January 2009

Establishing Black Identity at a Predominantly White Institution: The Influence of a Hybrid Pledge/Intake Process Utilizing Nguzo Saba Principles

Katherine D. Llyod
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wm.edu/oracle

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation

ESTABLISHING BLACK IDENTITY AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION: THE INFLUENCE OF A HYBRID PLEDGE/INTAKE PROCESS UTILIZING NGUZO SABA PRINCIPLES

Katherine D. Lloyd

Racial identity is a critical aspect of individual identity (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Using a case study approach, the author investigated what influence a hybrid pledge/intake program that utilized Nguzo Saba, a set of seven African principles, had on Black identity development. Four Black males[1] who attended a predominantly White institution (PWI) participated in an interview about their new member process. Findings showed that the hybrid pledge/intake process paralleled Nguzo Saba, and that this process may have positively influenced their racial identity (Howard–Hamilton, 1997). Therefore, student affairs professionals could seek to use the Nguzo Saba principles as a framework in their practice with Black students to support their racial identity development.

Predominately White institutions (PWIs) may create a climate where Black male students face serious obstacles to success (Chavous, 2002). The purpose of this case study was to inform policy and practice regarding programming and interactions with Black male students. A review of major theoretical frameworks on Black identity development was paired with an historical overview of the Black fraternity to situate the study. An overview of Nguzo Saba, a set of seven African principles, is used as a framework for discussing the results from interviews with four members of a Black fraternity.

Black Students at Predominately White Institutions

African American students attending PWIs could have difficulty relating to their campus environment (Bruno, 2002). PWIs have a framework that is strongly influenced by English (Anglo-Saxon) culture and values (Cohen, 1998; Perkin, 1997; Thelin, 2004), and this framework could prove to be unsuccessful in supporting Black students (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1996). Some student affairs professionals have historically relied upon a body of knowledge that supports and reinforces Eurocentric values (McEwen et al., 1996). This framework could lend itself to institutional racism. Institutional racism can be defined as:

> [T]he collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in processes; attitudes and behavior which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 1999, Racism section 6.34)

---

[1] The Editors of *Oracle* recognize the low number of participants as a limiting factor in the validity of this case study. We feel the value in this study is that it explores using alternative theoretical principles in the development of fraternity men. In addition, we recognize the challenges of obtaining larger sample sizes of NPHC new members at PWIs, particularly when there are practices which do not directly parallel the new intake process. We would like this article to facilitate further discussion of methods to aid students in their development within a safe and nurturing environment. We do not encourage nor condone any hazing practices.

The racial climate (the attitudes and behaviors towards African Americans) at PWIs could be influenced by institutional racism (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Some Black students at PWIs struggle with integrating to their campus environment (Chavous, 2002). Factors that contribute to this difficulty are non-inclusive programming, discriminatory policies, and negative perceptions from the White campus community (Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994). Solorzano, Cela, and Yosso (2000) found that PWIs have racial microaggressions inside and outside of the classroom, which could be why Black students have difficulty integrating. Among these microaggressions are supervisibility, invisibility, and resentment for affirmative action. Furthermore, some Black students feel pressure to assimilate and are expected to be the Black voice (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Lewis, Chelser, & Forman, 2000; Solorzano et al., 2000; Tatum, 1997). These factors could cause Black students to question their sense of place and identity (Lewis et al., 2000). Phinney and Traver (1988) stated that Black youth in predominately White communities question their racial identity due to the institutional environment. Black students at PWIs may not be receiving racially affirming answers to their identity questions.

Student Development: Establishing Black Identity

Harris (1995) stated that having a positive racial identity is challenging in an environment that collectively devalues persons of color. Some Black students need to be affirmed racially. An Afrocentric perspective can assist Black students in redefining who they are, thus developing a positive Black identity (Nobles, 1980).

Many college student developmental theories have their foundations in European psychology (Johnson, 2000). These theories work to address the developmental needs of White students, however, they fall short in their application to Black students (Johnson, 2000; McEwen et al., 1996). Chickering and Reisser (1993) stressed the importance of how students need a sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context. A positive racial identity is enhanced by an awareness of one's own cultural background, so students need a connection to the social world of their ethnic group. According to Nobles (1980), an Afrocentric perspective represents a self-affirming reawakening and rebirth of personal beliefs and behaviors based on African tenets. Black students should be encouraged to learn about their ancestors and history to aid in developing an Afrocentric identity and perspective.

Nigrescence
The theory of Nigrescence (Cross, 1995) is known as "the psychology of becoming Black" (p. 94). Nigrescence is a linear, five-stage, Black identity theory that focuses on an experiential, resocializing process of transforming oneself from a non-Afrocentric identity to an Afrocentric identity (Cross, 1995). It is also a process of "self-actualization under conditions of oppression" (Parham & Helms, 1985, p. 432). In short, Nigrescence is a process of African American self discovery.

The first stage in this process of discovery is Pre-Encounter. A student at the Pre-Encounter stage does not consider race as part of his or her identity (Cross, 1995). Black students at this stage are

2

more than likely to be in organizations that have few members of underrepresented populations (Mitchell & Dell, 1992; Parham, 1989).

The second stage is Encounter, where a momentous emotional event takes place. For example, this event may occur when a student is first personally confronted with overt racism. This event prompts the student to evaluate his or her cultural beliefs and values.

Immersion-Emersion is the third stage, where a student begins to evolve from a Eurocentric to an Afrocentric value system. In the first part of this stage, Immersion, the student immerses himself or herself into Blackness (e.g., joining a Black fraternal organization). In the latter part, Emersion, the student emerges "from the emotionality…and oversimplified ideological aspects of the immersion experience" (Cross, 1995, p. 110). This stage could encourage autonomous self-review, since one may be experiencing a pro-Black and anti-White perspective (Howard-Hamilton, 1997).

Internalization is the fourth stage in this process. Here the Afrocentric identity is accepted. This identity helps Black students defend and protect themselves from psychological insults, provides a sense of belonging, and provides a foundation on how to interact with other cultures and deal with situations (Cross, 1995). In addition, students at this stage have a sense of compassion for all oppressed people and are more sensitive to individuals at earlier stages.

The final stage is Internalization-Commitment, which is "an introspective phase in which there is a fusion of Afrocentric awareness with a desire to move from belief to action and empower others" (Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995, p. 331). Here the student becomes more involved in creating social change.

Cross (1995) created the theory of Nigrescence to understand the Black experience. This theory can allow student affairs professionals to assess where Black students are developmentally and better understand their personal motivations (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Student affairs professionals could nurture Black identity development via Nigrescence by incorporating the Nguzo Saba principles into their daily practice with students.

Nguzo Saba
The Nguzo Saba is a set of seven principles that are African in origin (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). The first principle, Umoja, refers to unity with African people. This principle is about a commitment to togetherness. Next is Kujichagalia, which means self-determination. This principle encourages one to define him/herself instead of letting others define who he/she is to become. The third principle is Ujima, which means collective work and responsibility (e.g., making one community member's issue the whole community's concern). Here, one works for the collective good. The fourth principle is Ujaama, which refers to cooperative economics (e.g., sharing one's wealth and resources with the community). The fifth principle is Nia, which refers to purpose, which not only benefits oneself, but the entire community. The sixth principle is Kuumba, which means creativity. The last principle is Imani, which means faith. These principles work together to give meaning and direction to one's life (Howard-Hamilton, 1997).

The Nguzo Saba principles could be used to help facilitate Black students' progression through the stages of Nigrescence and "to redefine themselves in ways that are culturally congruent" (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 1994, p. 327). Put into practice, the Nguzo Saba principles could be incorporated into racially affirming experiences and programs for Black students. For example, men who join a Black fraternity may experience Umoja through brotherhood, because being a member of a Black fraternity creates a support network of men who are bonded by common principles. Similarly, Black students who join a Black fraternity may experience Ujima through community service (Dickinson, 1995).

The Black Fraternity

Black peer groups are essential in developing racial identity (Bagley, 1976). According to Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) an Afrocentric identity is enhanced through involvement in a fraternity. Furthermore, those who are part of a fraternity tend to embrace a stronger, more positive racial identity. They "have higher levels of Immersion/Emersion and Internalization attitudes" (Taylor & Howard Hamilton, p. 333). Cross (1995) explained that people in those stages immerse themselves into "the world of Blackness" (p. 107) and accept an Afrocentric identity.

Many students join Black organizations as a way of entering the social world of their ethnic group and to provide a counterculture to the Eurocentric atmosphere of their campus (Cross, 1995). In Guiffrida's (2003) study, "students who were from predominantly White environments, [found that] it was the [Black] student organizations that provided the important link they needed to connect with the Black community" (p. 314). At the Immersion-Emersion stage, students start to replace their old identity by embracing membership requirements, symbolic dress codes, rites, and rituals, which are a part of the Black fraternity experience (Cross, 1995; Dickinson, 2005). According to McKenzie (1990), Black fraternal organizations were created to provide leadership for the Black race and to be an academic and social support system, while incorporating aspects of racial identity and cultural heritage. The Black fraternity may be the organization that Black men need to connect to their community and culture (Harris, J. & Mitchell, 2008).

Pledging and Intake
In 1990, the Council of Presidents of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC) created a *Joint Position Statement against Hazing.* The statement announced the elimination of pledging and instituted a revised membership development and intake process. Pledging was officially abolished as a nationally recognized process for membership in Black fraternal organizations. To be nationally recognized as a member of an organization, one must go through membership intake. Those who do not participate in membership intake may be referred to as "ghost members," since they are not recognized by a national organization (Crenshaw, 2004). Although chapters have been mandated to use the intake process, some chapters continue to utilize the pledge process either during or after the intake process (Crenshaw, 2004; Kimbrough, 2003).

Both the abolished pledge process and the current membership intake process of Black fraternities have similarities to the rites of passage of West African tribes (Dickinson, 2005). In the rites of passage, initiates are separated from their parents and community. They share this journey to manhood with peers. The older men of the village teach the younger initiates, and the

initiates are given new names. Furthermore, they learn a new and secret language. This initiation process is to symbolize a rebirth. They go through physical training and learn songs, dances, and how to utilize sacred things. Throughout initiation, they undergo pressured situations (e.g., completing assigned tasks).

Those who experience the abolished pledge process and/or the membership intake process may go through similar experiences (Dickinson, 2005). They form a pledge line, where they receive pledge names and line numbers (Kimbrough, 2003). Pledges are separated from their community (e.g., social probation). Pledges are put into pressured situations (e.g., completing assigned projects on time) designed to facilitate their self-reflection and intellect. They learn about their national and local history. They work together and support each another in every task. They attend meetings where they learn rituals, songs, poems, and organization history. Pledges utilize their individual and group creativity, in conjunction with their resourcefulness, to successfully complete the assigned tasks. After completing their process, they become neophytes of their organization. They state an allegiance to the principles of the organization and are given the passwords, handshakes, signs, and secret signals of the organization (Dickinson, 2005).

The abolished practice of pledging has endured for many, because it is viewed as a necessary rite of passage (Kimbrough, 2003). The author posits that a Black student experiencing a hybrid of the abolished pledge process, without hazing practices, paired with the current membership intake process will gain a sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, since the processes are connected to African culture and traditions (Dickinson, 2005). A positive Black identity is enhanced by an awareness of one's cultural background (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Therefore, pledging a Black fraternity may aid in building a student's cultural awareness.

Joining a Black Fraternity and Black Identity Development

Parks and Brown (2005) stated pledging may serve as a way to reconstruct identity. Further, the authors explain, "numerous psychological processes are put in place throughout the pledge process, which can alter the way individuals look at themselves" (p. 454). Joining a Black fraternity allows Black males to experience their African culture. A positive racial identity is enhanced by an awareness of one's own cultural background (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Taylor & Howard-Hamilton (1995) stated that "individuals who are affiliated with Greek letter organizations will…have higher levels of Immersion/Emersion and Internalization attitudes" (p. 333).

Method

The purpose of this study was to answer the question: what influence does joining a Black fraternity have on Black identity development? To answer this question, a qualitative case study was conducted. This study was an intensive, holistic description and analysis of joining (Merriam, 1998). The perspective of the students who pledged/went through intake is the foundation to understanding a process to membership (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). The purpose of this study was to positively inform policy and practice regarding programming and interactions with Black students. The author's hope was that insights gleaned from this study can

- 59 -

directly influence policy and practice regarding programming and interactions with Black students.

Participants

Participants in this study were four undergraduate Black men. Three of the participants were 20-year-old juniors, and the other was a 21-year-old senior. Each participant grew up in an urban area and was involved in a number of student organizations and programs on campus (e.g., intramural sports, Black student groups, mentoring programs). They attended a large, urban, public, research-oriented PWI in the Northeast. The university had about 26,000 students, with 48% of them being males and about 9% of African-American heritage (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). All participants were members of the same NPHC fraternity, chapter, and pledge/intake line.

This sample was chosen because the chapter combined aspects of the abolished pledging process in addition to the national membership intake process as a means to gain membership. Furthermore, the chapter dean (an older member in the chapter who mentors the pledges through the process) was mindful of incorporating aspects of African rites of passage into their process and educating them on their African heritage. The four men are members of one of the oldest NPHC chapters at this PWI. Many of the members of this campus-based chapter have been forerunners in their respective fields (e.g., medicine, science, public service, and civil/human rights) in their community. This chapter also has a long history of financially supporting the campus and community.

Procedure

A letter requesting volunteers was sent to the chapter that stated the purpose of the present study and the qualitative methods to be used. Those who were willing to participate contacted the author, a woman of color who is a member of a National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sorority. Four members of the chapter volunteered. Participants took part in a demographic survey and a semi-structured interview about their college experience as a Black man and their hybrid pledge/intake process. The questions asked were designed to determine specifically how this process influenced their Black identity development. The interview questions were reviewed by an older member of the fraternity and a colleague who is an alumna member of a NPHC sorority to ensure clarity. The answers to the interview questions informed the understanding of how pledging/intake influences Black identity development.

According to Glaser & Strauss (1967), listening to students tell their story is important. Conducting interviews allowed the students to speak in private about the sensitive topic of pledging. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms were used for the names of the four participants (Elizworth, John Smith, FirstGen, and Solomon) and chapter (Beta Chi Mu). NPHC chapters at PWIs tend to have smaller new member groups, which presents a risk not inherent with other studies of fraternal organizations, where the number of members offers more anonymity. Therefore, to protect privacy, the total number of pledges on line was not stated. Interviews took place in a private, agreed upon location. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using escriptionist.com, then placed in a locked file.

Analysis
Content analysis of the interview transcripts yielded lists of common codes. A second reading of the transcripts produced more specific codes in the grounded theory tradition (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Examples of codes used were pledging activities and examples of Nigrescence. Segments of the text relating to each theme were then compiled. For each transcript excerpt, a textual analysis was used as a vehicle for uncovering broader themes and recurring patterns of meaning (Merriam, 1994). The themes developed from the study were the value of the hybrid pledge/intake process's connection to West African tribal rites of passage, the importance of Nguzo Saba as a framework for this process, and its influence on Black identity development. Verification of themes was done by checking the analytic steps that lead to the themes and results (Berg, 2004). This analysis was appropriate for the present study, because it enabled an understanding of this particular process's influence on Black identity development (Berg, 2004).

To ensure validity, member checks and peer debriefing were used. According to Guba and Lincoln (1991), it is reasonable that the researcher check the results with those who participate in the study. The students who participated in the study reviewed the data and found the results plausible. Peer debriefing aids in confirming the trustworthiness of the results (Spall, 1998). A colleague, who is an alumna of a NPHC sorority, served as a peer debriefer.

The theory of Nigrescence, coupled with the Nguzo Saba, was the theoretical framework used to make interpretations from the participant interviews. The objective was to determine if the Nguzo Saba principles could be used to help facilitate Black students' progression through Nigrescence by creating programming and interactions, in the hybrid pledge/intake process, based on the Nguzo Saba principles.

Results and Discussion

Utilizing the abolished pledging process along with membership intake seems to have positively influenced the Black identity development of the four student participants. Recounted experiences revealed similarities to Nguzo Saba, which seems to have been used as a developmental framework within this chapter. The following results and discussion demonstrate these observations.

The Hybrid Pledge/Intake Process

African Rites of Passage
The hybrid pledge/intake process was the primary rite of passage. The men described the hybrid process as "intensive" and "arduous." An older member in the chapter served as their dean or teacher throughout their process. The pledge line participated in many activities and tasks similar to the rites of passage (e.g., experiencing pressured situations like getting assigned tasks done on time). Pledges spent a number of hours learning information, which consisted of fraternal history, Black history, and poetry. They held each other accountable for studying the information. Elizworth stated they had to "make sure everyone knew all of the information." Each volunteered community service hours through mentoring young boys at a local school. At the end, they participated in leadership training workshops as part of their national membership intake process.

Nguzo Saba: A Hybrid Framework for Pledging/Intake

The four mens' stories illustrated how their new member experiences paralleled Nguzo Saba. There were a number of African principles expressed in their process. Those principles were Umoja, Ujima, Kujichagalia, Nia, and Kuumba.

John Smith shared how he felt "a higher sense of brotherhood built on an understanding of where we've come from as…Black men, living as Black men on this campus." Elizworth stated that, "one huge aspect of pledging is that there is no individual. There's only a unit." This is interpreted as an example of Umoja (unity). Another example of Umoja was how FirstGen stated that through pledging [intake]:

> You're realizing that whatever you do, impacts someone else. That's when you really realize that I gotta depend on this person next to me, this person in front of me or whatever is the situation. I think that's what I really – that's what I got from [pledging].

This sense of accountability is also an example of collective work and responsibility (Ujima).

Nia (a purpose that not only benefits self, but the collective community) is a high value that was stressed in their hybrid pledge/intake process. Solomon stated, "it's love for all mankind and so we would stress giving back to our community, so that was one aspect of it, the community service." This is why they spent many hours mentoring Black youth in their community.

Solomon also illustrated the principle of Kujichagalia (self-determination). He stated that:

> If anything the process gave me a new look on how, when we get into situations, how we – a lot of the times we have the capacity, and we have the ability to really get through it and a lot of us don't know that, but we really have it deep down and it's engrained in us. We just have to be able to pull it out.

FirstGen shared, "but it's – a lot of times it was all mind over matter - just pushing yourself…But ultimately, I think I am a better man from it today…I mean I'm proud of who I am and what I've come from." FirstGen understood that at times there are going to be tasks (e.g., studying for an exam) that he may not want to do. He realized that he might need to push himself to get tasks done. Furthermore, he attributed a positive definition of who he is as a Black man to the hybrid pledge/intake process. With regard to the group, he believed the process helped give each member a heightened sense of self-confidence. John Smith added that:

> Well, understanding rather that as a Black male there are certain things in my life that I'm gonna have to deal with, and I can either make them work for me or I can have them not work for me and then learning to choose the better of the two.

Solomon shared how the end of their journey to membership concluded with their probate show, where they publicly celebrated the completion of their process, which is an example of Kuumba (creativity). Solomon said that, "probating out the public display of showing how we were down, and we gotten through it and we were at the end, I think that was very memorable."

The Developmental Influence of the Hybrid Pledge/Intake Process

The pledge/intake process these four men experienced seemed to have positively influenced their Black identity development. The process gave them a sense, or a stronger sense in some cases, of their cultural background. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted this is important, because a positive Black identity is enhanced by a connection and knowledge of Black/African culture. John Smith stated that "[the process] gives you a far better sense of the African Diaspora and my

- 62 -

lineage as it pertains to that." FirstGen stated that he "think[s] in some ways I can say it made me more aware of my history and just more confident, and just prouder." A positive Black identity incorporates pride in one's ancestors and history (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Their process enhanced the pride they had in their history and culture. Furthermore, the excerpts from the transcripts illustrated how their process possibly influenced them at three stages of Nigrescence (Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment).

John Smith and Elizworth illustrated the third stage of Nigrescence, Immersion-Emersion. A student at this stage begins to immerse himself into a "world of Blackness" (Cross, 1995, p. 107). He joins organizations in which membership is comprised of Black students and/or organizations that support the Black community. John Smith stated he:

> Joined my fraternity…for my community, because some of the most organized men that I've ever met in my entire life were men in this organization. These are men that I've seen out in my community working for the betterment of my community. And then as I researched the organization, I learned that…it's about the betterment of [Black] men.

Elizworth and FirstGen shared that they joined Beta Chi Mu for a support network. Elizworth said he, "didn't really have that support network, and I looked for it in a fraternity, especially a fraternity full of Black males." FirstGen shared that he joined, "simply for the brotherhood...And just the support and love that I get from every brother… [that] is what made me wanna join." The Black fraternity was created as a support system for Black men (Kimbrough, 2003) and these four young men received that support.

FirstGen and Elizworth also gave voice to an illustration of Internalization. At this stage, one accepts an Afrocentric identity. FirstGen shared that the pledging [intake] process had, "made me more confident about being Black. It made me more confident about being Black on this campus. It just made me more secure in who I am as a person." In addition, a student at this stage has compassion for all oppressed people. Elizworth's reflected this compassion when he stated that he wants to "align Black people with Vietnamese people that are being subjected to…[the same] oppression".

The last stage in this process of "becoming Black," is Internalization-Commitment (Cross, 1995). At this stage, one uses his Afrocentric beliefs and moves into action to empower others. John Smith shared how the pledging [intake] process had:

> Helped me to really – and when I say helped, not necessarily in a mental sense, but in a more active sense, a more proactive sense, it's helped me to really understand the need for getting more African-American males involved, and then creating such a firm support system that they wanna stay here and then graduate. And then after that, graduate on time and then after that, graduate with honors.

In addition, according to Howard-Hamilton (1997) these principles can "help people gain direction and meaning in their lives" (p. 22). This was illustrated when John Smith stated that the pledging [intake] process "really helped me recognize the need in my community and it's also helped me to better understand my place in the community and my role". John Smith attributed his passion to getting involved with Black college males to the pledging [intake] process.

The hybrid pledge/intake process is naturally Afrocentric. National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations' "choices regarding…pledge practices…have direct links to African religious

practices, secret societies…, aesthetics, philosophy, values, and educational norms"(Dickinson, 2005, p. 11). Furthermore, Dickinson (2005) goes on to state that, "there are African antecedents of many of the [National Pan-Hellenic Council] pledge rituals" (p. 15). Dickinson references Dr. Asa Hilliard's (1986) work on ancient African educational systems. "The components of the now-[abolished] pledge rituals mirror the categories, and quite possibly the purposes, of the "Mystery Schools" of Egypt and the initiation systems of West Africa. (Dickenson, 2005, p. 15). Elizworth stated how the pledge [intake] "process that I had was…charged with emotion…it was an awakening on a lot of levels." This awakening is consistent with an Afrocentric worldview. An Afrocentric worldview represents a reawakening of personal beliefs and behaviors (Nobles, 1980).

Summary
According to Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) an Afrocentric identity is enhanced through involvement in a fraternity, and those who are part of a fraternity tend to embrace a stronger, more positive racial identity. Furthermore, they observed, individuals who are affiliated with fraternities and sororities "have higher levels of Immersion/Emersion and Internalization attitudes" (Taylor & Howard Hamilton, p. 333). Parks & Brown (2005) stated the pledging process may serve as a way to reconstruct identity noting that "numerous psychological processes are put in place throughout the pledge process, which can alter the way individuals look at themselves" (p. 454).

The hybrid process aided these four students toward a healthier sense of self-identity within a social, historical, and cultural context. The intentional addition of the Nguzo Saba principles certainly facilitated this process. Overall, the six to seven week hybrid pledge/intake process the four participants in this case study underwent appeared to connect them with both a better sense of Black identity and with Afrocentric values.

Limitations

Using a qualitative case study and a convenience sample did not allow for generalizations beyond the four participants (Berg, 2004). Conclusions drawn from this study only speak to the experiences of the four student participants. The instrument used to check for validity (member checks) is also a limitation of the present study. Hamersley & Atkinson (1995) stated "we can not assume that anyone is a privileged commentator on his or her own actions, in the sense that truth of their account is guaranteed" (p. 229)**.** Other methods (e.g., triangulation) should have been used to check for validity.

The students' level of Nigrescence was not measured before they started the hybrid pledge/intake process. In the future, a measurement such as the Cross Racial Identity Scale (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) should be carried out prior to beginning the hybrid pledge/intake process.

Future Studies

Future studies comparing the influence of the pledging process versus the intake process in promoting Nigrescence among Black students could be conducted and would benefit from inclusion of both fraternity and sorority members, of members from different NPHC organizations and chapters, and of pledge lines from numerous PWIs.

Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals

PWIs may not be providing the social support needed for Black students required for them to succeed (Davis, 1995). The author posits that student affairs professionals using Eurocentric (focused on European culture and beliefs) developmental theories when working with Black students may hinder racial identity development.

This study indicates that using the Nguzo Saba principles in a hybrid pledge/intake process may have positively influenced the participants' Black identity development. According to Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999), "identity development consists of an individual's movement toward a highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions" (p. 41). Beta Chi Mu's hybrid pledge/intake process provided the four students a greater sense of self. In addition, according to Elizworth, the hybrid process created an "awakening on a lot of levels" for them, which is congruent with an Afrocentric worldview (Nobles, 1980).

Student affairs professionals should be concerned with of the application of European psychology and Eurocentric-based student development theories to their work with Black students. Using those theories could stifle Black students' racial identity development (McEwen et al., 1996). Black identity development is "an important factor for [student] affairs practitioners to recognize when they are considering ways to enhance the educational environment for African American males" (Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995, p. 331).

The Nguzo Saba principles can be a framework for programming and interacting with students. Student affairs professionals could nurture Black students' racial identity development by using the Nguzo Saba in everyday practice. This practice can be accomplished by encouraging students' interest in joining Black student organizations or by volunteering in the Black community. Additional recommendations specifically related to each principle are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1
Programs & Interactions Based in the Nguzo Saba

Value	Definition	Program & Interaction
Umoja	Unity with African people	Promote joining Black student organizations (e.g., Black fraternity)
Kujichagalia	Self-determination: To define oneself	Encourage students to not let society define who they should be (e.g., not letting a professor discourage him/her from becoming an engineer)
Ujima	Collective work and responsibility	Create projects that require teamwork (e.g., have students work in committees)
Ujaama	Cooperative economics	Encourage students to financially support their community (e.g., shopping at Black-owned businesses.)
Nia	Purpose that benefits not just the self but the collective community as well	Promote causes that impact the Black community (e.g., equality in education)
Kuumba	Creativity	Provide students programs to express their creativity (i.e., coffee houses, poetry jams, etc.)
Imani	Faith	Support their spiritual development (i.e., attending church with them)

References

Bagley, C. (1976). Sequels of alienation: A social psychological view of the adaptation of West Indian migrants in Britain. In K. Glaser (Ed.), *Case studies in human rights and fundamental freedoms* (vol. 2). The Hague, The Netherlands: Nijhoff.

Berg, B. L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences.* Boston: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.

Bruno, D. (2002). Racial identity and psychological adjustment among African American college students. Unpublished paper, Central Connecticut State University.

Chavez, A. F., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1999). Racial and ethnic identity and development. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *84*, 39-47.

Chavous, T. M. (2002). African American college students in predominantly White institutions of higher education: Considerations of race and gender. *African American Research Perspectives*, *8*, 142-150.

Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cohen, A. M. (1998). *The shaping of American higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Council of Presidents of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. (1990). *Joint position statement against hazing*. Retrieved on May 19, 2006, from www.nphchq.org

Crenshaw, A. M. (2004). *Undergraduate members perceptions of the current membership intake process: Among selected Black Greek-lettered organizations.* Unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1995). The psychology of Nigrescence: Revising the Cross model. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, and C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling* (pp.93-124). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davis, J. E. (1995). College in Black and White: Campus environment and academic achievement of African American males. *Journal of Negro Education, 63*(4), 620-633.

Dickinson, G. H. (2005). *Pledged to remember: African in the life and lore of Black Greek-letter organizations.* In T. L. Brown, G. S. Parks, and C. M. Phillips (Eds.), *African American fraternities and sororities: The legacy and the vision* (pp. 11-35). Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.

Elliott, R., Fischer, C. T., & Rennie, D. L. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *28*, 215-229.

Fries-Britt, S., & Turner, B. (2002). Uneven stories: Successful Black collegian at a Black and White campus. *The Review of Higher Education*, *25*(3), 315-330.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Gordon, E. T., Gordon, E. W., & Nembhard, J. G. G. (1994). Social science literature concerning African American men. *The Journal of Negro Education, 63*(4), 508-531.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1991). *Effective evaluation.* Oxford: Jossey-Bass.

Guiffrida, D. A. (2003). African American student organizations as agents of social integration. *Journal of College Student Development*, *44*(3), 304-319.

- 67 -

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Harris, H. W. (1995). Introduction: A conceptual overview of race, ethnicity, and identity. In H. W. Harris, H. C. Blue, & E. E. H. Griffith (Eds.), *Racial and ethnic identity: Psychological development and creative expression* (pp. 1-14). New York: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Harris, J., & Mitchell, V.C. (2008). A narrative critique of Black Greek-letter organizations and social action. In G. S. Parks (Ed.), *Black Greek letter organizations in the 21st century* (pp.143- 168). Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.

Hilliard, A. G. (1986). Pedagogy in ancient Kemet. In M. Karenga & J. H. Carruthers (Eds.), *Kemet and the African worldwiew: Research , rescue, and restorations* (pp. 138-139). Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press.

Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (1997). Theory to practice: Applying developmental theories relevant to African American men. *New Directions for Student Services*, *80*, 17-30.

Johnson, V. (2000). *A comparison of European and African based psychologies and their implications for African American college student development theories*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Kimbrough, W. M. (2003). *Black Greek 101: The culture, customs, and challenges of Black fraternities and sororities*. Cranberry, NJ: Associated University Presses.

Lewis, A. E., Chesler, M., & Forman, T. A. (2000). The impact of "Colorblind" ideologies on students of color: Intergroup relation at a predominantly White university. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *69*(1/2), 74-91.

Macpherson, W. (1999). *The Macpherson report: The Stephan Lawrence inquiry*. London: Home Office.

McEwen, M. K., Roper, L. D., Bryant, D. R., & Langa, M. J. (1996). Incorporating the development of African American students into psycho social theories of student development. In F. D. Stage, G. L. Anaya, J. P. Bean, D. Hossler, & G. D. Kuh (Eds.), *College students: The evolving nature of research* (pp. 217-266*)*. Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster.

McKenzie, A. (1990). Community service and social action: Using the past to guide the future of Black Greek-letter fraternities. *NASPA Journal*, *28*(1), 30-36.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mitchell, S. L. & Dell, D. M. (1992). The relationship between students' racial identity attitude and participation in campus organizations. *Journal of College Student Development*, *33*, 39-43.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). Enrollment. Retrieved December 6, 2006 from www.nces.edu.gov

Nobles, W. (1980). *Afrocentric psychology: Toward its reclamation, reascension, and revitalization*. Oakland, CA: A Black Family Institute Publication.

Parham, T. A. (1989). Cycles of psychological Nigrescence. *Counseling Psychologist*, *17*, 187-226.

Parham, T. A., & Helms, J. E. (1985). Relation of racial identity attitudes to self-actualization and affective states of Black students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *32*, 431-440.

Parks, G. S., & Brown, T. L. (2005). "In the fell clutch of circumstance": Pledging and the Black Greek experience. In T. L. Brown, G. S. Parks, & C. M. Phillips (Eds.), *African American fraternities and sororities: The legacy and the vision* (pp. 437-464). Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.

Perkins, H. (1997). History of universities. In L. F. Goodchild & H. S. Wechsler (Eds.), *The history of higher education* 2nd ed. (p. 20). Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster Custom Publishing.

Phinney, J. S., & Traver, S. (1998). Ethnic identity search and commitment in Black and White eighth graders. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *8*(3), 265-277.

Robinson, T. L., & Howard-Hamilton, M. (1994). An Afrocentric paradigm: Foundation for healthy self-image and healthy interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, *16*(3), 327-340.

Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, *69*(1/2), 60-73.

Spall, S. (1998). Peer debriefing in qualitative research: Emerging operational models. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *4*(2), 208-213.

Tatum, B. D. (1997). *"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?"* New York: Basic Books.

Taylor, C. M., & Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (1995). Student involvement and racial identity attitudes among African American males. *Journal of College Student Development*, *36*(4), 330-336.

Thelin, J. (2004). *A history of American higher education.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Vandiver, B. J., Cross, W. E., Jr., Worrell, F. C , & Fhagen-Smith, P. E. (2002). Validating the Cross Racial Identity Scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 49*(1), 71-85.

Katherine D. Lloyd is a member of the Association of Fraternity Advisors. She is a sister of Phi Mu Fraternity. She earned her Masters of Science in Applied Developmental Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, while working as the Graduate Student Assistant for Fraternity and Sorority Life. Her primary responsibility was working with NPHC organizations. Currently she is working as the Community Director for Greek Housing at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.