Doctoral Defense PowerPoint: IMPACT OF SELF-ESTEEM AND IDENTIFICATION WITH ACADEMICS ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

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IMPACT OF SELF-ESTEEM AND IDENTIFICATION WITH ACADEMICS ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

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November 9, 2009
As the nation wrestles with the education of African American students and the achievement gap, various performance (GPA) and non-performance variables (self-esteem, and identification with academics) are often studied. The impact of self-esteem and identification with academics on the achievement of African-American students presents a challenging discussion.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of self-esteem and identification with academics on the achievement of African American students.
The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement differs across studies because of differences in the ways self-esteem is measured and defined (Enger, 1993).

The operational definition of self-esteem is the positive or negative value placed on attributes or the relative degree of worthiness or acceptability which people perceive with respect to their self-concept (Rosenberg, 1965; Enger, 1993).

Midgett, et al. (2002) found a modest correlation between self-esteem and achievement.

• Forsyth (2007) suggest that interventions to enhance positive self-esteem did not improve the academic performance of students.

• Karsenti and Thibert (1995) report that academic motivation is related to grade point averages (GPA).

• Osborne (1997) report that students who have a positive identification with their educational experiences are more motivated to do well.

• Yet Baumeister (2003) believe that a “feel good education” may not lead to academic achievement.
Study Methodology

- Administrative approval and parental consent were obtained.

- Students were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group.

- The Start Something curriculum intervention was implemented.

- Instruments (Schools Perception Questionnaire and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale) were given as two separate measures (pre, post). Duration of each questionnaire was 15 minutes.
Instruments

• Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, Cronbach Alpha was 0.84 (1965).

• 10 item scale designed to measure overall self-esteem using statements of acceptance and self-worth. Participants answered items on a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree such as “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.”

• School Perceptions Questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha was 0.82. (1997).

• 32 item instrument designed to assess identification with academics and claims to measure the centrality of academics to the self and to assess facets of identification including belonging such as: “Being a good student is important to me or School is a waste of time.”
Participants Involved

• 93 African American students

• 6th-8th Graders

• Inner-city Durham, NC

• Charter School

• Low social economics, free/reduced lunch

• Mostly from single parent homes (mothers)
Start Something Curriculum

- Based on life of Tiger Woods.

- Study conducted in 2003 (Quality Education Data); youth showed positive improvement in self-esteem, improved attitudes toward learning and improved academic performance, and improved study habits.

- Covers Six Units (Introduction, Discovering, Power, Heroes, Mentors, and Role Models).

- Covers such topics as leadership, volunteerism, problem solving, goal setting, and career exploration.

- Lesson plans and activities included.

- The experimental group was taught the Start Something Curriculum, up to 30 minutes per session and over 3 months (October-December, 2007).
ANCOVA evaluates whether population means on the dependent variable, adjusted for differences on the covariate, differ across the levels of the independent variable. **The question being tested is whether the adjusted group means vary significantly from each other.**

ANCOVA controlling for the pretest scores on each of the dependent variables (Grade Point Average, self-esteem and identification with academics).

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine the effect of the Start Something curriculum on academic performance (Grade Point Average) and non-academic performance variables (self-esteem and identification with academics).
Hypothesis 1 (Findings)

Students exposed to the Start Something curriculum will perform better academically compared to those not exposed to the curriculum.

- Supported.
- Those students that participated in the Start Something curriculum performed better than those who did not participate in the curriculum.
# Means and Adjusted Means for Academic Performance Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable and Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Adjusted M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA-Post: Treatment</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>88.24</td>
<td>86.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>76.25</td>
<td>76.29</td>
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</table>
Hypothesis 2 (Findings)

Students who are exposed to the Start Something curriculum would improve their self-esteem after exposure to the treatment.

• Not Supported.

• There was no difference between those students who participated in the curriculum and those who did not.
Means and Adjusted Means for Non-Academic Performance Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable and Group</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>6.80</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 3 (Findings)

Students who are exposed to the Start Something curriculum will increase identification with academics.

- Not Supported.
- There was no differences between those students who participated in the curriculum and those that did not.
Means and Adjusted Means for Non-Academic Performance Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable and Group</th>
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<th>M</th>
<th>Adjusted M</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
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<td>3.23</td>
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Limitations

- Students from a charter school are not representative of the general population.

- Charter schools and public schools vary in demographics, income, abilities, and resources.

- The timing of the study during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays may have been a limitation.
Implications of research findings

- A curriculum endorsed and based on African American sports figure may impact student achievement.

- Increasing self-esteem and identification with academics may not be a direct link to student performance.
Conclusions

- The curriculum had no impact on the students’ self-esteem or how they identified with academics.

- The curriculum impacted the students grade point averages.

- There was no straightforward link between self-esteem and student performance.
Is it Just ME!