The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity: Its Use With Euro-American, Latino, and Native American Undergraduates

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This study examined the reliability and validity of scores from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity with 550 Euro-American, 112 Latino, and 41 Native American undergraduates. Data for the Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard scales indicate that these scores have construct validity. Scores have acceptable Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliabilities across the 3 groups.

For the last 2 decades, counselors have been encouraged to be multiculturally sensitive and to take clients’ racial or ethnic identity into consideration during counseling. Similarly, counseling researchers are also expected to consider how participants’ racial or ethnic identity potentially interacts with outcome variables. In spite of these expectations, the reliability and validity of scores from racial or ethnic identity measures have been problematic. Measures developed for one racial or ethnic group have not been consistently tested for appropriate use with other groups. For instance, the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997) was created for use with African American individuals but has not been tested for possible use with other racial or ethnic groups. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the Centrality and Regard (Private and Public) scales of the MIBI could be used with college freshmen of self-reported Euro-American, Latino, and Native American heritage.

As Helms (1996) noted, “there is no clear conceptualization of what constitutes ‘measurement’ of racial or ethnic identity” (p. 144). Furthermore, most instruments designed to “measure” racial or ethnic identity are constructed for use exclusively with individuals of one minority group (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, or Native Americans). Based on the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998), the MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997) is one such instrument. The MIBI does, however, have dimensions of racial identity that might be relevant to other racial or ethnic groups.

The MMRI (Sellers et al., 1998) proposed four dimensions. The first, identity salience, is defined as the level of significance race has in an individual’s self-concept at a specific moment in time and is the only dynamic dimension of the model. The second dimension, centrality, represents the extent to which an individual normatively defines him- or herself in terms of race. Third, ideology represents an individual’s beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about how members of one’s race should act. The final dimension, regard, is characterized...
by an individual's affective and evaluative judgment of his or her race. It is important to
note that racial identity is not synonymous with any one dimension of the MMRI (Rowley,
Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998).

Constantine, Richardson, Benjamin, and Wilson (1998) reported that the MMRI (Sellers et
al., 1998) contains the most contemporary, all-inclusive conceptualization of the function-
ning and development of Black identity and provides a theoretical foundation for the impor-
tance African Americans give to race by the manner in which they define themselves and
their membership in their racial group. Sellers et al. (1998) also proposed this model in an
effort to bridge gaps evident in the research on the racial identity of African Americans.

Developed to measure the three static dimensions (i.e., centrality, ideology, and regard) of
the MMRI, scores from the MIBI have been reported to be reliable. In addition, construct
validity evidence consistent with the theoretical premise of the MMRI has been reported
(Sellers et al., 1997). One of the unique qualities of the MIBI is that its interpretation can be
used in several ways. For example, results can be interpreted within the perspective of exist-
ing research on universal aspects of group identity as well as within the context of intra-
group experiences specific to African Americans.

Although Sellers et al. (1998) developed their conceptual model of racial identity and the
MIBI to assess this identity for use with African Americans, two dimensions of the model,
centrality and regard, may be applicable to other racial/ethnic groups. Centrality represents
the extent to which individuals normatively define themselves in terms of race. Regard is
characterized by individuals' affective and evaluative judgment of their racial group mem-
bership. Regard has two categories: (a) public—one's perceptions of other people's overall feel-
ings about African Americans (or other self-identified racial group membership), and (b) pri-
ivate—an individual's own overall feelings about African Americans (or other self-identified
racial group membership). According to Rowley et al. (1998), each dimension of the MMRI
can yield discrete results about an individual's racial identity.

Sellers et al. (1997) claimed that scores on the Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard
scales of the MIBI have construct validity, matching the theoretical premises of the appropr-
iate MMRI dimensions. In addition, they reported that the Centrality scale scores were moder-
ately internally consistent for African American students at a predominately White university
(coefficient alpha = .78) and at a predominately Black university (coefficient alpha = .75). Pri-
ivate Regard scores, however, had weak internal consistency for African American students at
a predominately Black university (coefficient alpha = .61) and at a predominately White un-
iversity (coefficient alpha = .55). A factor analysis indicated that the structure coefficients for
items on the Public Regard scale were not consistently larger on any factor.

Investigating the construct validity of the MIBI scores, Rowley et al. (1998) specifically exam-
ined the relationship of the Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard scales with the Rosenberg
Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965) across samples of African American college
and high school students. Private Regard (coefficient alphas of .73 for college students
and .76 for high school students) and Centrality (coefficient alphas of .73 for college stu-
dents and .73 for high school students) were positively related to self-esteem. The scores on
the Public Regard scale were not internally consistent for either group; therefore, those scores
were not analyzed. These findings indicate that the MIBI Centrality and Private Regard scales
are related to self-esteem for African Americans in diverse educational venues and that items
for the two scales tend to be somewhat internally consistent.

SELF-ESTEEM AND RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY

Self-esteem has been described as feelings of self-worth, self-respect, self-acceptance, and
worthiness (Rosenberg, 1965; Wylie, 1979) and as a "composite view of oneself that is presumed
to be formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others" (Bandura, 1997, p. 10). The development of the regard dimension of the MIBI was
influenced by Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) and Luhtanen and Crocker (1992), who talked about private and public collective self-esteem. According to Sellers et al. (1997), private regard is the “extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively toward African Americans and their membership in that group. This component of regard is consistent with the concept of psychological closeness and racial pride” (p. 807). Public regard is the extent to which individuals believe that others perceive their racial group positively or negatively and appears to reflect Bandura’s definition of self-concept/self-esteem. Centrality is the degree to which one believes that one’s race is central to who one is as an individual, which might reflect the self-acceptance definition of self-esteem. In addition to the Rowley et al. (1998) study, other researchers have tested the link between self-esteem and racial/ethnic identity. In a study of 418 White and Black undergraduates in a northeastern university, Goodstein and Ponterotto (1997) reported that “ethnic identity,” measured by the Racial Identity Attitude Scale and the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992), was positively correlated to self-esteem (measured by the RSE) for Black undergraduates but had a very weak correlation for White undergraduates. For men and women within each of the racial groups, there were no differences in self-esteem and ethnic identity. What is problematic in this study is that different racial identity measures were given to Black Hispanic Black and to White Hispanic White students, although both groups completed the MEIM. In addition, no analyses were conducted to determine whether the biracial students differed from those who identified as only Black or only White. Persons who indicated a Hispanic heritage were not disaggregated; therefore, both groups were heterogeneous with respect to race.

Lorenzo-Hernandez and Quellette (1998) also found a positive correlation between self-esteem and ethnic identity among Dominican, Puerto Rican, and African American undergraduates. Again, the groups were not examined separately. Also, the data were not examined for sex differences even though Grossman, Wirt, and Davids (1985) reported that sex was a mediating variable between self-esteem and ethnicity. What this literature suggests is that for Latino or African American students, self-esteem is related to racial/ethnic identity.

There has been limited research on self-esteem and ethnic identity for Native Americans. Collectivism—close identification with one’s tribe or clan and a family constellation with cousins being called brothers or sisters and aunts and uncles viewed as parents—is very typical. For Native Americans, having a connection with everything is essential to one’s positive self-esteem (Weaver & Brave Heart, 1999). Indeed, Weaver and Brave Heart reported data that indicated that Native Americans had the strongest cultural identification compared with African, Asian, Mexican, and White Americans. According to Moran, Fleming, Somervell, and Manson (1999), however, most Native Americans blend Native traditions with mainstream customs and, as a result, have a dual, or bicultural, identity. Studying ethnic identity among Native American high school students, Moran et al. found that this biculturalism was positively related to self-esteem. Using the RSE and MEIM, Chee (2002) also found that self-esteem and ethnic identity were positively related for southwestern Native American college students. No differences in ethnic identity or self-esteem were found on the basis of the participants’ sex.

When studying Native Americans and Latinos, culture cannot be ignored. One important aspect of culture common to both of these groups is the importance placed on being part of a larger group, whether it is a tribe or clan for Native Americans (Chee, 2002) or la familia for Latinos (Gloria, 1993). The importance of this larger group is evident in the practice of Native Americans, particularly Navajos, introducing themselves using their clan name (e.g., Loretta Yazzie of the Zuni Edgewater clan) and in married Latinas linking their family name with their married name (e.g., Rosina Lopez de Garcia). For individuals who are Native American or Latino, it is likely this cultural component will be reflected in the centrality dimension of the MIBI.

No measure that can comprehensively assess racial/ethnic identity across racial/ethnic groups was found in the literature. Available measures are designed to measure racial identity within a single racial group (Helms, 1995; Sellers et al., 1997) or to intertwine the constructs of race and ethnicity with a more all-inclusive format (Phinney, 1992).
Our study investigated whether the MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997) could be used reliably and validly with non-African American racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, the psychometric properties of the MIBI scores for Euro-American, Latino, and Native American college freshmen were examined. Four research questions were posed: (a) Were the scores on the Centrality, Public Regard, and Private Regard scales of the MIBI reliable for Euro-American, Latino, and Native American undergraduates? (b) Were the Centrality, Public Regard, and Private Regard scores positively related to self-esteem for Euro-American, Latino, and Native American undergraduates? (c) Did Latino, Native American, and Euro-American undergraduates differ on Centrality and Public Regard? and (d) Did men and women within each racial/ethnic group differ on Centrality, Public Regard, and Private Regard?

METHOD

Participants

The sample for this study was drawn from a pool of 876 first-semester college freshmen (approximately 15% of the incoming class) who were involved in a longitudinal study examining academic persistence at a large, predominately White, southwestern university. To examine the psychometric properties of scores from the MIBI, only the students of Euro-American (n = 598; 223 men and 375 women), Latino (n = 112; 35 men and 77 women), and Native American (n = 41; 22 men and 19 women) heritage were included in the data analyses. Approximately 74% of the Euro-Americans reported yearly family incomes over $60,000, whereas 53% of Latinos and 59% of Native Americans reported yearly family incomes below $60,000.

Procedure

Three counseling professors and 6 doctoral students (1 African American, 1 biracial, 2 Euro-American, 3 Latina, 1 Native American, and 1 international) participated in gathering the data. Recruited from 56 freshman classes and campus student organizations, participants were told that participation was voluntary, that involvement was not related to grades, and that responses would be confidential. They completed the Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard scales of the MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997), as well as a demographic form and other psychosocial measures. Three cash prizes to be raffled after completion of data collection were offered as incentives. Approximately 90% completed the research packet.

Instruments

Information was gathered through a demographic sheet; the RSE (Rosenberg, 1965); and the Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard scales of the MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997). To minimize a potential order effect, six different packets were constructed to counterbalance the order of the instruments.

*RSE (Rosenberg, 1965).* The RSE, used to measure self-esteem, consists of 10 statements, such as “I feel that I have a number of good qualities,” that evaluate individuals’ subjective views of themselves. Participants respond to each statement on a 4-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree.* Total scores could range from 10 (low self-esteem) to 40 (high self-esteem). For the pool of 876 freshmen who completed the RSE, the Cronbach alpha was .84, with a mean of 35.57 (SD = 4.76).

*MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997).* The MIBI was designed to assess the three stable dimensions (centrality, regard, and ideology) of the multidimensional model of racial identity. Sellers et al. (1997) reported that the MIBI measures three interrelated empirical constructs in contrast to one construct with three different dimensions. They also reported that a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test on the appropriateness of the factor analysis of the MIBI yielded results of .86, .83, and
.61 for ideology, centrality, and regard, respectively. Results higher than .60 are typically deemed acceptable (Norusis, 1985).

The dimensions of centrality and regard were examined for this study. The Centrality scale (8 items) assesses the extent to which being a member of one's racial/ethnic group is important to one's self-concept (e.g., "I have strong sense of belonging to Black people"). Regard has two scales: Private Regard and Public Regard. The Private Regard scale (6 items) assesses one's overall feelings about one's racial/ethnic group, with higher scores reflecting more positive responses (e.g., "I am proud to be Black"). The Public Regard scale, also made up of 6 items, focuses on one's perceptions of other people's overall feelings about their racial/ethnic group, with higher scores reflecting more positive responses (e.g., "In general, others respect Black people"). Participants respond to items on a 7-point, Likert-type scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). For each scale, a mean total score ranging from 1 to 7 is calculated.

For the current study, the wording of the MIBI was modified to replace the term Black(s) with a blank space. For instance, the item examples given above were modified to read: "I have strong sense of belonging to ____ people." "I am proud to be ____ people." "In general, others respect ____ people." Prior to responding to the MIBI items, participants were asked, "What is your racial/ethnic self-identification?" The response options were Euro-American/Caucasian, Asian American, Hispanic American/Latino, African American, Native American, biracial, or international. Participants were then told to respond to the items based on this self-identification. To address the research questions, participants were classified into racial/ethnic groups on the basis of this self-identification and their self-identified race/ethnicity in the demographic section.

RESULTS

Prior to analyzing the hypotheses, 36 Asian American, 22 African American, 46 biracial American, and 16 international students and 5 students who did not report identity were omitted from the data analyses. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency estimates of the RSE scores calculated for each of the three targeted racial/ethnic groups were .85 for Euro-Americans, .82 for Latinos, and .74 for Native Americans.

To answer the first research question, Cronbach alpha internal consistency estimates were calculated and are shown in Table 1. For the 550 Euro-American students who completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIBI Scale</th>
<th>Euro-Americans (n = 550)</th>
<th>Latinos (n = 104)</th>
<th>Native Americans (n = 40)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>α</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>α</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Regard</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Regard</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. MIBI = Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity. Each α coefficient was significant at p < .001.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
the MIBI, the estimates were .75 for scores on the Centrality scale, .82 for scores on the Private Regard scale, and .72 for scores on the Public Regard scale. For the 112 Latino students, the estimates were .67 for scores on the Centrality scale, .78 for scores on the Private Regard scale, and .78 for scores on the Public Regard scale. For the 41 Native American students, the estimates were .78 for scores on the Centrality scale, .88 for scores on the Private Regard scale, and .49 scores on the Public Regard scale.

The second research question was analyzed by zero-order correlations to determine whether Centrality, Public Regard, and Private Regard scores were positively related to self-esteem for Euro-American, Latinos, and Native American students. The alpha for rejection of no relationship was set at .01. Self-esteem and Centrality were not statistically significantly related for Euro-American ($r = -.01$) or Latino ($r = .00$) students; however, the relationship was positive for Native American students ($r = .37, p = .01$, shared variance = 14%). Scores on the RSE and Private Regard scale were significantly related for Euro-American ($r = .19, p = .001$, shared variance = 4%) and Native American ($r = .28, p = .01$, shared variance = 8%) students but not for Latino students ($r = .13, p = .098$, shared variance = 2%). The same relationship tended to hold for Public Regard: Euro-American ($r = .23, p = .001$, shared variance = 5%), Native American ($r = .33, p = .038$, shared variance = 11%), and Latino ($r = .13, p = .10$, shared variance = 2%) students. These data provide weak-to-moderate support for the construct validity of scores from the MIBI scales.

The third research question, which asked whether Latino, Native American, and Euro-American students would differ on Centrality and on Public Regard, was analyzed using an one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each dependent variable. The probability level for each ANOVA was set at .01. There were group differences on both Centrality, $F(2, 686) = 52.96, p = .001, \eta^2 = .134$, and Public Regard, $F(2, 686) = 110.02, p = .001, \eta^2 = .243$. Scheffe multiple comparisons with an alpha set at .001 indicated that for centrality, Native American students ($M = 4.98, SD = 1.12$) reported statistically significantly higher centrality than either Latino ($M = 4.16, SD = 1.10$) or Euro-American ($M = 3.39, SD = 1.12$) students, and Latino students scored significantly higher on the Centrality scale than did Euro-American students. When Public Regard was examined, Euro-American students ($M = 5.23, SD = .96$) scored statistically significantly higher than either Latino ($M = 3.81, SD = 1.04$) or Native American ($M = 4.15, SD = 1.10$) students. There were no differences between Latino and Native American students on scores on the Public Regard scale. (See Table 2 for means and standard deviations for the scores on the three scales across the gender and racial/ethnic groups.) The last research question was analyzed to determine whether men and women within each racial/ethnic group differed on the three identity scales. A series of $3 \times 2$ ANOVAs (race/ethnicity by gender) with a familywise alpha of .01 for each two-way ANOVA was conducted.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIBI Scale</th>
<th>Euro-Americans</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
<th>Native Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Regard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Regard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. MIBI = Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity.
Of particular interest was the interaction. Gender and race/ethnicity interacted on Centrality, $F(2, 683) = 7.51, p = .001, \eta^2 = .022$, and on Private Regard, $F(2, 683) = 4.33, p = .01, \eta^2 = .013$. A simple main effects test indicated that on both Centrality and Private Regard, Native American female students ($M = 5.56, SD = .96; M = 6.24, SD = .62$, respectively) had significantly higher scores than did Native American male students ($M = 4.44, SD = 1.00; M = 5.17, SD = 1.56$, respectively). No gender differences for Euro-American or for Latino students were found. There was a significant gender main effect on Private Regard, $F(1, 683) = 17.20, p = .001, \eta^2 = .025$. Women ($M = 5.68, SD = .97$) scored higher than did men ($M = 5.44, SD = 1.16$) on the Private Regard scale.

The simple main effects investigated whether there were identity differences among men within the three racial/ethnic groups. One-way ANOVAs revealed differences among the men on Centrality scores, $F(2, 244) = 7.73, p = .001, \eta^2 = .06$, and on Public Regard scores, $F(2, 244) = 31.52, p = .001, \eta^2 = .22$. Scheffé multiple comparisons showed that for Centrality, Native American men had higher scores than did Euro-American men. In contrast, for Public Regard, Euro-American men had significantly higher scores than both Native American and Latino men, whereas Native American and Latino men were not statistically significantly different in their scores.

The simple effects ANOVAs to test for differences among the three ethnic/racial groups of women revealed significant differences on all three scales: Centrality, $F(2, 439) = 54.85, p = .001, \eta^2 = .20$; Private Regard, $F(2, 439) = 5.02, p = .007, \eta^2 = .02$; and Public Regard, $F(2, 439) = 77.18, p = .001, \eta^2 = .26$. Scheffé multiple comparisons indicated that Native American women had statistically significantly higher scores on the Centrality scale than did Latino women, who had statistically significant higher scores than did Euro-American women. On the Private Regard scale, Native American and Latino women had higher scores than did Euro-American women, whereas Native American and Latino women were not significantly different. Finally, Euro-American women had higher scores on the Public Regard scale than did Native American and Latino women, who did not differ significantly.

**DISCUSSION**

Overall, the findings indicate moderate support for use of the abbreviated MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997) with Euro-American, Latino, and Native American undergraduates. The Euro-American students in this study were relatively consistent in their responses to the racial/ethnic identity statements in the Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard scales, suggesting internal consistency for these scale scores for Euro-American students. When the findings related to racial/ethnic identity are taken into consideration for the Euro-American students, it seems that they are happy and proud (Private Regard) to be Euro-American and that they believe that others also think highly (Public Regard) of Euro-Americans. Their scores on the Public Regard scale were significantly higher than Latino and Native American participants’ scores on that scale. Furthermore, this finding held when men across groups and women across groups were compared. Being Euro-American, however, was not necessarily central to participants’ sense of identity. In fact, their scores on the Centrality scale were significantly lower than the scores of Native American and Latino students. Furthermore, the centrality of being Euro-American was not related to their self-esteem. However, their scores on the Private Regard and Public Regard scales were positively related to their self-esteem. The more they “felt good” (Private Regard) about being Euro-American and believed that others “respected” Euro-Americans (Public Regard), the higher their self-esteem. It should be noted, however, that these significant relationships might have been an artifact of the large sample size and that these relationships accounted for limited shared variance. As expected, Euro-American men and women did not differ in their racial/ethnic identity scores. This supports previous findings that racial/ethnic identity is not different for White men and women (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997).
What can be concluded from the current research is that scores from the abbreviated form of the MIBI tend to be reliable and valid for Euro-American undergraduates, but one should not assume that racial/ethnic identity plays the same role in the lives of these young people as it might in the lives of other racial/ethnic group students. Indeed, this conclusion is further supported by the fact that 48 Euro-American students (8.7% of the Euro-American sample) left the MIBI blank. Perhaps these students did not consider that they, too, represent a racial/ethnic group. As counselors and researchers take racial/ethnic identity into consideration for racial/ethnic minorities, perhaps consciousness-raising would be appropriate for Euro-Americans, who may be taking their own racial/ethnic identity for granted, which could easily result in unconscious racism and racist treatment of those who are not Euro-American.

For the Latino sample, the Cronbach alpha reliabilities for scores on the Private Regard and Public Regard scales were acceptable, but the alpha was weak to moderate for scores on the Centrality scale. It is important to note, as expected, that Latino students had higher scores on the Centrality scale than did the Euro-American students. Being Latino, for this sample, is part of how these students self-identify, and this identity is important to their sense of self. Although their scores on the Centrality scale were not as high as the scores of Native American students, most Latinos are typically reared in homes that promote a collective identity (Chee, 2002). In addition, kinship or extended family systems facilitate a strong sense of affiliation and belonging to family and, by extension, to a racial/ethnic group for self-identified Latinos (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Marin & Marin, 1991; Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). This sense of collectivism was demonstrated by scores on the Centrality scale—Latinos scored higher on Centrality than did Euro-Americans but lower than Native Americans. Scores on the Centrality scale differentiated Latino students from Euro-American and Native American students.

Clear construct validity for scores from the three MIBI scales was not established for the Latino sample. It is evident that other psychosocial and cultural variables (e.g., generational status, specific Latino ethnic group identity) as well as other aspects of self-esteem (i.e., a more interdependent measure that takes family and group into consideration) need to be considered when assessing self-esteem before a correlation between self-esteem and racial/ethnic identity is meaningful for Latinos (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2001). The findings from the current study need to be replicated, taking into consideration the issues just raised.

For Native American undergraduates, the Cronbach alpha reliabilities for Centrality and Private Regard scores were moderate to strong, whereas Public Regard scores were not internally consistent. The good internal consistencies for the Centrality and Private Regard scores suggest that Native American students consistently consider race/ethnicity to be important to their identity (Centrality) and that they have strong racial/ethnic pride (Private Regard; J. T. Garrett & Garrett, 1996; M. T. Garrett, 1999; Heinrich, Corbíne, & Thomas, 1990; Portman, 2001). This conclusion is validated by the fact that, of the three groups, Native American students had the highest scores on the Centrality scale. Their identity as a Native American is essential and important to their self-identification, in spite of perceiving that others may not have positive views of them.

Native Americans had the lowest Public Regard scores (i.e., one’s perceptions of other people’s overall feelings about one’s racial/ethnic group). Historically, Native American people have been subjected to multiple forms of oppression, including holocaust-like aggression (B. M. Duran & Duran, 1999; E. F. Duran, Duran, Brave-Heart, & Yellow-Horse, 1998; M. T. Garrett, 1999). In addition, negative and stereotyped portrayals that express disrespect and other forms of disparagement of Native Americans have been communicated through the media. Native American college students have been exposed to these less-than-positive racial profiles of “their people” and, by extension, of themselves. As a result of these forms of institutionalized racism and discrimination, some Native American students may have been uncertain as to how Native Americans are currently viewed and thus were inconsis-
tent in their responses to the items on the Public Regard scale. The weak internal consistency for Public Regard scores for the Native American sample might also reflect differential perceptions of racism and discrimination.

The significant correlations between self-esteem and each of the MIBI scales for Native American students provide support for the scales’ construct validity. Although the sample size was relatively small, for these Native American students, the more they defined themselves as being a Native American (Centrality), the higher their pride in being Native American (private regard), and the more positively they believed that their racial/ethnic group was viewed by others (public regard), the more positive their self-esteem. Although a causal relationship cannot be inferred for the Native American students, their personal self-esteem seems related to how they think others perceive their racial/ethnic group and seems somewhat related to personal perceptions of their racial/ethnic group. These findings support previous research that suggests that Native Americans who have internalized experiences of racism and oppression and start to adopt negative views of their race/ethnic group tend to report lower self-esteem (Kim, Omizo, & D’Andrea, 1998; Martinez & Dukes, 1997). It is interesting that female Native Americans scored higher on the Centrality and Private Regard scales than did male Native Americans. This finding must be accepted with caution because of the small Native American sample size (n = 41) and because of other intragroup differences that were not examined (e.g., age, tribal affiliation). Specifically, these findings suggest that female Native Americans may perceive their racial/ethnic selves in a more positive way than do male Native Americans (Portman, 2001). Also, the majority of the Native American participants were members of the Navajo tribe, which is matrilineal. Women grow up knowing that they are responsible for carrying on tradition and maintaining the family. Perhaps they develop self-respect early from these responsibilities and the honor accorded them as women.

Unlike Euro-American cultures, Latino and Native American cultures promote a regard for collective over individual well-being (M. T. Garrett, 1999; Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). This preference was also demonstrated by the findings for the MIBI scales examined in this study. Native American students and Latino students scored higher on the Centrality scale than did Euro-American students. On the campus where this study was conducted, the Native American and Latino students together represented less than 12% of the total population. This notable underrepresentation may fuel their affiliation needs to their racial/ethnic heritage reference group. These two groups also scored lower on the Public Regard scale than did their Euro-American counterparts, which again suggests that Latino and Native American students believe that society holds more negative views of their groups (J. T. Garrett & Garrett, 1996; M. T. Garrett, 1999; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Euro-American students are part of mainstream culture and thus considered the “norm” of society (Sue & Sue, 2003). Previous research (Sue & Sue, 2003) indicates that visible racial/ethnic minorities are marginalized groups in U.S. society and regularly deal with racism, discrimination, and oppression. These experiences, as well as messages from the media, may lead to negative internalized feelings and possibly lend voice to Latino and Native American students’ perceptions that others view them less positively. For counselors working with individuals from each of these three racial/ethnic groups, it is important to assess the extent to which their racial/ethnic identity plays a role in their view of themselves, their world, and their concerns. Our findings suggest that the Centrality, Public Regard, and Private Regard scale scores from the MIBI might be reliable and valid for this purpose, particularly for Native American students.

This study indicated that for Euro-American students, these three scale scores are internally consistent and the Public Regard and Private Regard scale scores have demonstrated initial construct validity by their correlations with self-esteem. In addition, scores on the Centrality and Public Regard scales revealed differences among the three groups as expected. For Latino students, scores from the three scales demonstrated acceptable reliability; how-
ever, none of the correlations between self-esteem and the MIBI scales were significant. Although scores on the Centrality and Public Regard scales differentiated between Latino and Euro-American students, the MIBI might not be the best measure of racial/ethnic identity for Latinos. We strongly suggest, however, that this study be replicated and that specific within-group membership be taken into consideration. For Native American students, the abbreviated MIBI scale scores had good internal consistency reliability for the scales of Centrality and Private Regard, but not for the scale of Public Regard. Scores from these three scales were strongly related to self-esteem, lending support for construct validity. The Centrality and Private Regard scales also differentiated between male and female Native Americans. It appears that the MIBI holds promise as a measure of racial/ethnic identity for Native Americans.

The findings also suggest that gender may not be a particularly important variable when considering racial/ethnic identity of Euro-American and Latino students. However, gender differences should not be ignored when the racial/ethnic identity of Native American students is being examined.

Limitations of this study need to be mentioned. First, there was a small sample size of Native Americans, and they were only from tribes in the Southwest of the United States. Second, 8.7% of the Euro-American students did not answer the MIBI, which might have biased the findings. Third, the age of the sample makes them homogeneous, limiting generalizability to only young freshmen. Finally, only one approach to establishing reliability and validity was used.

In spite of these limitations, these findings have utility for research, clinical practice, and program development in higher education. Specifically, the MIBI has potential for future research with these racial/ethnic groups, for college counseling, and for programs that promote academic persistence of racial/ethnic minority students. Campus programs need to be developed that integrate diverse racial/ethnic groups’ conceptualizations of themselves as racial/cultural beings and how that might affect their university persistence and success. The findings suggest that the MIBI might be a useful instrument in assessing racial/ethnic identity among Euro-American, Latino, and Native American college students and provide more insight into the role race/ethnicity plays in their lives. The findings also inform the measurement literature concerning the MMRI and offer multiple avenues for future research for validating the MIBI Centrality, Public Regard, and Private Regard scales for use with multiple racial/ethnic groups.

One obvious area of future research is the need to test the MIBI with larger samples, with other racial/ethnic groups, and with various age groups and to use qualitative interviews to explore perceptions of centrality and regard in their lives. Another future research suggestion is to examine the factor structure of the entire MIBI instrument with large samples of other racial/ethnic groups and to compare this factor structure to the factor structure originally theorized for the MIBI. In summary, although the MIBI was designed for use with African Americans, this study suggests that two dimensions, centrality and regard, may have applicability for the measurement of racial/ethnic identity for non-African American racial/ethnic groups.

REFERENCES


