeup must be considered. The formation of one's racial identity pertains to the "process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group."

One theory, designed by Tatum, focuses on four stages of African Americans progress in forming their racial identity:

- 1) Pre-encounter stage is when a person of color views the world from a white Eurocentric frame of reference either consciously or unconsciously adopting a pro-white and anti-black attitude.
- 2) Encounter stage, which involves an event or series of events through which individuals realize that they cannot fully be accepted in White society.
- 3) Immersion-emersion thinking; in this phase of development the person becomes more interested in their own African American identity and their awareness of racial views become more clear; this stage of cognitive awareness is sometimes characterized by anti-white attitudes.

4) Internalization when the person achieve a secure-sense-of-self as being an African American and embracing their culture but do not practice or invite an anti-white attitude.

Tatum's model offers a more proficient approach than just classifying a person as acting white, it offers an in-depth view of ethnic identity recognition.

One study offered a more definitive meaning behind the acting white hypothesis and the identity African Americans associate with high achievement. The hypothesis was that if peers saw other African Americans attain high achievement, then the peers would often consider those African Americans to be "acting white" (Stoltzfus & Harpalani, 2001). The study consisted of 562 African American adolescents ranging in age from eleven (11) to (16) sixteen years old who attended a school in the southeastern part of United States. Results showed students who displayed a Eurocentric-attitude had lower test scores and displayed low self-esteem; while African American students who displayed a proactive Afrocentric orientation correlated with a more secure, or internalized stage of their culture. Students who had a proactive Afrocentric mindset attained a higher grade point average compared to those students who did not embrace their cultural identity.

There is also the possibility that some students did less well because they were seen as "acting white." Cook and Ludwig (1998) also discovered African American honor students were considerably very popular amongst their classmates because of their academic success and the positive impact they made in school. Spencer (2001) believed the importance of adaptive and maladaptive coping skills reveal how African American adolescents and students from all ethnic groups sometimes struggle to find their own identity as they progress through life in hopes of gaining acceptance and approval from friends and classmates.

Tatum's internalization stage (1997) depicts African American students who attain high academic achievement as those who embrace their identity and culture. The four stages incorporate

a student's mindset from a conditional perspective that is contingent on their environment. Len et al, (1936) a social psychologist studied how the environment affects a person's thoughts and responses to life situations. He stated that every event has psychological contingencies, depending not only on the individual's state of mind but also the environment in which he or she resides. According to Krueger et. al, (2009) social or situational behavior can be viewed from conditional effects, person effects, and interaction effects. His model consisted of three hypotheses which entail that conditional effect causes the person to change their behavior due to the environment; person effect causes a person's behavior to remain consistent across situations meaning the individual has developed a trait that is a characteristic of their personality; and interaction effect is when a person and their environment normalize or equally interact in a fluent fashion.

Persons of color exerting peer pressure on fellow persons of color, calling cultural openness as "acting white" can be dangerous, and discourage positive and beneficial academic and extracurricular activities. Adolescent's knowledge of their collective or shared identity with friends shapes their thoughts, choices, and lives, and categorizing a person (especially a student) as acting white can cause a drop in grades, harmful conformism, and a damaged sense of self for teenagers.

Historical Perspective of Acting White Hypothesis

Three decades ago Fordham and Ogbu (1986) believed African Americans who label one another as acting white developed that frame of thought due to conditions of oppression. Consequently, these oppressive constraints caused many people of color to reject higher education since they believed the institutions were dominated by the officious mainstream culture within the United States. The distinction between cultural straddlers vs. acting white are two sides of the same coin. The acting white hypothesis entails a more pessimistic mindset of some African Americans. The idea is that some perceptions of interpersonal style have a negative impact on education, and

more so, have negatively affected generations to reject pro-achievement attitudes, to reject an academic attitude, and reject any behaviors they believe may be associated with being intelligent and successful. The root of many of these problems are contingent on people of color believing they are repressing their own culture and embracing the host culture.

Education has been the foundation of living a successful life in the United States. Many people of color have followed that path of success in spite of others, even when they struggle with the idea of selling out or losing their ethnic roots if they relocate or move to a more affluent areas. The concept of successful people of color educationally or financially selling out has been a belief dating back to 1957 when, Frazier, an African American sociologist believed many black professional intellectuals seemed to have forgotten their heritage and needed to refocus on the problems. He believed they needed to back down from disparagement or criticism of their people. Ogbu and Frazier(1994) believed certain behaviors, symbols, events, and meanings could be seen as inappropriate if portrayed as being sourced in oppressor belief systems, which he defined as cultural inversion.

Cultural inversion represents people of color who choose not to assimilate their behaviors, thoughts, and beliefs into mainstream culture. Instead they would rather embrace the carrying on of one's heritage, particularly if their ethnic culture is to remain alive within society. Yet it is possible to go too far in this direction. An equilibrium may be more important to reach. It may be that categorizing someone (mainly African Americans) as being white just because they choose to attain a higher education or deviate from the norm has caused avoidance against academic thriving in some social circles. One qualitative survey study has shown that some African American students believe the only way of being rewarded and valued in school is to master the host culture mainly (European Americans), thus giving up their form of speech, appearance, values, and

priorities, which some students believe is selling out or dis-identifying with their culture (Claude, 1992).

Researchers, specifically anthropologists have long known that social groups often struggle with their collective identity to protect its distinctiveness. Fryer (2006) found group cohesiveness can lead to strong efforts to prevent strangers or outsiders from infiltrating their social circle. Group members represent the character of a people, and these actions are evident in their behaviors, Amish people for example prevent their kids from interacting too much with the outside world in fear of their kids losing Amish identity. It is a possibility, as some have argued, that the African American concept of acting white has potentially damaged some sub-groups of African Americans families, their kids, and community as well due to the impact it has on kids in the classroom and amongst friends.

The phenomenon of acting white is worth studying because it can be a significant burden for people of color who work to become multicultural and deviate from the norms of their social group, friends, or neighborhood activities. Fordham et. al (1986) stated that some African American children, due to doubt, social pressure, and distorted thinking, do not put forth the effort to excel in school because they are afraid of being labeled as acting white. Barkley (2014), a basketball hall of famer, stated in an article when an African American kid excels in school and speaks well, the other students, especially “the losers”, begin to spread the word that this person is acting white due to their academic achievement. While the use of the term “losers” is unfortunate, the point is that these tensions need to be examined.

Race, IQ, and Acting White Theory

The creation of IQ testing during the 20th century, harmfully published journal articles, unfavorable newspaper headlines, and policies, that undermined African American student’s

educational attainment. This could have potentially created a social construct manipulating some black people to believe that they are unable of benefiting from education. The pseudo-science of centuries of past conducted by Herbert Spencer's scientific (1873) argument has created an extremely broad negative effect of African Americans and their ability to learn and progress in school. The intelligence test administered by psychologists such as Goddard not only demoralized people of color but also extended to the white communities as well. Goddard believed some immigrants who came to America via Ellis Island New York were incompetent and lacked the ability to gain intelligence based on his version of the "The Binet and Simon Tests of Intellectual Capacity."

The multiple intelligence test spanned throughout American history and the effect it has or had on people of color is damaging. Fryer, et al (2004) however, discovered high achieving students of color turned out to be highly popular amongst their social circle of friends. They were not labeled as acting white and did not have to hide their intellectual ability so the belief that being smart correlate with white kids is nonsensical. The label of being white amongst people of color is more than attaining a high grade point (or GPA) but the adoption of European culture.

Students View of Acting White

In 2001 Barnett, an African American psychologist and professor at Ohio State's Kent College, created a focus group of college students to better understand what aspects are considered white or at least trying to be white amongst people of color. The assembled group listed fashions such as Abercrombie & Fitch, the gap clothing line were worn mostly by white people and when African Americans wear that line of clothing they are trying to fit in because they could have chosen FUBU or Tommy Hilfiger. One student went on to say some African Americans even try to wear shorts in the wintertime, which has been seen as European. Since its inception the acting white hypothesis

has been used to label countless numbers of behaviors amongst people of color that deviate from the cultural or subcultural norms in some groups and neighborhoods.

Toldson (2013) an African American professor believes African Americans have embraced this misconception and swallowed this belief that he theorized came from predominantly upper class white people. The professor went on to conduct his own research on this theory with some pointed questions targeting teenager's perception of smart students asking them to describe how they saw these kids ranging from; 1) cool, 2) normal, 3) weird, 4) boring, or 5) admired?" the study revealed females were partially neutral however 1 percent of African Americans saw smart kids as being cool.

The Howard university professor also posed another question asking students if they had done well in school would they tell their friends about their grades or would be ashamed?" The results showed eighty-nine percent of student despite color said they would be proud of their accomplishments and tell their friends, 17 percent of white males stated they would not tell their friends and would feel embarrassed to tell classmate. However, 10% of the African American male students felt partially embarrassed to disclose their high grades to classmates. Toldson's final question centered on classmates reaction of ditching hanging out with friends in order to do homework and how they believe their friends would feel ranging from would they 1) be supportive of you, 2) make fun of you or try to disrupt you, or 3) they wouldn't care one way or the other?" While 45% of African American females said their friends would show support only 40% of African males and white females said their friends would support their choice.

Toldson's research showed how some African American students did not succumb to intelligence as being white based on previous data. In addition the professor also expressed another fallacy stating if smart kids did not have friends due to high grades that does not mean they are

acting white; it just means their popularity within that particular school doesn't coincide with their academics not that their behavior coincide with acting white. The labeling of acting white or trying to fit in is ever present amongst African Americans, especially amongst students since their academic future, professional position in the job market and life in general could be contingent on this theoretical imposition. There are cultural differences amongst ethnic groups and how people view those distinctions vary greatly. Professor Barnett showed how students categorize certain fashions based on ethnicity such as Abercrombie and Fitch worn by Europeans and Tommy Hilfiger worn by African Americans. Labeling a person based on designer clothes can't potentially effect or alter a person's life but labeling as acting because of their academic aspirations and intelligence can have collateral damage for students.

Cultural Straddler Characterization

Cultural straddler is a positive alternative to “acting white.” Previous research on the acting white hypothesis operationalized cultural straddler as a person who is a boundry spanner and who connects one culture with another. Yet the tensions between cultural straddler and acting white is about people of color such as African, Hispanic, and or Native American who indulge in activities or behaviors outside iof their ethnic cultural norm such as: A) one’s perception of speaking proper English language; B) listening to a genre of music other than just soul music; C) Academic identity, D) Non-ethnic recreational activities such as visiting libraries, art galleries; D) Carter (2003) went on to explain cultural straddlers are people who strategically navigate in a diverse ethnic society because they know how to participate in a myriad of cultural environments ranging from family, peer group, neighborhood, ethnic community, interracial setting and recreational activity. People of color who are labled as acting white have been scrutinized and mocked by various portions of

society as previous research illustrated. This phenomenon has been everpresent in some of America's neighborhoods and schools.

Purpose of Research Study 1

The purpose of this research is to observe how sociocultural norms, social media, and group socializing affect the ideology (or beliefs) of academically-oriented urban youth, cultural-mainstreamer youth and cultural straddler youth. This research propose to observe which factors are most influential for urban teenagers (both academically advanced and cultural-mainstreamer) to develop an integrated identity that coincide with the cultural mainstream. It is hypothesized that academically-oriented-youth, sub-cultural-mainstreamer-youth and cultural-straddler-youths' identity are socially influenced through social norms, sociocultural norms, social media and group socializing.

Study 1: Method

Researchers set out to observe how sociocultural norms, the acting white hypothesis, and cultural transmission relate to the academic attitudes of young adults. Specifically, they hypothesized that cultural-straddlers (young adults who seem to straddle across different cultural norms) will be the best predictor of academic orientations. A survey method was used to find the variables associated with one's identity that might be related to a stronger academic orientation. The general research was conducted over a six-month period.

There were 26 African American participants between the age of 21 to 40 years old who live in the inner city (or urban) areas of Chicago; specifically in socioeconomically declined areas. The initial recruitment of participants began with face-to-face interviews in public places within diverse and urban neighborhoods. Potential participants were approached and asked if they would like to participate in a study about peoples' use of social media, academic orientation, and identity.

Additional recruitment was conducted in a snowball sampling method at a City College located in Chicago. Participants were freshmen college students who would gather in the lunchroom and discuss topics that coincided with social media, academics college assignments based on conversation the researcher prior to administering survey. Of those potential participants approached by the researcher only 10 declined to participate in the survey. A total of 25 young adults (23 women and 3 men) were briefly interviewed in a library, department, and grocery stores.

The researcher used a likert type scale consisting of:

Academic Attitude Questionnaire: This scale was created for the purposes of measuring young adults attitude toward academics in spite of negative potentialities within their culture. All participants completed a (10) questionnaire scale to measure their attitude towards school related work such as: A) enthusiasm to participate in-group studies; B) innate ability to achieve in school; C) a need to achieve attitude. Social factors such as group pressure can subject people (specifically students) to believe, behave, and act in accordance with their social group or classmates.

Cultural Transmission Questionnaire (all so identified as cultural mainstreamers which are people who specifically embrace their culture only) This scale was created for the purposes of measure how cultural transmission influence people's beliefs, values, attitudes, and how it effect their decisions in life. For example these people are immersed in their culture and don't venture out to experience other cultures because their culture is the mainstream. All participants completed a (10) questionnaire scale to measure their values, beliefs, and customs relating to; A) intergenerational viewpoints; B) morals; C) impressionability amongst friends; and D) desire to gain acceptance from friends and associates.

Social Media Users Questionnaire: All participants completed a (10) questionnaire scale to measure their use of social media sites such as Instagram, tumblr, Facebook and the influence it has on their attitude of self and identity. A) When I receive positive feedback on a personal post, I feel good about my interest in the subject; B) If I post something online that is well received, I feel confident discussing it with others offline; C) I feel good about myself when I get a lot of notes on something I posted online; D) If I see a topic is being talked about on social networking sites, I will look into the topic.

Cultural Straddler Questionnaire (the low side of the dimension is the “Acting white” pole): All participants completed a (10) questionnaire scale to measure their attitude towards behaviors that are considered straddling within, one’s own culture and a host culture. The scale will measure participants attitude towards; A) speaking proper English language instead of Ebonics or slang words; B) genre of music; C) need to achieve in school; D) recreational activities such as visiting libraries, art galleries; E) and racial and ethnic in-group/out-group signifiers centered on cultural style via dress code.

The procedure for this study consisted of one set of interviews which took place in two Chicago department stores (a total of 11 participants including 10 females and 1 male), which occurred over a two-week period at different times throughout the day. Five of the participants were employees and six were customers. The survey was presented to the participants in the form of a question inquiring about their use of social media as a form of communication with friends and news. All eleven responses was in the affirmative, thereafter the researchers presented the survey with room for questioning. The participants all agreed to take they survey because they used social media as a primary form of communication with friends and news. The entire assembly including the researchers question and answer prior to handing out the survey took an estimated

50 minutes for the group to answer all of the questions.

The second set of interviews took place in two Chicago neighborhood grocery stores. The four participants (3 females and 1 male employee) agreed to participate in the survey because they also used social media as a primary form of communication. The survey was presented to the participants in the form of a question inquiring about their use of social media as a form of communication with friends and news. The entire assembly including the researchers question and answer prior to handing out the survey took an estimated 50 minutes also for the group to answer all of the questions.

The third set of interview occurred with recent high school graduates who were now enrolled in a Midwest junior college. There were a total of three participants (2 females and 1 male) who agreed to participate in the survey subsequent to the researcher posing the survey in the form of a question relating to their use of social media. The survey was presented to the participants in the form of a question inquiring about their use of social media as a form of communication with friends and news. The entire assembly including the researchers question and answer prior to handing out the survey took an estimated 60 minutes also for the group to answer all of the questions.

The fourth set of participants (consisting of 8 females) were collected in various places around Chicago such as fitness centers, convenience stores and snack shops where first year college students frequented. This study occurred over a period of two to three weeks. Potential participants was asked if they would like to participate in a study about people's use of social media and if they used social media as a form of communication. The survey was presented to the participants in the form of a question inquiring about their use of social media as a form of communication with friends and news.

Study 1: Results

A reliability analysis was used to ensure good internal reliability of the scales, a Cronbach's alpha was used for several of the scales. The first set of ten questions focused on Academic Attitude; *Cronbach's alpha* = .800 meaning the individual questions are related to each other, that is correlated, and therefore showing good internal consistency. Cultural Transmission Questionnaire had *Cronbach's alpha* = .789; the Social Networking Questionnaire had *Cronbach's alpha* = .790, and Cultural Straddler Questionnaire had a *Cronbach's alpha* = .810.

Descriptive Analysis

Means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages were run on the sample. The study consisted of ($N = 25$) participants, with 48% being males and 52% females. The ethnic makeup included 88% of the participants being of African American descent and 12% were of Hispanic American descent. The descriptive for Academic Attitude was on a 6 point scale, showed a $M = 4.5$, meaning most participants either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed, and the $SD = 8.722$; the Cultural Transmission Questionnaire had $M = 3.436$, meaning most participants disagree and somewhat agreed, based on their response to the questionnaire, and $SD = 9.371$, basically the mean average is an affirmation that participants who took the cultural transmission survey typically chose somewhat agree to agreed; Social Networking Questionnaire had a $M = 3.9$, indicating participants agreed or strongly agreed based on their response to the questionnaire, and a $SD = 9.367$. With the Cultural Straddler Questionnaire, there was an $M = 1.792$, meaning participants strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed based on their response to the questionnaire and a $SD = 8.722$.

Regression Analysis

Ordinary least squares linear regression was conducted to see if there is a relation between the predictors (social networking, cultural transmission, and cultural straddler) and the dependent variable (academic attitude identity). Significance was found, $F(1, 14) = 6.255$, with a $p = 0.18$ showed an R^2 of (0.373), which means that the model accounts for 37% of the variance. Of all the predictors there was one significant relationship found between the cultural straddler scores (i.e., low in “acting white” perceptions) and the dependent variable academic attitude, with a B of .515, $p < .05$. In other words, those who see productive behaviors as “acting white” had worse academic attitudes. Those who were resistant to see a connection with productive attitudes and acting white had better academic attitudes.

Variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Err	Sig (p)
Acad. Att.	.651	.424	.337	.783	.016

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	300	1.210		.248	.806
Social Network	.651	.196	0.16	1.528	.142
Cultural Trans	.184	.166	.214	1.108	.281
Cultural Straddler	.515	.196	.466	2.626	.016

Dependent Variable: Academic Attitude

The four variables related to academic identity were measured, consisting of cultural straddlers, social media use, cultural transmission and academic attitude. The regression showed significant relationships across these factors that was consistent with the hypothesis that cultural-straddlers tended to have stronger academic attitude. The academic attitude questionnaire measured participants’ sense-of-self as it related to their interests in academic studies, to complete homework assignments, pass tests and achieve their academic goals.

Participants who identified with cultural transmission (exhibited in section B) did not have any significance to academic attitude. The cultural transmission survey focused on values and beliefs learned from one's family, friends, and their neighborhood. Participants who scored low on cultural transmission also scored low on academic attitude, which supported the hypothesis because these participants believed embracing an academic attitude was considered white based on survey results.

Participants who scored high or disagreed with the cultural straddler survey (B) also had a significant relationship to academic attitude, which supported the hypothesis. Therefore, participants who did not believe that speaking proper English, going to the library, getting good grades in school, and being known as a brainiac, along with reading and writing poetry was associated with acting white showed a significant correlation to having an academic attitude. The reasons behind this significant relationship (cultural straddler and academic attitude) could be that participants who don't categorize higher education, as acting white may not label those previously illustrated activities as acting white. This relationship was expected because cultural straddlers are people who not only embrace their culture but find interest in other cultures as well and academic as well

The possible relation within academic attitude and cultural straddlers or why there was significance found could be purely optimism created through social media thereby influencing participants to view themselves and academics in a positive light. Mead (1934) theorized that people imagine others see them as they view themselves, which he defined as reflective appraisal. Therefore, when students post photos and their opinions about subjects on social media sites they are looking for validation to reinforce their sense of self. However, those posts of their beliefs on certain topics are founded on family and intergroup beliefs, which are identity created in one's

conversation and then posted on social media. This could account for the identity created through cultural transmission that is then reinforced through social media postings via one's pictures, thoughts, and position on certain subjects.

There were limitations to the study due to potential factors that were not measured in the relationship between cultural transmission and social networking which is the amount of conversations young adults have relating to culture while online. The study was limited in depth due to a small sample size of 26 participants and can not generalize large populations of African American and Hispanic American student as embracing cultural transmission. The procedure took place over a three month period in areas such as grocery stores, clothing stores, workout facilities, and a junior college all located on the south of Chicago and surrounding suburbs. The procedure in which data was collected was not gathered solely from people who used social media on a consistent basis and the social media questionnaire did not pose questions relating to how often participants used social media. The cultural transmission survey measured participants' beliefs and values as it related to their family and friendships, while the academic attitude survey measured one's belief about achieving in school. Even though the cultural transmission survey measured participant's beliefs the scale wasn't designed to validate at what stage of life those beliefs developed.

Cultural straddlers, and social networkers showed some relation to possessing an academic mindset or at the most a positive perception of academics. There was no correlation between cultural transmission and academic identity. Although, cultural transmission focused on cultural beliefs shared within one's family and community the survey resulted in no significant correlation to having an academic attitude. This research set out to observe if sociocultural norms, social

networking, and cultural transmission affect the ideology (or beliefs) of academically oriented urban students, cultural-transmission youth and cultural straddler youth.

The researcher specifically, hypothesized that cultural-straddlers will be the best predictor of academic orientations, which was validated in survey results. . The study also found that social networkers possessed an academic attitude as well. The relation between social networkers and academic attitude would require further research.

Participants who were considered to have an academic attitude (with academic attitude being the independent variable academic attitude) agreed to items in the survey such as I work very hard on my schoolwork, I am pretty smart, I work on my class work because I think its important, it is up to you to do the best in school and trying hard is the best way for me to do well in school. How the questions were constructed could have biased the results due to high cronbach's alpha for cultural straddler (.810) and cronbach's alpha for academic attitude being (.800) could have biased the results due to the strong relation in both questionnaires. However social media users questionnaire had a cronbach's alpha of (.790) and cultural transmission had a cronbach's alpha of (.789) which were somewhat high but not as the former two questionnaires. The cultural straddler questions and academic attitude questions could have been more persuasive in format thereby persuading participants to easily agree to those questionnaires.

Study 2: Qualitative

Statement of the Problem

Research in a previous study hypothesized that cultural straddlers (people who straddled between cultures) possessed stronger academic attitudes. The study examined four characteristics of social media users, cultural straddlers, academic attitude and cultural mainstreamers. The

regression analysis showed cultural straddlers had a significant relationship with the acting white hypothesis. Participants who were considered to have stronger academic attitudes agreed to items in the survey such as I work very hard on my schoolwork, I am pretty smart, I work on my class work because I think it's important, or it is up to you to do the best in school and trying hard is the best way for me to do well in school showed a relation to possessing an academic attitude which categorized them as acting white. However, cultural straddlers carried the burden of being labeled as acting white, which is kind of demeaning or sarcastic amongst people of color. This labeling has been a problem within African and Hispanic American social circle and neighborhoods.

Purpose of Research

The researcher posed two questions which is how do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within the four themes?

The purpose of Study 2 was to understand how the negative labeling manifests itself for cultural straddlers such as A) one's perception of speaking proper English; B) non-ethnic music genre; C) academic identity; and D) non-ethnic recreational activities. In addition the research hopes to also understand influences on cultural straddlers and whether, due to labeling, they ever forgo the behavior or activity. The psychological effects of labeling a person of color can either positively or negatively affect a cultural straddler's decision to forgo cultural activities when close to a family member, friend, or close associate. Once presented with the label, are their behaviors or lifestyle dependent to change? Consistent with the research showing people are heavily influenced to change their behaviors, activities, or lifestyles if they believe people close to them do not approve of their behavior, this research was conducted to better understand why some

African Americans choose to label a person of color who shows high academic competence, cultural diversity or speak very proper as “acting white”. Previous research revealed cultural straddlers were people of color who: A) spoke proper English language instead of Ebonics or slang words; B) listened to a genre of music other than just soul music; C) need to achieve in school; D) recreational activities such as visiting libraries, art galleries; E) and racial and ethnic in-group/out-group signifiers centered on cultural style via dress code (Owens, 2016).

While previous research on “acting white” provided quantitative data on the subject of acting white there are still voices that need to be heard from an individual point of view. A qualitative method will be use to better understand why some African Americans choose to label a person of color who shows high academic competence or cultural diversity (a cultural straddle) as acting white.

Design and Procedures

The researcher used qualitative interviews in a second study to learn why some minorities label people within their ethnic group as white just because they straddled between cultures within American society. Qualitative interviews were conducted to better understand why some people of color label someone as “acting white” because they straddle or crisscross between cultures. The primary purpose is to understand the life experiences of those who might be seen as cultural straddlers, those who associate within one or more of four themes such as A) Speaking proper English; B) Non-ethnic music Genre; C) Academic Identity; and D) Non-ethnic recreational activities . Some of the questions of interest include: Are cultural straddlers subject to change their behavior or lifestyle activities based on people’s responses closes to them?

The researcher also hoped to understand how the acting white hypothesis manifests itself amid a cultural straddler and once presented with a label of acting white from a family member,

friend, or close associate are their behaviors or activities dependent to change? People are heavily influenced to change their behavior, activity, or lifestyle if they believe people close to them do not approve of their behavior. A qualitative method consisting of in-depth interviews was used to understand this societal attitude of cynically categorizing a cultural straddler (or person of color) based on their intelligence or extracurricular activity as acting white. This research will also serve to further understand the extent to which peers, family members or others influence participants perceptions that they are being labeled as “acting white”.

Study 2: Method

Participants

Participants in this study included 10 people (7 males and 3 females) between the ages of 18 to 40 years of age who considered himself or herself as African American, Hispanic American, Native American or person of color. All ten participants were volunteers who participated in screening questions to see if their lifestyle potentially coincide with a cultural straddler before proceeding to the interview phase.

Measurement Scale

The measurement scale was developed from Fordham and Ogbu’s acting white theory relating back to their 1986 study of Urban African American teenage students who were criticized for straddling boundaries as related to speaking proper English, listening to non-ethnic music genre and indulging in non-ethnic recreational activities. The four sections in this research set out to discover if those acting white attitudes still manifest in 21st century African America adults (see Appendix A, B, C, and D). The scale is not actually categorizing a person based on their responses to the four themes but will track recurring themes based on participant’s responses to each interview question. The interviewer’s objective was to better understand the related themes (or

theme) leading up to this manifestation of labeling a person who ventured outside their ethnic environment as acting white.

Procedures

➤ Recruitment Process

Participants between the ages of 18 to 30 years of age who identified as being African, Hispanic or Native American were recruited for this survey. The pre-interview recruitment started in public places around the city of Chicago such as Kennedy King College, other City Colleges, and Southside Libraries whereas the interviewer would have a casual conversation with citizens in hopes of gaining their attention and time to participate in the study. Other participants were acquaintances of the researcher whom he had met in cafes, department, and grocery stores prior to conducting the study. The questionnaire has four sections (see section A, B, C and D) that will measure participant attitudes toward being labeled a cultural straddler or acting white. Life experiences will be recorded (see Appendix A).

- 1 Phase1: Potential recruitment started with a casual face-to-face conversation with prospective participants who appeared interested in learning more about the research and its four themes subsequent to the researcher giving a brief description. Thereafter, interested participants set future dates to meet with the researcher to have a more in-depth conversation and participate in the screening process.
- 2 Phase 2: The interviews took place in a public place such as libraries, junior colleges and other community places around the Chicago land area. However, some participants preferred to meet in a café or eatery due to their personal schedule.
- 3 Phase 3 Instructions: Prior to issuing screening questions participants were giving an informed consent document outlining the research and their rights as a participant and

was allowed to ask any questions pertaining to the research that was not covered in phase one.

- 4 Phase 4: Before starting the recorded interview careful consideration was made not to bias the study so participants were told the questionnaire is designed to explore their opinion toward four themes, which are: A) One's perception of proper English; B) listening to non-ethnic music Genre; C) Academic Identity; and D) indulging in non-ethnic recreational activities. Screening questions are illustrated below.

➤ Screening Questions

- 1 Do you consider yourself African, Hispanic, Native American or a person of color?
- 2 Are you between the ages of 18 to 30 years of age?
- 3 What is your perception of proper English?
- 4 Do you listen to music genres other than your native culture?
- 5 Do you consider yourself to possess an academic identity?
- 6 Do you or have you indulged in non-ethnic recreational activities outside or rare within your native culture?

➤ Instructions

Instructions to participants: Participants were told the study is designed to explore their opinion toward four themes, which are A) Speaking proper English; B) listening to non-ethnic music Genre; C) Academic Identity; and D) Indulging in non-ethnic recreational activities.. Since the screening process enabled the researcher to potentially know participants did have some relation to one or more of four areas the conversation proceeded to the informed consent procedures in which each participant was given a copy followed by instructions from the researcher.

Incentives

Participants were issued café gift cards, or lunch during the interview process. Some participants declined any financial gifts because they believed their input would help my research and eventually better society and race relations. In addition the researcher explained the respondent driven program to current participants whereas they will receive a gift card if they refer a friend or someone to participate in the survey.

Results Section

The researcher used thematic analysis to categorize and phrase recurring themes, such as words, and patterns across data sets within four themes: A) One's perception of proper English; B) Listening to non-ethnic music genre; C) Academic Identity; and D) Indulging in non-ethnic recreational activities. Through the process of analysis, similar recurring statements were identified that were found to be significant to the study aims. The themes were repeatedly reviewed for initial groupings of meaning through the context of the participants' complete responses to the research questions, illustrated on the topic of "One's perception of Speaking Proper English" (see Appendix A). In order to cross reference similar recurring themes, all 10 participants' qualitative interviews were organized and grouped based on topic (see, Appendix, A, B, C and D). For the purposes of this research similar recurring emerging themes are italicized with quotations from the participant narratives.

Participant narratives were summarized per section (or topic) to capture the mindset and lived experiences of each interviewee. The research set out to answer two research questions; A) how do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? and B) Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within one or more the four themes? Since the entire

pool of participants were African American, similar recurring themes are italicized and listed below the concluding paragraph of each topic. Specific theories were applied to analyze and explain what potentially influenced their life choices.

Section A Chart 1 Theme Coding: One's perception of proper English:

For section A participant's answers to the questions relating to proper English were categorized under certain themes:

1. Textbook, syntax or diction - meaning the participant based their perception of English from a standard or grammatical correct pronunciation that's widely used by Americans.
2. Social setting- meaning the participant based their perception of English on the environment and listener or receiver of information.

This section of the interview consisted of 6 questions on one's perception of speaking proper English (see Appendix A). However, the researcher illustrated three key questions 1, 5, and 6 in this section to measure a specific collective recurring theme from the 10 participants. Please see section (A,B,C and D) to review the interview in its entirety.

Section A: Perception of Proper English

As illustrated below the researcher categorized each participant's responses during the interview. Thematic analysis was used to categorize recurring themes such as words, similar thoughts, and patterns expressed throughout the 10 participant interviews. Participants answered the following six questions: 1) what is your perception of speaking proper English? 2) How do you measure what is considered proper English?; 3) How does your language vary based on whether you are speaking with your family, friends, manager, teacher, or close associate in your life?; 4) Can you tell me a story when your use of English actually stood out from your family member, friend, co-worker or close associates?; 5) How has your use of proper English benefitted your

identity, profession, education and friendship? And 6) What mental strategies did you use if someone said something that was against your perception of the proper use of the English language? The interviews consisted of the following participants however the names have been changed to protect their identity: 1) Mike, 2) Paul, 3) Eric, 4) Derrick, 5) Donald, 6) Shawn, 7) Lynn, 8) Linda, 9) David, and 10) Eddie

Participants 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 had similar thoughts, reflecting their perceptions of English having a textbook approach to using the language. These participants used similar words that coincided with diction, syntax, and pronunciation to explain their perception of English and how they use the language. The seven participants were categorized under the “acting white theory” due to their perception and standard practice of the English language. Dr. Ogbu’s “acting white” (1980) theory, based on research, categorized African-American’s as being perceived by peers as acting white if they were seen as being smart students, deviating from their culture, and if their peers classified them as being smart or acting white because of their academic behavior. Participants 1, 2, and 3 based their perception of English on the social setting and were categorized under the non-standard practice of English. Non-standard English lacked proper pronunciation and is characterized by sayings or Ebonics that is often not regarded as acceptable speech by educated people. However, some of those same participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 varied their language based on the social setting and person. For example neighborhood and professional settings caused these participants’s language use to reflect their social identity, known best by friends, managers, or educators.

There were three participants, Eric, Derrick and Linda (participants 3, 4, and 8), who had similar thoughts. They did not vary their language regardless of whether they were in a social or professional setting. They believed in “keeping it real” and not changing their language or “talking

white” just to gain acceptance. These three participants’ beliefs coincided with Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) theory that African Americans who showed too much intelligence or deviated from the norm of their subgroup were often seen as “acting white”. Although participants in group one (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) based their perception of English on a textbook concept and participants in group two based their perception of English on a non-standard concept of English, Ogbu’s acting white hypothesis is still a construction of reality for some African American social circles. This research consisted of two questions which is how do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler’s choice of activities within the four themes?

This study revealed African Americans who straddled between cultures, such as speaking proper English, or listening to non-ethnic music are deemed as acting white and those same participants were also influenced to abandoned recreational activities due to a lack of interest from neighborhood friends or family members. Some of the same participants also expressed how they were taunted because of their proper speech or non-ethnic recreational activities. This is what Ogbu (1978) termed as “cultural opposition”, which is to resist the mainstream cultural values, and ways of living. The participants defined it as “keeping it real” and not conforming to the majority cultural norm.

Section A Table 1: Perception of Proper English

Chart 1 Appendix A Perception of Proper English Questions	Mike Participant 1	Paul Participant 2	Eric Participant 3	Laura Participant 4	Donald Participant 5	Shawn Participant 6	Lynn Participant 7	Linda Participant 8	David Participant 9	Eddie Participant 10
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1. What is your perception of proper English?	Standard English, social setting	Social setting set the tone	Pronunciation-on	Textbook method	Textbook, pronunciation	Textbook, grammatically correct	Textbook, clarity	Textbook, clarity	Textbook	Textbook
2. How do you measure proper English?	Based on social setting	Syntax/diction	Textbook-Method	Syntax and diction	Voice and clarity	Education level	Articulation, clarity	No way to measure English	Word Pronunciation	Textbook
3. Language variability?	Based on social setting and person	Based on social setting	Does not Vary	Does not vary	Setting/person	Setting/person	Setting/person	Does not vary	Setting/person	Setting/person
4. Has your English stood out?	Does not stand out	Not relative	Does not stand out	Does not stand out	Amongst team mates	Amongst family	Amongst friends	Not relative	In classroom	Ebonics at work
5. Has English benefitted your identity?	During job interviews	During interviews	In professional setting	During interviews	Professional settings	Professional settings	During interviews /and on the job	During interviews	Professional settings	Professional settings
6. Mental strategies to defend proper English?	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive

Participant 1 Michael: Michael’s ability to switch language (or code switch) around friends is a reflection of the knowledge and feelings he believed his friends had about his social identity. The participant felt as if he had to uphold a certain image around his friends, and “talking proper” would, he believed, have damaged his image. Based on the interview it appeared as though Michael remained loyal to his current lifestyle through code switching. The ability to change expressions in language for Michael turned an “I” perception of himself to a “we” representation, which Tajfel (1972) theorized as one’s social identity belief system.

This concept of self entailed that people derive esteem and knowledge of self from group membership. When asked how Michael measured proper English he stated it was dependent on the social setting and the person he is addressing. Michael’s belongingness to friends placed an

indebted sense of group responsibility, which provoked him to express a more relaxed English pronunciation around friends and family. However, Michael went on to say that, when he's conversing with a manager or teacher, his English use is professional instead of slang or flat (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A). The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

Man, if I were talking to a friend I would probably be like what's up bro...but if I am talking to someone else like a manager or educator I might say how you are doing sir or ma'am? I think speaking proper English has landed me some jobs in the past.

Based on our interview there were two themes relative to the formation of Michael's perception of proper English: the social setting and person to whom he's addressing. Hogg (2006) stated people are influenced by their social circle of friends, Michael also was influenced by friends through what he believed was *keeping it real* meant not being fake and talking proper around friends. Michael chose to use slang or cool type communication instead of Standard English. The participant remained loyal to his current lifestyle through code switching which allowed him to use proper English in professional settings instead of on an everyday basis.

Participant 2 Gregg: The questions on one's perception of "speaking proper" (see results section A). Gregg's perception of proper English seemed to depend on who was in the room. For example if it was a corporate or educational setting with a manager or teacher then his use of proper English focused on syntax and diction. When it came to measuring proper English, the participant expressed the importance of syntax and diction especially during an interview. Based on our interview it appeared the participant valued his identity and how his English was expressed. When asked how does your language vary based on speaking with your family, friends, manager, teacher? The participant stated speaking with family members allowed him to be relaxed but not as cozy when around friends. Gregg believed proper English was an important aspect of

communicating with his manager. The participant also stated how his correct pronunciation of words provoked friends to taunt him but he never abandoned the competence to speak proper English in spite of the jokes (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A). The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

I believe the social setting will set the tone accompanied with proper use of diction and syntax. Now, I am quite sure I may have gotten a number of jobs due to my use of speaking proper English. Sometimes Fred would call me white because of my English but like I say sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me even though I was taunted with names they don't hurt me.

Based on the interview there were two themes relative to the formation of Gregg's perception of speaking proper English syntax and diction. The participant's use of proper English has benefited him during job interviews but also made him the butt of friend's jokes. Gregg's inner beliefs and values provided a high level of self-awareness that allowed him to remain steadfast in the face of ridicule from close friends. The interview revealed that Gregg remained loyal to his current lifestyle by not wavering from his identity.

Findings for Participant 3 Elijah: The questions on one's perception of speaking proper English (see results section A Table 1) attempted to identify Elijah's perception of speaking proper English. The participant believed correct pronunciation is essential when speaking proper English. Elijah stated it is not about talking like a white person instead it is about using the pronunciation and meaning of words appropriately. Elijah also explained measuring proper English does not require a textbook type of communication style because people do not speak from a schoolbook typed system because that is not being real. For this participant, keeping it real meant speaking English in a context he knew best, Ebonics. For example in a phlebotomy class the participant explained a theory to an African American professor-using Ebonics or non-

standard English. Using slang for this participant was being real to his self-concept and his subculture (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A).

The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

I believe correct pronunciation is the key and not talking like a white person, remaining constant in my meaning of words when conversing with my managers, teachers and or supervisors has created a genuine level of respect for my identity compared to talking like a white person. I believe in keeping it real, and not being fake so I prefer not to talk like some kind of robot that is why I never had to defend my English and if my friends had a problem I would tell them they don't have to talk to me.

Based on the interview there were two themes relative to the formation of Elijah's perception of proper English, which was pronunciation and the definitive meaning of words. Elijah remained loyal to his current lifestyle even when speaking to the professor. Elijah's self concept was contingent on how he believed others evaluated him. Mead (1932) described this as "reflective appraisal". Keeping it real connotes exhibiting an identity Elijah's friends have grown accustomed to seeing throughout his life and any behavior other than what they know of him would be viewed fake or not keeping it real. The interview revealed Elijah remained true to his identity.

Findings for Participant 4 Lisa: Lisa's perception of proper English stemmed from what her parents taught her as a child along with the education she learned in school. Like participant 2, (Gregg) Lisa believed syntax, diction, and pronunciation was important during interviews. She went on to explain how speaking properly has its place in life and should not take precedence over what is comfortable to each person. The participant believed pronunciation was key to speaking proper English because she would always correct a family member's mispronunciation of words, especially her grandmother (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A). The participant's comments about proper English centered on her saying:

Well, my parents used proper English so I learned from them, especially my Mom because she believed syntax, and diction was important. I think my pronunciation of words has benefitted my identity and how I presented myself in front of an interviewer. Now when I am around friends I never had to defend my English.

Based on the interview there were four themes relative to the formation of Lisa's perception of proper English, which were syntax, academics, diction, and the parental guidance learned during childhood. Lisa relied on resources such as books, public opinion, or social norms for speaking proper English in her life.

Findings for Participant (5) Dominique: The twenty year old believed articulation and pronunciation is a deciding factor for values of good or bad English because, as he believed, people must understand what you are trying to express. Dominique thought tone was important when measuring proper English. For example he said if I am talking to a judge, teacher, or manager tone is important, but if I am conversing with a friend or family member, slang is a more common grammar. Even though slang was a more common language the social setting took precedence over comfort. For example when asked "how has your proper use of English benefited your identity, profession, education and friendship" Dominique stated it allowed him to gain acceptance in professional, recreational and educational settings. One time Dominique found himself speaking proper English on the basketball court due to a previous college speech course but quickly reverted to slang (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A). The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

I believe articulation and pronunciation of my words is important when speaking proper English and not about talking white. I also think my use of proper English has helped me gain

acceptance in most professional, recreational, and educational settings.. But if someone did say something against my English then they don't have to talk to me

Based on the interview there were four themes relative to the formation of Dominique's perception of proper English, which was pronunciation, articulation, tone of voice, and social setting. During the interview Dominique expressed his normalcy of slang when associating with friends. Dominique was not true to his identity due to him altering his attitude to coincide with the present environment. Forsyth (1999) explained how normative influence causes a person to feel and act in ways consistent with group norms, standards, and convention. Slang is influential amongst his social circle of friends but during the interview Dominique never used slang neither was it portrayed in his body language.

Findings for Participant (6) Chermon: The questions on one's perception of speaking proper (see results section A) attempted to identify Chermon's perception of speaking proper English. The twenty-three year old Chipotle employee and electrical trade student believed proper English coincided, for him, with being grammatically correct when pronouncing words. He went on to explain a person does not have to use big words in a conversation for it to be proper English or to get their point across. When asked about language variability the participant stated it depends on the environment. Chermon stated if I were talking to a friend or family member my English would be more slang but if I were conversing with my manager or teacher I would speak more professionally (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A). The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

I think being grammatically correct and pronouncing my words correct is what defines proper English to me. I attended a culturally diverse high school in southern Illinois so I kind of grew up using proper English but when my mom moved us back to Chicago in

my late teens my friends would jokingly call me white boy because of my proper English. I would usually tell my friends this is how I talk and it work best for me.

Based on the interview there were two themes relative to the formation of Chermon's perception of proper English, which is one being grammatically correct and proper pronunciation. Chermon changed his attitude to coincide with their present environment.

Findings for participant (7) Lynette: Lynette's perception of speaking proper English requires one to speak clearly and fluently using correct pronunciation. When asked how her English is measured for its accuracy she said articulation and clarity is key but it came at a cost of being called white by friends. During the interview Lynette was emotional, after explaining how being called white for her proper use of the English language during high school and even now in adulthood. The participant went on to explain how her use of speaking proper English has benefitted her identity in the customer service field. As a university secretary Lynette's proper English is very much appreciated in the office. In spite of being called white Lynette was asked what mental strategies did she use if someone said something that was against her proper use of English language? Lynette stated having a sense of humor has enabled her to block the taunting from friends (to see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section A). The participant's comments about proper English centered on her saying:

I think speaking proper English consist of talking clearly and fluently. I also think speaking properly or my perception of using proper English has benefitted my identity and professional career but when friends do make fun of my English I would jokingly tell them to shut up

Based on the interview there were three themes relative to the formation of Lynette's perception of proper English, clarity, fluency, and pronunciation. valued her perception and usage

of speaking proper English. Lynette remained loyal to her current lifestyle in spite of being taunted from friends.

Findings for Participant (8) Leila: The questions on one's perception of speaking proper (see results section A) attempted to identify Leila's perception of speaking proper English. Leila's perception of speaking properly English centered on a person speaking clear enough so the listener can understand an individual's words. When asked how her English is measured for its accuracy Leila stated there is no measurement in speaking proper English because you can't measure the words pronounced out of someone's mouth. Throughout the interview Leila refrained from using a textbook approach to determining what is and what is not proper English. The next question focused on language variability in which Leila identified her language as formal such as yes or no when speaking with anyone ranging from mom to manager. We proceeded to identity questions in which the research asked how has your use of proper English benefited her identity, profession, education and friendship? Leila did not use words such as clarity, articulation, fluency, syntax, and or diction to answer this question instead she preferred second power words as a benefit to her identity, profession, and education. The participant's comments about proper English centered on her saying:

Speaking clearly so someone can understand your words is proper English to me. I think my use of proper English has benefitted me during interviews and my knowledge to use second power words. However, I never had to defend my use of proper English because my friends are accustomed to my speaking style

Based on the interview there were three themes relative to the formation of Leila's perception of proper English, clarity, formality, and eloquent words. Leila remained loyal to her current lifestyle and perception of English in spite of what friends thought.

Findings for Participant (9) Dion: Dion's perception of speaking proper English consisted of pronouncing his words correctly and not confusing words just because they sound the same. When asked how his words are measured for proper English Dion said pronunciation is a key factor for him. When asked how does his language vary based on speaking with family, friends, manager, teacher, or close associate the aspiring Chicago rap artist said family and friends are addressed in an urban type language while his manager and teacher are addressed with more proper English.

Even though he may have addressed professionals in a proficient manner, urban language was his everyday speech. The researcher asked Dion if he could tell a story when his use of English actually stood out from a family member, friend, co-worker or close associates? The participant described how he explained a theory to his African American phlebotomy professor using an urban type of language that did not exactly thrill the professor. Dion went on to say urban language is his common metaphor or everyday form of communicating. The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

My perception of proper English is all about using the correct word to explain what you are trying to describe. I believe by keeping it real and not talking all proper has benefitted my identity and friendship because I am not being phony or fake. In relation to defending my English, no one has ever questioned or teased my proper English with the exception of a few word pronunciations during a conversation.

Based on the interview there were three themes relative to the formation of Dion's perception of proper English, pronunciation, definitive meaning of words and ebonics. Dion remained loyal to his current lifestyle and did not change his perception of English.

Findings for Participant (10) Edward: The questions on one's perception of speaking proper (see section A) attempted to identify Edward's perception of speaking proper English. Edward's

perception of proper English consisted of what he learned in elementary school about the English language. The grammar school classes in particular is what set the foundation for how proper English is viewed, which is using a standard pronunciation of words. He went on to say how modern society has created slang as a form of communication even though it is an informal language that has now become the norm in some urban neighborhoods. The Midwest university civil engineer graduate believed a textbook based approach to measuring proper English is a standard for him.

Edward went on to explain how slang is his common language when speaking with family and friends but managers and teachers are addressed more professionally. The researcher went on to ask how has his use of proper English benefited his identity, profession, education and friendship? Edward believed having to speak proper English has been a detriment instead of a benefit because it's not his true identity in a sense. The participant explained how speaking proper English has helped his professional identity in the workplace but it's not a huge benefit outside the job because it's not a common language in his neighborhood. The participant's comments about proper English centered on him saying:

The English I learned from parents and what I learned in my high school grammar classes set the foundation on how I use English language. I think speaking proper English in the work place has benefitted me but is detrimental also because it's not my true identity. Honestly, my friends know the importance of speaking proper English when it's necessary, because they know white people run this country so I never had to defend or explain my reason for speaking proper English.

Based on the interview there were two themes relative to the formation of Edward’s perception of proper English, which was proper grammar, and a textbook approach of communication. Edward changed his attitude to coincide with the present environment.

Section B Chart 2 Theme Coding for Music Genre Questionnaire:

For section B participant’s answers to the questions relating to non-ethnic music genre were categorized under:

1. Ethnic- meaning the participant listened to music of their culture such as rhythm & blues, rap, disco and house music.
2. Non-ethnic- meaning the participant listened to music not of their culture such as country music, classical music, rock & roll
3. Acculturative age- meaning at what age of life did participant venture to other music ranging from pre-adolescent, teenager, and adulthood.
4. Music and identity- meaning music can affect one’s identity either positively or negatively, culturally related to their life
5. Music and mood-meaning music can affect one’s mood, relative to life experience, relative to culture Mental strategy- defensive, non-defensive or neutral

Section B Table 2 : Music Genre

Chart 2 Appendix B Perception of Proper English Questions	Mike Participant 1	Paul Participant 2	Eric Participant 3	Laura Participant 4	Donald Participant 5	Shawn Participant 6	Lynn Participant 7	Linda Participant 8	David Participant 9	Eddie Participant 10
1. What genre of music was played in your household?	Rhythm & Blues and Rap	Rock & Roll and Classical	Rhythm & Blues and Rap	Rhythm & Blues	Rhythm & Blues and Rap	Rhythm & Blues	Rhythm & Blues	Rhythm & Blues/Jazz	Rhythm & Blues and Rap	Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll

2. How often was this music repeated?	Repeatedly	Repeatedly	Repeatedly	Repeatedly	Repeatedly				Repeatedly	Occasionally
3. When did you venture out and listen to other music?	Adulthood		Teenager		Pre-adolescent	Repeatedly	Repeatedly	Repeatedly		
		Teenager		Teenager		Teenager	Pre-adolescent	Teenager	Never ventured out	Teenager
4. How can music connect to one's sense of identity, culture, or life experience?	Neutral	Culturally related								
5. How has this choice of music affected your mood throughout your life?	Neutral		Affect mood		Affect mood	Affect mood		Affect mood	Affect mood	Affect mood
		Neutral		Affect mood			Affect mood	Affect mood	Affect mood	
6. Mental strategies did you use to defend your	Non-defensive		Neutral		Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive
		Non-defensive		Non-defensive						

Finding for participant 1 Michael: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Michael's home throughout childhood, how often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Michael stated his dad would always listen to rap music such as Tupac and

Notorious Big, which later influenced his choice of music to be rap music growing into his teenage years. He went on to explain that his mom's choice of music was slow jams (meaning she listened to R&B or rhythm and blues). Mom chose artist such as such R Kelly, Chris Brown, Charlie Sims, and Johnnie Taylor. Even though Michael's parents conditioned him to rap along with rhythm & blues he developed more of an attachment to rap music. Rap music became the accepted music for Michael even though he did venture into non-ethnic music genres such as Nickel Back a white Canadian rock group who hit the top charts in 1995. Michael and his Caucasian girlfriend enjoyed European bands but his friends did not, so he soon lost interest in the group. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

My dad always listened to rap icons such as Tupac and Notorious Big, which is how I began liking rap music early in life. Now, mom enjoyed slow jams such as R Kelly, Chris Brown, Charlie Sims, and Johnnie Taylor. Now, I ventured out to other music genres (non-ethnic) and began listening to white people music such as Nickel Back a successful Canadian Rock Group around 21 years old. However, when I listened to Nickel Back amongst my black friends I never had to defend my choice of music.

There were three music genres played most in Michael's life, which were rap, rhythm & blues and European music. The participant slowly lost interest in non-ethnic music because it was not the norm amongst group members.

Finding for participant 2 Gregg: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Gregg's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Gregg expressed his mom's eclectic taste for various artists such as Rock N Roll, disco, classical music, and music from the late 1960s. Although Gregg absorbed Rhythm & blues such as Donna Summer, and Simon & Garfunkel, rap music influenced his identity and mood because it was relative to his life. At times Gregg ventured out to non-ethnic music such as Led

Zeppelin but also embraced soulful music as well. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

Mom was kind of eclectic when it came to music, she would play genres such as Rock N Roll, disco, classical music, and songs from the late 1960s. I drifted away from the music I grew up hearing during my late teens and early twenties and began to embrace rock groups such as the Doors, The Who, Jimmy Hendrix and Led Zeppelin. Even though I was teased for my taste in music I am flexible, so if I am riding in my car and listening to a certain genre of music and noticed the passenger isn't feeling the music I'd ask what kind of music they would prefer? If the individual chose an artist or song I wasn't thrilled about I would still listen and not complain.

There were three music genres played most in Gregg's life, which was rap, rock music, and rhythm & blues. Gregg remained loyal to his current lifestyle in spite of the taunting from friends. The effects of labeling a person of color can either positively or negatively effect a cultural straddler's decision to either forgo or assume their behavior once it's manifested amid people closes to the individual such as a family member, friend, or close associate.

Finding for participant 3 Elijah: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Elijah's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Elijah's parents played old school music such as Marvin Gay, and rap artist such as the late Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smog's. While his mom listened to soulful music such as Marvin Gay, his dad enjoyed rappers such as Tupac and the late Biggie Smog's. When asked what genre of music was played most Elijah said Tupac and other rappers. Elijah is an aspiring urban rap artist so his choice of music has varied from old school blues, classical music, and soulful music as well. The participant believed music connects to one's sense of identity, culture, and life experience. He remembered how his mom would clean the house while listening to soulful music. Elijah believed

music eases his mind, which enables him to better express his feeling. Elijah also said even though friends didn't particularly care for classical music it did not change his likeness for the artist he enjoyed. While on the subject of music the participant stated:

Although my mother played soulful music such as Marvin Gay the artist I remember most was Tupac Shakur and Notorious Big. My dad played rap music so much it was relative to my life and what young people such as myself were experiencing. When I was in high school I listened to blues, classical music, and rhythm and blues but didn't really care for heavy metal and rock. Now, my friends didn't have a problem with my taste in rap artist but when I played T-j Cole a white artist they would say man turn that off. I wouldn't change the radio station but I would ask what is their dislike toward the artist other than him being white.

There were three music genres played most in Elijah's life, which is old school blues, classical music, and soulful music. The participant remained loyal to his current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 4 Lisa: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Lisa's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Lisa's parents loved old school blues but they also took a liking to rhythm and blues during Lisa's childhood. During the mid 1990s she remembered her parents grooving to artists such as R.Kelly, Teddy Riley, and Freddie Jackson played in compilation with those old blues albums. As time progressed into the mid 2000s Lisa began listening to similar rhythm & blues artists such as Monica, Keisha Coles and Ashanti. Subsequent to beginning High school Lisa ventured out to other music genres because of VH1 a multicultural television station that played Caucasian type music. Thereafter, Lisa grew to like other culturally based music outside of her ethnic group. Music has been an inspiration to her life especially during those hard times when she just wanted to be alone and relax to soothing songs. Although she was in her early twenties the participant did not

second-guess her choice in music even when friends taunted her about white artists. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

My parents loved old school blues but they also took a liking to rhythm and blues during my childhood such as R.Kelly, Teddy Riley and Freddie Jackson. I ventured out to other music genres in the middle 2000s when I was introduced to VH-1 a multicultural television station that played Caucasian type music. I grew to like white singers such as Gwen Stefani, Eminem and Lady Gaga and if my friends made fun of my music choice or called them white it really would not bother me as long as I enjoy the artist.

There were three music genres played most in Lisa's life, which is, rhythm & blues, rap, and soulful music. The interview revealed Lisa remained loyal to her current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 5 Dominique: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Dominique's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? The researcher began by asking Dominique what genre of music was played in his household that made you notice this was your family's music of choice? Dominique said the music genre was split between mom enjoying Jazz artist and rhythm blues singers such as Mariah Carey and Luther Vandross, while his dad listened to rappers such as Tupac and Lil Wayne throughout the day. However, it was not until 6th or 7th grade when his friendship became more diverse with Caucasian artist such as Critique Biscuit and Lincoln Park.

Dominique believed music is an expression of one's feelings, which make certain songs relative to his identity and how he is feeling at that time. Rap music played a pivotal role in Dominique's life ranging from how he dressed, speak and behave. When asked what mental strategies did he use to defend his choice of white music the participant said he would ask his friend to explain why they don't like his choice of music such as Critique Biscuit or Lincoln Park

but would not let their taunting alter his choice of music. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

The music genre was split between mom enjoying Jazz artist along with rhythm blues singers such as Mariah Carey and Luther Vandross, while my dad listened to rappers such as Tupac and Lil Wayne. I began listening to other music genres between 6th and 7th grade when my friendship became more diverse mainly white kids during my early years living in southern Illinois. I began listening to Caucasian singing groups like Critique Biscuit and Lincoln Park. I would ask my friends to explain why they didn't like that artist however there decisions did not alter my choice of music.

There were four music genres played most in Dominique's life, which is jazz, rap, rhythm & blues, and white singing artist. The interview revealed Elijah remained loyal to his current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 6 Chermon: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Chermon's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Hermon's mom played rhythm and blues such as singer Mary J. Blongs and Kelly Price for enjoyment but jammed on house music (a form 1970s disco music) when it was time to clean up the house. The music he remembered most was mom's rhythm & blues collection such as Mary Blige album and Kelly Price as a child. Outside of mom's genre, Chermon grew up in Galesburg Illinois so white music was normal but after the family moved to Harvey Illinois; rap music along with Rhythm & Blues became the new norm in high school because his friends were black. Now, to answer my question Chermon didn't have to venture out to non-ethnic music because European music was part of his inner circle of friends in Galesburg. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

My mom played rhythm and blues such as singer Mary J. Blygs and Kelly Price for enjoyment but jammed on house music (a form of 1970s disco music) when it was time to clean up the house. I grew to enjoy music outside of my ethnic group due to my early years living in Galesburg Illinois a mostly white town. Now, my late teen years was mainly lived in Harvey Illinois a predominantly African American suburb but I did not and don't allow my new friends ridicule of my music choice to dissuade me from enjoying what I like.

There were two music genres played most in Chermon's life, which is, rhythm & blues and house music. The interview revealed Chermon remained loyal to his current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 7 Lynette: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Lynette's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? As a child she grew up hearing her older brother playhouse music (which is similar to fast paced disco music) but Lynette's mom played artist such as Smokey Robinson and all the oldies. However, her father played country music but the two music genres played most was house music along with rhythm & blues. Lynette's mom would play various rhythm and blues artist on their record player back in the old days but what she remembered most was house music repeatedly played by her brother. While on the subject of music Lynette recalled her middle school years and the first time she ever heard African music (mostly rhythmic drum beating) that was different than the normal music she heard around the house.

As time progressed Lynette slowly ventured out to other music genres that had a nice beat such as Brazilian, Portuguese, and Reggae toned music. However, during the interview Lynette reverted back to house music and how it has a cultural connection with not only her identity but the African American culture as well, due to the large of amount of African Americans who related to the rhythmic style and cultural history of house music in Chicago. Although Lynette recognized her ethnic roots through music she was still taunted for her taste in music and white speech but she

never stopped listening to her choice of music. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

As a child I grew up hearing my older brother playhouse music (which is similar to fast paced disco music) but mom played artist such as Smokey Robinson and all the oldies. Now my father played country music but the two music genres played most was house music by my older brother and rhythm and blues. I remember my grammar school years and the first time I heard African music (mostly rhythmic drum beating) that was different than the normal music I heard around the house. As time progressed I slowly ventured into other music genres that had a nice beat such as Brazilian, Portuguese, and Reggae toned music. Whenever I played artist such as Novella an African musician around friends they would turn it off and I would turn it back on, we would repeat the process several times until I request they leave my radio alone.

There were four music genres played most in Lynette's life which is, house music, soulful music, Reggae and Brazilian music. The interview revealed Lynette remained loyal to her current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 8 Leila: The questions on music genre (see results section B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Leila's home throughout childhood? How often was that particular music was played? When did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Leila's mom listened to various music genres such as jazz, and rhythm & blues, but she heard James Brown, Michael Jackson, and Madonna played most as a child. The participant ventured out during her early teenage years gravitating towards white artists such as Brittany Spears, N Sync, Back Street Boys, Kid Rock, Limp Biscuit, Aerosmith, and Blink 182, which were all white artists. The researcher went on to ask in what way can music connect to one's sense of identity, culture, or life experience? Leila believed music is a form of expression in which people can associate their life to the meaning of a certain song. Since Leila listened to non-ethnic music the researcher asked what mental strategies did she use to defend her choice of music if

someone said the music was white? Leila stated if her friends said something negative about her choice of music she would say these are artist who make good music and not just white people's music. While on the subject of music the participant stated:

My mother listened to jazz, rhythm, and blues, but I heard James Brown, Michael Jackson, and Madonna played the most as a child. I ventured out during my early teenage years and gravitated to white artists such as Brittany Spears, N Sync, Back Street Boys, Kid Rock, Limp Biscuit, Aerosmith, and Blink 182, which are all white artists. If my friends said something negative about my choice of music I would say these are artist make good music and not just a white person's music.

There were four music genres played most in Leila's life, which were, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Madonna and white singing artist. The interview revealed Leila remained loyal to her current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 9 (results section B) Dion: The questions on music genre (see Appendix B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Dion's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Dion stated hip Hop and R&B was played most such as R.Kelly and Maxwell but when it came to hip hop his mom played east coast artists like Jay Z and Lil Kim along with Chicago artist like Do or Die and Tongue Twista. The researcher asked at what time or age in his life did he venture out to other music that differed from his ethnic group or the music he grew up hearing? Dion stated he never ventured into other music genres as he believed there were no other artist outside his cultural selection of artist that interest him except maybe Eminem a white rap artist. Since Dion listened to European artists the researcher asked what mental strategies did he use to defend his choice of music if someone said Eminem was an artist or may have showed through his or her action they were not interested in listening? Dion expressed a careless attitude

to what his friend thought about his choice of music. While on the subject of music the participant stated:

Hip Hop and R&B was played most such as R.Kelly and Maxwell but when it came to hip hop mom played east coast rap artist like Jay Z and Lil Kim along with Chicago artist like Do or Die and Tongue Twista. I really never ventured out to other music genres because I don't believe there are artist outside my culture that would be of interest to me maybe except Eminem a white rap artist. Overall, I never cared what my friend thought about my choice of music because it would not change what I like.

There were three music genres played most in Dion's life which is, Hip Hop, Rhythm and Blues and Rap music. The interview revealed Dion remained loyal to his current lifestyle.

Finding for participant 10 (results section B) Edward: The questions on music genre (see Appendix B) attempted to identify what genre of music was played most in Edward's home throughout childhood? How often it was played and when if any did the participant venture out to other non-ethnic music genres? Edward's mom listened to Lauren Hill (a rhythm & blues singer) and 1980s rock music while in the midst of a divorce, dad on the other hand (who is disc jockey) listened to a lot of hip-hop. The participant went on to explain how mom wasn't really big on music but dad would play hip-hop and Rhythm and Blues on a daily basis along with some house music tracks he created himself. As time progressed Edward ventured out to rock music during guitar hero's inception (2005), which is a series of musical games created for the PlayStation 2 home video game. The break through in playing a real guitar began at age 15 with the embracement of neo soul, blues, and Rock & Roll bands such as Winger, Scorpions, and Van Halen that all started from playing a video game. However, while on the subject of music the participant stated:

My dad was a DJ so I grew up listening to Hip-hop rap artist and quite a collection of soulful music. I ventured out to guitar music after playing this video game my parents purchased when I was around 13 years of age. I play quite a bit white rock music on my guitar and really don't care what people thought of my music choice besides all my

friends know I play the guitar and the music I find enjoyable such as Neo Soul and white artist as well.

There were three music genres played most in Edward's life which was Hip Hop, Soulful music and white rock music. The interview revealed Edward remained loyal to his current lifestyle.

Section C Chart 3 Theme Coding for Academic Identity

For section C participant's answers to the questions relating to academic identity were categorized under:

- 1 Academic identity- meaning the participant's answers coincide with being an intellectual, intelligent or academically oriented
- 2 Acting white- meaning the participant indulged in activities that was considered non-ethnic

Section C: Academic Identity

As is illustrated below categorizing each participant's response during the interview. Data theming (or thematic analysis) was used to categorize recurring themes such as words, similar thoughts, and patterns expressed throughout the 10 participant interview. Participants answered the following four questions: 1) Reflecting on your childhood years, dating back to elementary school, I want you to tell me a defining moment that helped you think, more deeply about your identity as it relates to academics?, 2) In your own words, how would you describe your identity as it relates to your education?, 3) How would your family members, friends, or close associate describe your identity as it relates to academics?, and 4) What mental strategies did you use to defend your academic identity if someone said your acting like a white person or showed through their behavioral responses they did not like your academic style? The interviews consisted of the following participants: 1) Mike, 2) Paul, 3) Eric, 4) Derrick, 5) Donald, 6) Shawn, 7) Lynn, 8) Linda, 9) David, and 10) Eddie as illustrated in the chart.

This research consisted of two questions which is how do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within the four themes? The researcher used data theming to cluster similar recurring themes expressed during interviews. For section C participant's answers to the questions relating to academic identity were categorized under:

1. Academic identity- meaning the participant's answers coincide with being an intellectual, intelligent or academically oriented
2. Acting white- meaning the participant indulged in activities that was considered non-ethnic
3. Culturally diverse- meaning the participant is aware of and respect other ethnic groups beliefs and behaviors

Participants 1, 3, 6, 8, 9 expressed how their parents encouraged them to take education serious during elementary school while participant 10 stated how he was self-inspired to take academics serious. During the interview these six participants seem to explain (in their own words) how education was not a first priority until their parents explained the benefits of education with the exception of participant number 10. In particular, Mike began taking his academic identity serious around 10th grade due to the close relationship with his father while Eric, Shawn, and Linda, expressed how their mom encouraged them to embrace academics. Eddie, expressed how growing up in a socioeconomically depressed community like Englewood motivated him to want more out of life and he believed academics was his only way out. The six participants expressed how they were viewed as acting white amongst their friends dating back to elementary school and high school. Eddie the civil engineer (participant 10) who plays Rock N Roll music on his guitar as a

hobby still face being called white amongst his neighborhood friends. Participants 2 and 4 began taking education serious after receiving a failing grade in elementary school. Paul expressed his reaction after receiving an “F” on a classroom test that left him feeling less than other students while Donald expressed how receiving a failing grade made him realize the importance of studying and academics. Laura and Lynn (or participants 4 and 7) explained how their inquisitive mind initiated them to take academics serious.

Participants Mike, Paul, and Linda (or participant 1, 2, and 8) expressed similar words in question two attributable to an academic identity. The three participants believed education is the foundation of their identity, indulged in non-ethnic activities that deviated from the norm and saw nothing wrong with their active lifestyle. They were the only two participants who placed such a high regard on education and it shaped their identity. Participants, Eric, Donald, Shawn and Eddie (or participants 3, 5, 6 and 10) used words that described their identity as being culturally diverse and also believed education broadened their mind and way of viewing the world. Laura and (or participant 4) described her identity as inquisitive while Lynn (participant 7) described her identity as smart. Both participants displayed placed a high regard on academics but also expressed their dislike for some African Americans categorized a person of color as being white if they show a certain level of intelligence. The Englewood native David described his identity as educated but also expressed that he is not a white boy. The clothing store associate also pronounced his identity as being hood too in front of other co-workers as if to exceed the educated characteristics.

For question three, participants (1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,9 and 10) stated how their friends used words such as debater, historian or intelligent to describe their personality. Linda (participant 8) the café manager expressed how friends described her as a historian, as the interview progressed the participants also explained those same friends would jokingly call her white too. For question four

Mike, Donald, and Shawn expressed how they were defensive when friends called them white, when Lynn, Linda, David and Eddie were non-defensive when friends called them white because of their intelligence and Paul and Linda were neutral meaning they did not give the joke much thought. This research consisted of two questions which is how do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within the four themes? This study revealed African Americans who possessed an academic identity were called white amongst friends which alludes to Dr.Ogbu's acting white theory.

Section C Table 3: Academic Identity

Study 3 C Academic Identity questionnaire	Mike Participant 1	Paul Participant 2	Eric Participant 3	Laura Participant 4	Donald Participant 5	Shawn Participant 6	Lynn Participant 7	Linda Participant 8	David Participant 9	Eddie Participant 10
1. Can you tell me a defining moment that helped you think more deeply about your identity as it relates to academics?	Family encouraged	Failing Grade	Family encouraged	Inquisitive	Failing Grade	Family encouraged	Inquisitive	Family encouraged	Family encouraged	Self-inspired
2. How would you describe your identity as it relates to your education?	Academic identity	Academic identity	Culturally diverse	Intellectual	Culturally diverse	Culturally diverse	Smart	Academic identity	Educated	Culturally diverse
3. How would your family members, friends, or close associate describe your identity as it relates to academics?	Debater	Intellectual	Academic identity	Goal oriented	Intellectual	Athletic	Cultured	Historian	Debater	Intelligent
4. What mental was used to defend your academic Identity?	Defensive	Neutral	Defensive	Neutral	Defensive	Defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive

Finding for participant 1 (results section Appendix C) Michael: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant’s identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Michael about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? Michael expressed how academics became a

serious undertaking in 10th grade because he knew education was an important aspect of his identity. He was excited to explain how education positively shaped his life throughout high school and junior college but he also received taunting from classmates who would call him white due to his desire to study and complete homework assignments on time. The next question was concerned with how family members, friends, or close associates described Michael's identity as it related to academics? Michael's friends described him as very debative when it came to group discussions, especially if they were discussing a topic he knew well. Michael explained how it angered him when friends labeled him a white boy just because he indulged in activities that were considered white like, fishing and deer hunting. Based on the interview there were two themes relative to the formation of Michael's academic attitude which is he began to take academics serious in 10th grade, he was seen as debative amongst friends but was also labeled white boy.

Finding for participant 2 (results section C) Gregg The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant' identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Gregg about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? Gregg expressed how education became a serious undertaking subsequent to failing a test in 1st grade. Gregg was embarrassed, but it also raised his awareness as to the importance of studying and education. The researcher asked Gregg to describe what education means to him? In which he replied education certainly varies because there is book intelligence, street sense, and common sense so to apply all three levels of intellect to his life required good judgment. Gregg believed education is the foundation for him to make good judgments in life. The next question was concerned with how family members, friends, or close associates described Michael's identity as it related to academics? Gregg is seen as an intellectual person amongst family and friends but some of those same friends jokingly called him

white boy. The participant expressed how being categorized as a white boy throughout his life because he mainly frequented European bars. Gregg also expressed how being called white never angered him. Based on the interview there were two themes relative to the formation of an academic attitude. Subsequent to failing a test he began taking academics seriously in 1st grade. As time progressed friends and family had started viewing him as an intelligent person. Gregg also believed good judgment is an important quality.

Finding for participant 3 (results section C) Elijah: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Elijah about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? Elijah stated there really was not a defining moment, he just knew the importance of education in elementary school due to mom emphasizing how learning would give him a promising future. The participant went on to express how education positively enhanced his identity while growing up in Englewood. The researcher asked Elijah how would you describe your identity as it relates to your education? Elijah expressed how education had its place in his life as it related to learning in the classroom but social skills are what benefited him the most. The participant went on to say most of his friends would define him as a smart and well-rounded person that doesn't particularly care for school but those same friends also called him white boy if he showed his more intellectual nature too much. Based on the interview there were three emerging themes relative to the formation of an academic attitude: he knew education was important during elementary school, education enhanced his social skills and he's seen as smart amongst friends.

Finding for participant 4 (results section C) Lisa: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to

academics. The researcher asked Lisa about a defining moment that helped her think more deeply about her identity as it related to academics? Lisa explained how she was an honor student in high school with an inquisitive desire to learn so attaining good grades was important to her identity. When asked to describe her identity as it related to education Lisa exclaimed education as being pertinent to her life and financial well-being. The participant also stated that she has always been driven and controlled by an academic lifestyle. As the interview progressed Lisa stated her immediate family and friends would describe her as smart and goal oriented.. The participant also stated she will be the first college graduate amongst her nuclear family. Based on the interview it appeared as though Lisa's perception of education was positive along with the encouragement she received from college friends. Based on the interview Lisa expressed three emerging themes relevant to the formation of an academic attitude, she's an inquisitive learner, attained good grades and her friends would describe her as smart and goal oriented.

Finding for participant 5 (results section C) Dominique: The questions on academic identity (see Appendix B) attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced Dominique's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Dominique about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? The first memory Dominique had about himself as it related to academics was receiving an "F" in first grade subsequent to a lack of test preparation. The failing grade weakened his spirit throughout elementary and high school. However, Dominique regained his love for academics and its innate benefits upon entering college. When asked how does his identity relate to education? Dominique stated education goes beyond the classroom and into his own culture. For him education is about venturing out into other cultures and becoming well rounded. Dominique viewed academics as becoming more cultured in America's diverse society. Based on the interview Dominique expressed one emerging theme

relevant to the formation of an academic attitude. Subsequent to receiving a failing grade in elementary school it seemed to raise his awareness as to the importance of studying.

Finding for participant 6 (results section C) Chermon: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Chermon about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? Chermon recalled how his mom implemented a strict regimen when it came to schoolwork and attaining good grades. Chermon stated that he knew it was important to keep his grades within an A or B range for my sake and to keep mom happy. As the interview progressed Chermon described his academic identity as being cultured while family members and friends viewed him as an avid learner. The last question focused on Chermon's mental strategy to defend his choice of activities if friends taunted him. The participant was teased for staying after school in study groups but Chermon would tell the taunters that is why your grades are poor. Based on the interview Chermon expressed one theme relative to the formation of an academic attitude, which was studying assiduously to maintain an A or B average throughout elementary and high school.

Finding for participant 7 (results section C) Lynette: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Lynette about a defining moment that helped her think more deeply about her identity as it related to academics? Lynette expressed two themes that coincide with an academic attitude, which was her love for math and literature (mainly Shakespeare and Greek Mythology). The participant considered herself cultured but family and friends saw her as the smart go to person for guidance. As the interview progressed Lynette, stated she never had to defend her academic identity or reason for speaking proper English. Based on the interview

Lynette expressed two themes relative to the formation of an academic attitude, which was her love for math and literature.

Finding for participant 8 (results section C) Leila: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Leila about a defining moment that helped her think more deeply about her identity as it related to academics? Leila expressed how she watched mom struggle to make a living with a high school education and realized the importance of an education in 8th grade. The young adult believed academics would provide a better opportunity in life and the job market once she graduated from college. Leila, also believed academics reflects through her identity when friends consult her for advice. Her ability to empathize and sympathize with friends is credited to the education she attained throughout life. Based on the interview Leila expressed two themes relative to the formation of an academic attitude, which is her love for academics and the aptitude to give professional advice to friends.

Finding for participant 9 (results section C) Dion: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Dion about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? Dion stated academics were an important part of his Mom's life, which she imposed on him around nine years of age. Mom made sure his homework and studying was completed before he associated with friends or played video games. Dion described his identity as it related to academics as prioritized and focused because of mom's stricked regimen for studying and competing homework assignments during his elementary and high school years. As the interview progressed Dion stated his described him as smart and very debative.

Based on the interview Dion expressed two themes relative to the formation of an academic attitude, his Mom's devotion for him to complete homework assignments and to study as well.

Finding for participant 10 (results section C) Edward: The questions on academic identity attempted to identify what aspect in life influenced the participant's identity as it related to academics. The researcher asked Edward about a defining moment that helped him think more deeply about his identity as it related to academics? It was in sixth grade when the now civil engineer began to embrace math and reading. Although Edward embraced education in elementary and high school he preferred to describe his identity as artsy and musical however friends described him as the math guy or solution oriented person because he is known to figure things out. Edward went on to say its okay being known as the smart person.

Based on the interview Edward expressed two themes relative to the formation of an academic attitude, which is the embracement of math and reading in elementary school.

Section D Chart 4 Theme Coding: Non-ethnic recreational activities:

For section D participants answers to the questions relating to non-ethnic recreational activities

- 1 Defensive- meaning the participant responded to a friend, family or close associate in a negatively
- 2 Ethnic activities- are activities considered normal amongst an ethnic group or subgroup of African Americans
- 3 Non-ethnic activities- indulging in activities, hobbies, games, social clubs or happenings that's not accepted with an group
- 4 Non-defensive- meaning the participant did not respond negatively in defense of their recreational music choice

Section D below categorized each participant's response during the interview. Data theming (or thematic analysis) was used to categorize recurring themes such as words, similar thoughts, and patterns expressed throughout the 10 participant interviews. Participants answered the following four questions: 1) What recreational activity had the most influence on your life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in your neighborhood or social circle of friends? 2) What places have you visited in your city for recreational purposes you found entertaining that was non-ethnic where you noticed a very small portion of African, Hispanic or Native Americans or a person of color? 3) What other recreational activities or places you found enjoyable but also found yourself frequenting the place alone because your friends thought it was non-ethnic? 4) What mental strategies did you use to defend your choice of recreational activities when someone showed you they did not like your choice of recreational activities either through their distancing themselves from you or any other notion you may have noticed? The interviews consisted of the following participants: 1) Mike, 2) Paul, 3) Eric, 4) Derrick, 5) Donald, 6) Shawn, 7) Lynn, 8) Linda, 9) David, and 10) Eddie as illustrated in section D.

This research consisted of two questions which is how do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within the four themes? The researcher used data theming to cluster similar recurring themes expressed during interviews. For section D, participant's answered questions relating to recreational activities which were categorized under either:

For section D participants answers to the questions relating to non-ethnic recreational activities

1. Defensive- meaning the participant responded to a friend, family or close associate in a negatively
2. Ethnic activities- are activities considered normal amongst an ethnic group or sub-group of African Americans
3. Non-ethnic activities- indulging in activities, hobbies, games, social clubs or happenings that's not accepted with an group
4. Non-defensive- meaning the participant did not respond negatively in defense of their recreational music choice

Participants (1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10) enjoyed non-ethnic recreational activities during their teenager and young adult life, while the other applicants (2, 3, 5, and 9) did not indulge in non-ethnic activities. Paul, Eric, and David chose to forego question one believing it did not pertain to their lifestyle. Inquiry two asked what places have you visited in your city for recreational purposes you found entertaining that was non-ethnic? Participants (1 thru 10) visited places around Chicago that was non-ethnic but found themselves frequented without friends. Mike, Paul, and Lynn embraced the non-ethnic recreational activities and soon turned them into hobbies even after their friends opted out. Participants Eric, Laura, Donald, Shawn, Linda, and David indulged in non-

ethnic recreational activities during their teenage years expressed similar words in question two attributable to losing enjoyment due to growing older or finding pleasure in other recreational activities. Inquiry four asked participants what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities if friends showed a dislike? Nine of the ten participants used similar words to explain their non-defensive approach if friends taunted their non-recreational choices. Eric the clothing store associate and native of Englewood located in Chicago said he would become verbally aggressive if friends teased his non-ethnic recreational choices.

Section D Table 4: Recreational Activities

Chart 4 Appendix D Perception of Proper English Questions	Mike Participant 1	Paul Participant 2	Eric Participant 3	Laura Participant 4	Donald Participant 5	Shawn Participant 6	Lynn Participant 7	Linda Participant 8	David Participant 9	Eddie Participant 10
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1. What non-ethnic recreational activity influenced you most?	Deer hunting	No answer	None	Oil painting	After speech classes	Multicultural class project	Spanish dance classes	Badminton	None	Guitar playing
2. Have you frequented non-ethnic recreational activities in your city?	Fishing lake	Smart Bar	Chicago 5K run	Shedd Aquarium	Chinatown	Downtown Chicago	Spanish social groups	Mexican Taco Festival	White party	None
3. Have you visited other non-ethnic recreational activities your friends did not like?	Fishing	Metro Bar	White/European bars	Shedd Aquarium	Long boarding	Ballroom dancing	Latino dance classes	None	Never ventured out	The Guitar Center
4. What mental strategies did you use to defend your choice of recreational activities?	Neutral	Neutral	Non-defensive	Defensive	Neutral	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive	Non-defensive

Findings for Participant 1 Michael: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Michael’s life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was

non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited. Michael and his father took up an enjoyable sport of deer hunting growing up in Mississippi but the family later moved to Chicago and Michael soon lost interest in hunting due to city life and a lack of interest from friends. Michael renewed his outdoor life and soon took up fishing as a teenager but also found himself alone because friends considered the sport boring and white.

The researcher asked what mental strategies did he use to defend his choice of recreational activities when someone showed him they did not like his choice of recreational activities? Michael expressed that he never really had to defend the activities he chose to indulge in because if his friend did not like it he would often go alone. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

Well, I loved deer hunting but rekindled that enjoyment in fishing, because when I moved to Chicago of course deer hunting ended. Even though fishing was not a shared activity amongst my friends, I never really had to defend my recreational activities because if a friend did not like it I would often go alone.

Based on the interview there were two recreational activities Michael enjoyed, deer hunting, and fishing, which he abandoned due to friends showing no interest in the activity. Michael received a (2) because he changed his attitude to coincide with group norms. Sherriff (1936) described norms as "jointly negotiated rules for social behavior, the customs, traditions,

standards, rules, values and fashions which are standardized as a consequence of the contact of individuals.

Findings for Participant 2 Gregg: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Gregg's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. The participant did frequent north sidebars and clubs such as Metro Bar and Smart Bar located north of Chicago. As the interview progressed the researcher asked what mental strategies were you use to defend his choice of recreational activities?

Gregg said if a friend disagreed or taunted his nightlife "sticks and stones" meaning their words don't hurt him because he's accustomed to frequenting Chicago north side bars. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

One weekend I was heading up north to the Smart Bar and asked Fred if he like to go with me and I remember him laughing as if to say that's not my crowd. I knew that is what he meant because we are longtime friends. I used to that response so when Fred laughed or another friend disagreed or taunted my nightlife my response is sticks and stones man once again sticks and stones because their words don't hurt me.

Based on the interview there were two recreational activities Gregg enjoyed, which was frequenting Chicago's north side Smart Bar and Metro Bar. Gregg received a (1) meaning the participant remained loyal to his current lifestyle.

Findings for Participant 3 Elijah: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Elijah's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. Elijah didn't indulge in non-ethnic activities except maybe a 5k run at Millennium Park with fellow Chicagoans. After he finished the run there was an after party held at an auditorium in the downtown area. Although Elijah enjoyed the party there really were not too many African Americans but it did not bother him.

The researcher asked if there were any other recreational activities or places he found enjoyable but also found himself frequenting alone because friends thought it was non-ethnic? Elijah stated how his friends have frequented a number of ethnically diverse parties, clubs, and bars around the Chicago land area without shying away from a mostly white crowd. The participant went on to say diversity isn't an issue but if the music was whack they would more than likely leave. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (see Appendix D) because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

I have frequented a number of mixed clubs for recreational purposes so diversity isn't an issue but if the music was whack then we would more than likely leave. My circle of friends are really close so if they are not feeling it (being the activity) then I probably would not either so never had to defend my choice of recreational activities.

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Elijah enjoyed which was frequenting predominately white or Europeans parties and bars around the Chicago land area along with friends who chose to accompany him instead of calling him white.

Findings for Participant 4 Lisa: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Lisa's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in her neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did she find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. As a child Lisa ventured out into painting on canvas, however her friends didn't painting interesting so she soon abandoned painting to play outside with her siblings and friends. The researcher went on to ask what places has she visited in her city for recreational purposes that was entertaining but was non-ethnic where you noticed a very small portion of African, Hispanic or Native Americans or a person of color?

The 20-year-old explained how she enjoyed visiting the Shed Aquarium.. The visit was new, exciting, and educational so she invited friends but they sharply declined so Lisa eventually abandoned the activity also. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (see section D) because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

When I was around 16 years old I remember the exciting time of visiting the Sheda Aquarium, I told my neighborhood friends but they really weren't interested. I never really had to defend my recreational activities with friends however I did stand up to my mom concerning my love for playing basketball with the guys, because she angrily detested her daughter being involved in such a masculine sport especially during high school.

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Lisa enjoyed that was considered non-ethnic, which was visiting the Shedd Aquarium as a young adult and during her teenage years

Findings for Participant 5 Dominique: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Dominique's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. As of 2017 Dominique is a college basketball player however he's also on a speech team as well. The speech team was really considered out of the norm for him, being the only black male student and one black female student. The participant said joining a speech team was totally nerdy amongst his friends.

Dominique has indulged in other non-ethnic activities such as visiting Chicago's China town, and picked up a new sport named long boarding, which is equivalent to using a big skateboard. Whenever he invited his friends to accompany him they would say man that is for white people. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (see Appendix D) because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities?

To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

Oh I love long boarding which is similar to skateboarding except the board you stand on is really long, man I really loved that sport but I found myself going alone because my friends really were not interested. I tried to ask one of my friends to long board with me but he wasn't interested, my friends and I have a playful kind of relationship so I never had to defend my choice of activities.

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Dominique enjoyed that was considered non-ethnic which was long boarding.

Findings for Participant 6 Chermon: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Chermon's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. As a young elementary school student Chermon remembered being sent to Springfield Illinois to present a project him and a classmate had completed. The trip was exciting, educational, and multicultural considering the predominantly white group of students who attended the event were quite different from his African American classmates in Galesburg Illinois. When asked about what other recreational or entertaining activities he indulged in Chermon remembered taking his college girlfriend to a Chicago pizza restaurant located in downtown Chicago.

The memory was vivid because they were the only African Americans amongst a countless number of white people whom he believed was staring at him and his girlfriend. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

I signed up for a ballroom dancing class at my high school that turned to be very fun. I remember telling my friends about all of the women who attended to try an influence them to participate but they laughed at me. For example when they laughed about the

ballroom dancing class I did not even try to defend my choice of activity I just laughed it as well and moved on

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Chermon enjoyed that was considered non-ethnic which was ballroom dancing.

Findings for Participant 7 Lynette: The questions on recreational activities (see section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Lynette's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in her neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. Lynette ventured out to a Reggae/Spanish dancing classes located on 18th street in Chicago. Even though the instructor taught dancing lessons from both ethnic genres of music their class base was primarily Latino. She said the class was entertaining but did not return for a second class because her best friend chose not to accompany her. Lynette stated she would have enjoyed the classes more if the moment were shared with her best friend.

The dance studio Lynette visited was very non-ethnic with a very small portion of African Americans in a mostly Latino and European based classroom. Even though she frequented other places she does not recall visiting any other place that had a primarily white crowd. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (see section D) because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see section D.

I don't recall visiting any other non-ethnic place except that dance class however, even though my best friend found the class boring she never taunted my choice of activities but I did abandon the second class because I did not want to go alone.

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Lynette enjoyed that was considered non-ethnic which was a Spanish dance class.

Findings for Participant 8 Leila: The questions on recreational activities (see section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Leila's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in her neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. Leila was a student in a predominantly white high school so she experienced non-ethnic activities like badminton a sport rarely played amongst her African American friends in her classroom and neighborhood. The participant stated her and two friends (one Hispanic and one African American) visited a taco fest on the north side of Chicago and really enjoyed themselves.

When asked if she felt out of place being around a predominantly Latino race Leila said no we had a lot of fun. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (see section D) because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

My circle of friends is always open to experiencing other cultures and activities so I never encountered an issue with a friend opting out due to cultural differences. My

friends are really open to exploring other cultures and activities as previously stated so I have never had to defend my choice of undertakings

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Lelia enjoyed that was considered non-ethnic which was badminton.

Findings for Participant 9 Dion: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Dion's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. Oddly Gambling was Dion's recreational activity, mainly dice games with friends. He also went beyond gambling with his African American friends and included Asian and Latin Americans in the game.

Since Dion attended a culturally diverse high school located on Chicago's north side gambling with non-African Americans gave him an advantage because he knew tricks such as how to hold and roll the dice to hit the winning numbers. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four (see Appendix D) because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

I never ventured out into other areas of recreational activities with a small population of African Americans unless it was gambling or playing cards. I also never had to defend my choice of activities because most of my friends didn't frequent white or culturally diverse clubs or bars.

Based on the interview Dion never ventured out to any non-recreational activities. Findings for Participant 10 Edward: The questions on recreational activities (see results section D) attempted to identify what recreational activity had the most influence on Edward's life outside of the home that was considered non-ethnic or abnormal in his neighborhood or social circle of friends. The researcher asked what recreational activities did he find entertaining that was non-ethnic where a very small portion of African, Hispanic, or Native Americans or a person of color visited along with other questions illustrated in the research. Edward really didn't go out as much except when he was a student at University of Illinois; even then recreational activities were minimal and mainly shared with his fraternity brothers. The brief interview illustrated below are responses from questions three and four because they focused on two important research questions which is do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities; and what mental strategies were used to defend their choice of recreational activities when friends showed they did not like one's choice of recreational activities? To see questions in its entirety and participant responses please see results section D.

I usually visit the guitar center at 2600 north Halsted in Chicago Illinois because of course there are no stores like that in Englewood. I typically take a friend with me so they can see how I live my life. One time I was looking for a piece for my guitar so I left my friend in one aisle and when I returned he was in awe after looking at all of the recording machines and other instruments. Now, I do remember asking my girlfriend at the time who was African American also if she would be interested in accompanying me to the guitar center, she declined. I was kind of hurt but I am used to most people saying no.

Based on the interview there was one recreational activity Edward enjoyed that was considered non-ethnic, which was playing Rock & Roll on his guitar.

Results

The researcher hoped to understand through participant interviews how the acting white hypothesis manifest itself amid a cultural straddler and once presented with a label of acting white from a family member, friend, or close associate are their behaviors or activities dependent to change? People are heavily influenced to change their behavior, activity, or lifestyle if they believe people closes to them don't approve of their behavior. A qualitative method consisting of in-depth interviews was used to understand the societal attitude of cynically categorizing a cultural straddler (or person of color) based on their intelligence or extracurricular activity as acting white.

The perception of one's English questionnaire (in section A) inventoried 10 different participant viewpoints and have determined that one's use of the English language is dependent on what they learned from their classroom textbook. However, participants who relied on their classroom knowledge (8 out of 10) trusted the social setting to prescribe how they would pronounce their English. Participant who used proper English (5 out of 10) explained how their speech would stand out amongst family members. Even though some participants expressed a dislike for speaking proper English they all (1 thru 10) believed speaking proper helped during job interviews. A significant number of participants (8) never had to defend their English language (Please see section A).

The music genre questionnaire (section B) inventoried 10 different participant viewpoints and have determined that all ten (1 thru 10) participants grew up listening to rhythm and blues or soul music. A total of 6 out of 10 participants did venture out to non-ethnic music however, some of those same participants (8 out of 10) believed the former music genre was connected to their culture and life experiences. Most of the participants (9 out of 10) believed music affected their

mood while all 10 participants chose not to be non-defensive when friends taunted their choice of non-ethnic music.

The academic identity questionnaire (in section C) inventoried 10 different participant viewpoints and have determined that 8 out of 10 participants was either inspired by their parents or self-motivated to take academics seriously in elementary school. Participants also (10 out of 10) described their identity as culturally diverse, educated, smart or academically inclined. In addition, all 10 participants also stated how friends described their identity using positive words such as historian, well read or intelligent as well. However, some of those same participants (4 out 10) was verbally defensive when a friend or associate taunted their academic identity.

The academic identity questionnaire (in section D) inventoried 10 different participant viewpoints and have determined that 6 out of 10 participants ventured out to non- ethnic recreational activities, while some of the (6 out of 10) same people did notice a small portion of minorities attending the event but did not deter them from the event. Interview results also revealed 8 out of 10 participant's friends opted out of the event due to non-ethnic culture. A number of participants (9 out of 10) were not defensive when friends taunted their non-ethnic choice of recreational activities.

Results from Study 2 revealed (6 out of 10) participants' lifestyle or behaviors coincided in either one or more of the four themes ranging from A) One's perception of speaking proper English; B) non-ethnic music genre; C) academic identity; and D) non-ethnic recreational activities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The researcher in this study hypothesized that cultural-straddlers will be the best predictor of an academic attitude. The purpose of this research was to observe how sociocultural norms, and cultural transmission affect the attitude of academically oriented urban youth. The term cultural straddlers stemmed from Ogbu's acting white theory as illustrated in this study stating how Fordham and Ogbu (1986) presented the belief that some African American students continuously under performed in school because of their cultural opposition of "acting white." Ogbu (1986) hypothesized that acting white deviates from a cultural norm within the African-American community. Ogbu's study collected data from eight secondary elementary schools in North Carolina. The data consisted of in-depth interviews, including behaviors and decisions enacted by students who carried the burden or label of acting white. Students labeled as acting white were defined as "nerd" "dork" or "braniac." Researchers found three distinct types of oppositionality in high achieving students labeled as acting white.

First was general oppositionality. Here peers taunted high achieving students calling each one "nerd," "dork," or "brainiac," and at times crossed racial and class lines with their name calling. Second was racialized oppositionality, whereas peers taunted their African American classmates through name calling such as "Oreo" or stated you are just trying to "act white." Third, interracial oppositionality involved peers labeling high achieving African Americans as "snooty", imposing titles like "high and mighty", or "you act like you are so much better than us?" African Americans who displayed attitudes or mannerisms that coincided with white cultural norms were assumed to adopt that cultural classification (Bergin & Cooks, 2002). The cultural straddlers (both low and high achieving students) were classified as acting white.

In study 1 one set of interviews took place in two Chicago department stores (a total of 11 participants including 10 females and 1 male), which occurred over a two-week period at different times throughout the day. Second set of interviews took place in two Chicago neighborhood grocery stores. The four participants (3 females and 1 male employee) agreed to participate in the survey because they also used social media as a primary form of communication. The third set of interviews occurred with recent high school graduates who were now enrolled in a Midwest junior college. The fourth set of participants (consisting of 8 females) were collected in various places around Chicago such as fitness centers, convenience stores and snack shops where first year college students frequented.

A Reliability Analysis was conducted to ensure good internal reliability of the scales, a Cronbach's alpha was used for several of the scales. The first set of ten questions focused on Academic Attitude; *Cronbach's alpha* = .800 meaning the individual questions are related to each other, that is correlated, and therefore showing good internal consistency. Cultural Transmission Questionnaire had *Cronbach's alpha* = .789; the Social Networking Questionnaire had *Cronbach's alpha* = .790, and Cultural Straddler Questionnaire had a *Cronbach's alpha* = .810.

A Descriptive Analysis was also conducted to show a means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages of the sample. The study consisted of ($N= 25$) participants, with 48% being males and 52% females. The ethnic makeup included 88% of the participants being of African American descent and 12% were of Hispanic American descent. The descriptive for Academic Attitude was on a 6 point scale, showed a $M = 4.5$, meaning most participants either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed, and the $SD = 8.722$; the Cultural Transmission Questionnaire had $M= 3.436$, meaning most participants disagree and somewhat agreed, based on their response to the questionnaire, and $SD = 9.371$, basically the mean average is an affirmation that participants

who took the cultural transmission survey typically chose somewhat agree to agreed; Social Networking Questionnaire had a $M= 3.9$, indicating participants agreed or strongly agreed based on their response to the questionnaire, and a $SD= 9.367$. With the Cultural Straddler Questionnaire, there was an $M=1.792$, meaning participants strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed based on their response to the questionnaire and a $SD = 8.722$.

A Regression Analysis was also conducted to see if there is a relation between the predictors (social networking, cultural transmission, and cultural straddler) and the dependent variable (academic attitude identity). Significance was found, $F(1, 14) = 6.255$, with a $p = 0.18$ showed an R^2 of (0.373), which means that the model accounts for 37% of the variance. Of all the predictors there was one significant relationship found between the cultural straddler scores (i.e., low in “acting white” perceptions) and the dependent variable academic attitude, with a B of .515, $p < .05$. In other words, those who see productive behaviors as “acting white” had worse academic attitudes. Those who were resistant to see a connection with productive attitudes and acting white had better academic attitudes.

Study 2 was founded on two research questions: Do people experience the feeling of being a cultural straddler when they venture outside of their cultural or in group norms? Do people closest to the straddle, such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler’s choice of activities, within the four themes? The last question illustrated in each of the four themes asked participants what mental strategy was used to defend their decision as it related to: 1) their perception of proper english, 2) Music genre, 3) Academic identity and, 4) their choice of recreational activities. The illustration below shows an end result for both research questions based on qualitative interviews.

Research question 1) How do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm?

1. Perception of proper English questionnaire: 8 out of 10 participants felt they had to defend their style of English use at times amongst friends.
2. Choice of music genre: 9 out of 10 participants were taunted about their choice of non-ethnic music and, incidentally, chose not to respond defensively.
3. Academic attitude: 4 out of 10 participants had to defend their academic attitude because some friends labeled them as white.
4. Choice of recreational activities: 9 out of 10 participants were teased for their non-ethnic recreational choices, and, incidentally, did not let the teasing bother them.

Research question 2) Do people closest to the straddler, such as a family member, friend, or close associate, have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within the four themes?

1. Perception of proper English questionnaire: 5 out of 10 participants used the social setting, meaning their friends, to gauge how they would pronounce their words.
2. Choice of music genre: 6 out of 10 ventured out to non-ethnic music genres but abandoned it around friends.
3. Academic attitude: 6 out of 10 participants were viewed as acting white amongst friends because they showed intelligence or a behavior that was non-ethnic
4. Choice of recreational activities: 5 out of 10 (Eric, Laura, Shawn, Lynn and Linda) participants ventured out to non-ethnic recreational activities, but, due to a lack of participation from friends, they abandoned the activity.

The purpose of this research was to understand how labeling manifests itself amid one who straddles between cultures within one or more of four themes such as: A) One's perception of speaking proper English; B) non-ethnic music genre; C) academic identity; and D) non-ethnic recreational activities other than their customary enjoyment. To understand these manifestations the researcher was interested in the questions: 1) How do people experience being a cultural straddler venturing outside of their cultural norm? And 2) Do people closest to the straddler such as a family member, friend, or close associate have more influence on a straddler's choice of activities within the four themes? Three decades ago Fordham and Ogbu (1986) theorized African Americans who labeled one another as acting white developed that frame of thought due to the conditions of oppression.

Participants in this qualitative research used organized prior knowledge, which Bruner (1957) described as schemas, to make choices throughout their lives. On average more than half of the African American (7 out of 10) participants in this study showed behaviors of a cultural straddler by venturing outside their cultural norms, however, nearly 3 out 10 participants were negatively labeled as white for indulging in non-ethnic behavior. In addition, approximately (5 out of 10) participants were persuaded by a family member, friend or close associate to abandon the non-recreational activity or behavior that was seen as "acting white". This study supports Ogbu's acting white hypothesis and that it still exists in the 21st century America. Participants who ventured outside their ethnic group did not consider themselves as "cultural straddlers", instead, just that they were people who were trying to enjoy their lives. Participants who displayed behaviors and or choices relative to a cultural straddler, such as showing intelligence or venturing outside ethnic group norms for entertainment purposes, substituted their recreational activities or abandoned them for the sake of friendship.

In conclusion the participants in this study were not raised in socioeconomically struggling families or neighborhoods but some of their lifestyle choices (6 out of 10) coincided with being a cultural straddler or acting white. This research revealed that when African Americans deviated from their ethnic group and customs they were seen as white. There were a number of participant's who adjusted their language and intelligence in accordance with the environment. Markus (1977) explained how people understand and trust the familiar through self-schemas. The use of self-schemas is reflected in the participants who labeled friends as white in this research, prejudging them based on perceptions of their life experiences and their cultural knowledge. Further research is needed to how early life experiences influence a person's choices throughout their life from a cultural conditioning perspective.

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