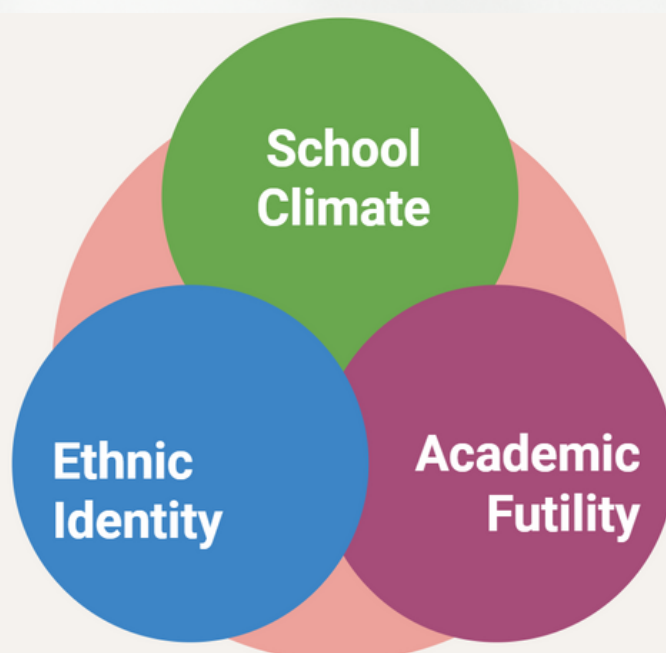


School Climate and Ethnic Identity Among Black Youth: Mixed Methods Analysis

CURRENT STUDY

Focus on the experiences of **Black and multi-racial/ethnic students** to elucidate the **experiences of students with marginalized identities** and to center the discussion on **how to support their educational success**.



ETHNIC IDENTITY

- Different from ethnic identification, which is limited to how one defines themselves as a member of a specific group
- Represents a **sense of belonging and commitment to an ethnic group** including an understanding of related behavior, language, and history (Booth et al., 2014).

SCHOOL CLIMATE

School Climate is a construct that refers to the structural, interpersonal and learning aspects of a school environment that are **perceived** by students, parents and school personnel.

ACADEMIC FUTILITY

- **Perceived control over academic outcomes** (e.g., academic futility) is the subjective manifestation and reflection of very objective conditions of control and power within the educational system.
 - **Higher** futility represents **less** sense of control
- A reflection of the ethnic and social stratification in our society because the likelihood of reaching a desired (educational) outcome is not random.

Procedures & Demographics

Qualtrics Survey

- Containing three measures
- Subset of sample (N=4,940)

693 Black students

in grades 6 - 12

across **2 school districts**

in the northeastern region of the United States

Student Interview

- Subset of Black students
- Parent and student consent

6 students

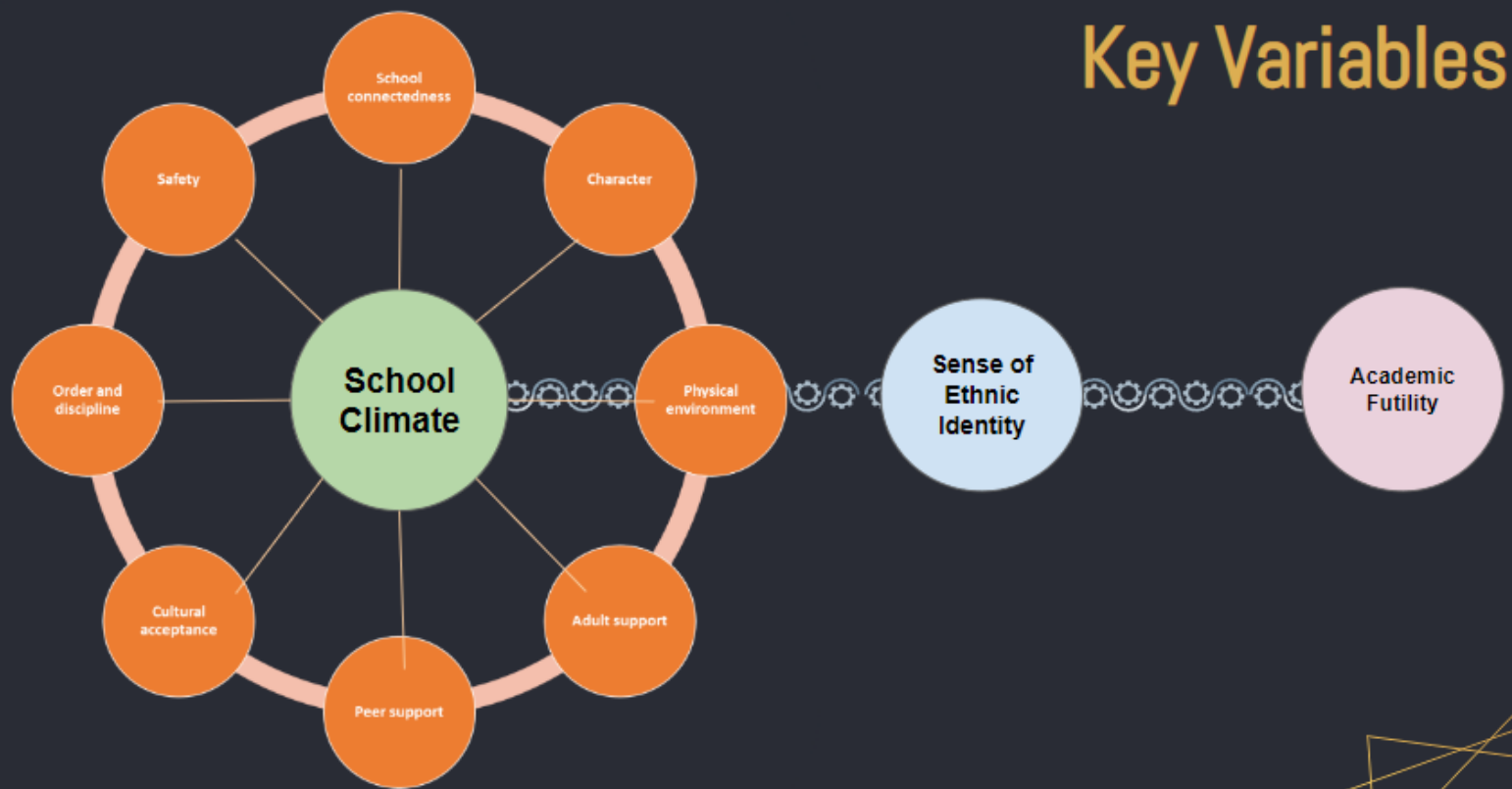
who opted to be interviewed after completing the survey

Survey Measures

Georgia School Climate Survey (GSCS)	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)	Sense of Futility Scale (SFS)
<p>Assesses middle and high school (typically grades 6-12) student perceptions of school climate within the eight dimensions (4-point Likert scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School connectedness • Character • Physical environment • Adult support • Peer support • Cultural acceptance • Order and discipline • Safety 	<p>Assesses ethnic identity in youth and adolescents through a 12-item measure (4-point Likert scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised from the original 14-item MEIM • Results in an overall ethnic identity score • Sample items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me" ○ "I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership." 	<p>Assesses students' perceptions on mastery based on educational goals through a 5-item measure (5-point Likert scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher futility ratings indicate students perceive they cannot create their own academic success • Sample questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "People like me will never do well in school even though we try hard" ○ "There is no use in working hard at school" ○ "A good job is not reserved for people like me."

La Salle, 2017; Brookover et al., 1978; Phinney, 1992; Roberts et al., 1999

Key Variables



Analysis

RQ1

What is the relation between Black students' academic futility (i.e., their perceived control over academic outcomes) and school climate?

RQ2

What is the relation between ethnic identity (i.e., their perceived connectedness to ethnic identity) and school climate?

RQ3

What key themes are expressed by Black students in interviews regarding school experiences, academic futility, and ethnic identity?

Structural equation modeling techniques in MPlus

Regression Models Testing Main Effects:

Academic Futility → School Climate Subscales

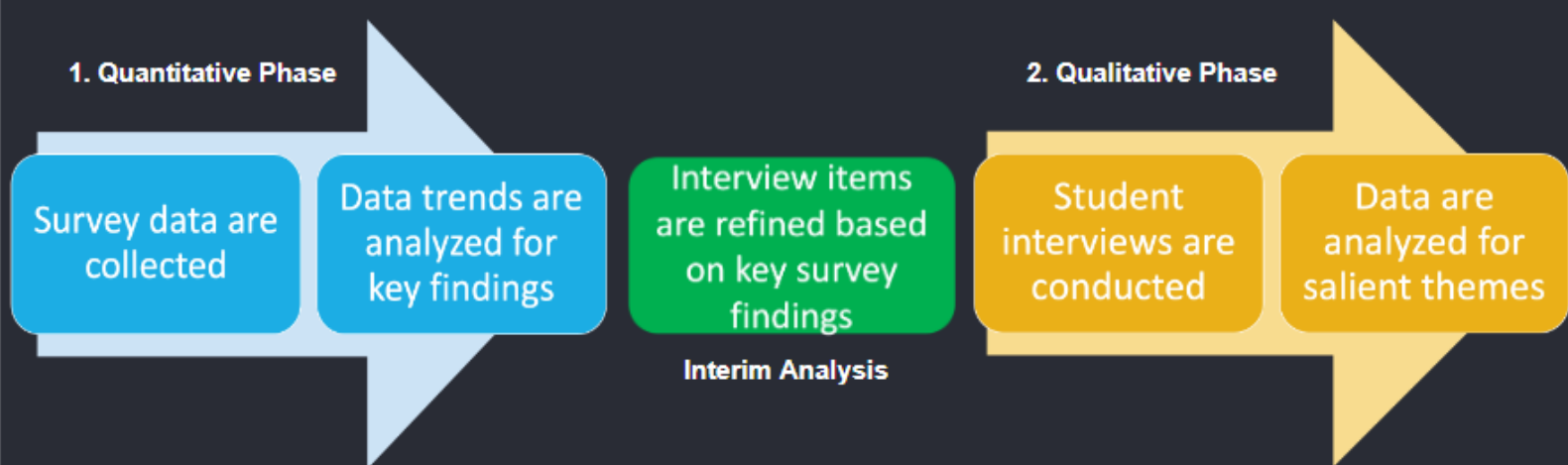
Ethnic Identity → School Climate Subscales

NVivo used to analyze interview transcripts

Analysis of Themes

Coding and analysis of individual interviews

Sequential Explanatory Paradigm in which data are collected and evaluated in two phases:



RQ1: Academic Futility and School Climate

Perceived control over academics was **significantly associated with** perceived **school climate in all areas.**

How much I think I control my academic achievement



Affects

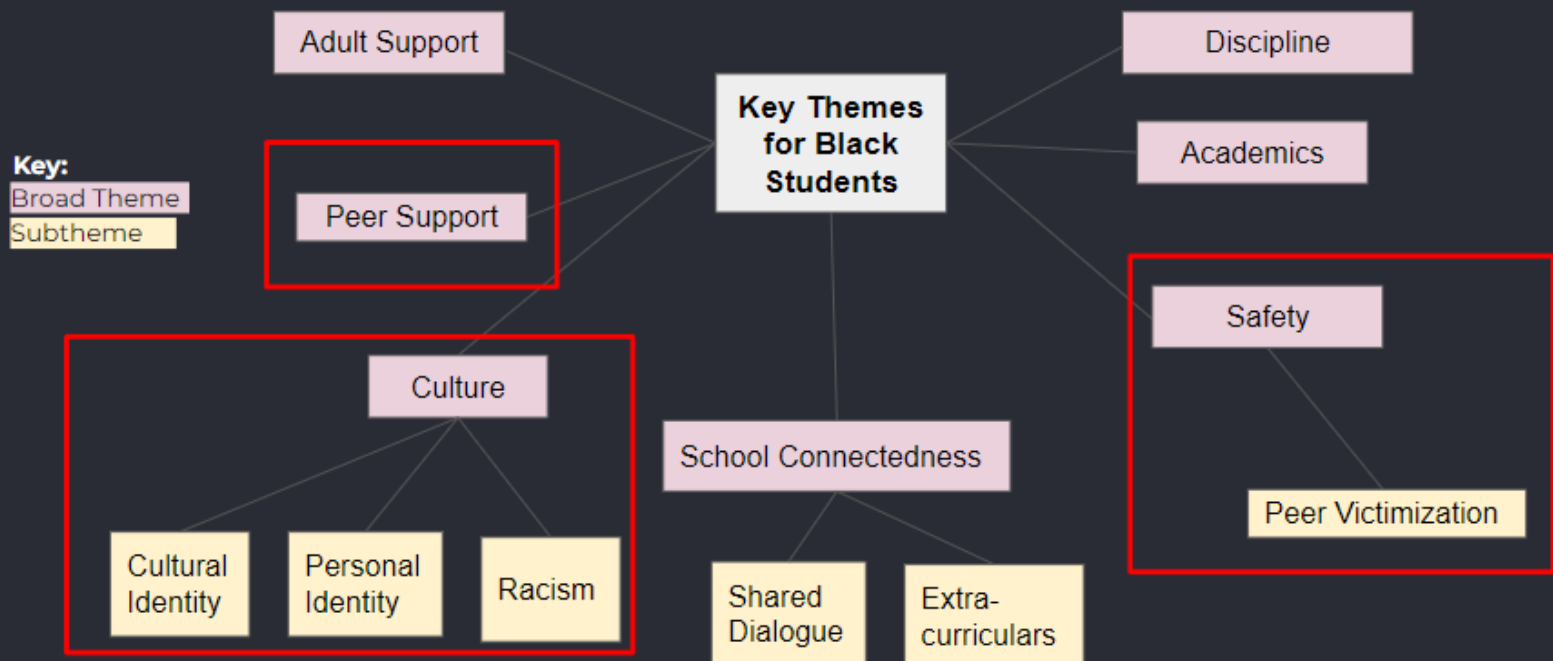
- How **connected** I feel at school
- How **safe** I feel at school
- Whether I feel **supported by adults and peers**
- My perceived **character development**
- Whether I think **rules are fair**
- Perceived **physical quality** of my school
- How **culturally welcoming** school feels

RQ2: Ethnic Identity and School Climate

Black students' sense of **ethnic identity** was **significantly associated with** perceived:

	β	R^2
Development of personal values and morals	.42	.17
Support from peers	.37	.14
Fairness of rules at school	.37	.13
Feelings of connectedness at school	.31	.10

Black Student Voices



Academic Futility & School Climate

- Significant **relationship between academic futility** (sense of control over academic outcomes) and **all subdomains of school climate**
- Consistent with previous findings from this project
 - Academic futility and school climate matters for all students

If my teacher thinks that I can...it helps **me** think that **I** can!



Ethnic Identity & School Climate

Ethnic identity development is a protective social factor for Black adolescents!



Black students who explore and are connected to their **ethnic identity** feel...

- they are more **connected** at school
- they are **supported by peers**
- a stronger sense of **character** development
- greater confidence in the **fairness of school discipline** practices

Black Student Voices: Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity

- The **Black experience** in school is distinct
- Show **pride** in Black identity *and* overlapping identities
 - Afro-Latine
 - First generation American

Personal Identity

- Black students are proud of their **individuality**
- Desire to be recognized for **achievements** and **special interests**
 - Academic excellence
 - Participation in clubs

Racism

- Acknowledge **Anti-Black racism** in addition to prejudice and peer victimization
- Express a strong desire for **school participation in anti-racist work**

Recommendations

Academic Futility: A Tier 1 Priority

- Espouse growth mindset
- Depict of a diverse image of success in curriculum
- Send the message that all students can succeed
- (Re)Define success *with* students and the community

A safe school is a racially equitable school.

- Ensure safety resources feel safe for both staff and students
- Increase adult presence and personal responsibility in addressing peer victimization, relational/physical aggression, and inequity/racism (directly, promptly, and with follow through)

Embrace ethnic identity as a malleable protective factor.

- Dedicate time and space to developing and celebrating Black identity
 - Affinity groups
 - Racial Identity Models of Counseling Intervention
- Celebrate diverse Black experiences in community, curricula, and extra-curriculars



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