The Impact of Racial Centrality on Authenticity and the Race-Based Impression Management Strategies of Black Management Consultants

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A Dissertation submitted to

The Faculty of
The Graduate School of Education and Human Development
of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

May 21, 2017

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Acknowledgments

> Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph: a beginning, a struggle, and a victory. —Mahatma Gandhi

The journey to one of life's most precious finish lines hasn't been an easy one, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge all who have aided in my arrival at this most glorious destination.

I'd like to first thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would not be where I am today were it not for His grace, mercy, and unfailing love.

To my chair, Dr. Andrea Casey, thank you for being my biggest champion and for never giving up on me. Thank you for always being in my corner and for making me a better researcher and scholar. I truly could not have asked for a better mentor, advisor, and advocate throughout this process.

Dr. Rhonda Jones, thank you for your guidance, patience, and constant support throughout this process. I simply could not have done this without you, and know that I am a much more thoughtful and well-rounded researcher because of your guidance.

Dr. Laura Morgan Roberts, thank you for believing in me in the moments when I struggled to believe in myself. I could not have gotten through this process had it not been for your guidance, patience, kind words, and support. It was truly an honor and a blessing to have you on my committee, and I will forever be indebted to you.

To my beloved Poppy, thank you for setting the bar so high and for being my inspiration. You'll always be the "Original Dr. Dennard," and I promise to honor our title in all that I do.

To my Grammy, I hate that I couldn't get this done before you had to go, but I know you and Poppy both have seen me through to this finish line. Thank you for always believing in me and for being my biggest cheerleader. You helped get me to the finish line in more ways than you could ever know, and I will be eternally grateful to you.

To my girls—Andrea, Ashley, Christy, Meya, Valerie, and Valery—I'm reminded every day how lucky I am to call such an immensely astonishing group of women my sisters and friends. Thank you all for being my biggest support system and for constantly motivating me to do better and to be better!

To the love of my life, . . . thank you for your unfailing love and for helping me to find my voice again. I would not be the woman I am today without you, and I am truly blessed beyond measure to do life with you. Thank you for loving me most when I deserved it the least. I love you to the moon and back!

And last but not least, to my Mommie, Sadie Dennard. We did it. Through the tears, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Thank you for always being my rock, my shoulder to cry on, and my biggest supporter. Thank you for motivating me, inspiring me, and encouraging me when I needed it most. This is for you. . . . We did it. God is good!

Abstract of the Dissertation

The Impact of Racial Centrality on Authenticity
and the Race-Based Impression Management Strategies
of Black Management Consultants

The management consulting profession in the United States is one of the fastest growing and most profitable industries in the world. Despite the industry's increasing popularity and growth, racial minorities remain disproportionately underrepresented in this industry.

This dissertation sought to shed light on the unique experiences of minorities in the management consulting industry by examining the experiences of Black management consultants and the relationships that exist between the centrality of race, authenticity at work, and the use of race-based impression management (RIM) strategies. This study also sought to contribute to theory by validating a conceptual model, which posits that the centrality of race moderates the relationship between RIM strategies and authenticity at work.

An online survey was developed using existing instruments designed to measure the centrality of race to one's identity, authenticity at work, and the use of RIM strategies. Quantitative data were gathered from management consultants who identified as Black and were currently or previously employed at a large multinational management consulting firm with 100,000 or more employees. Usable data were collected from 201 participants, and structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data.

This study found that the RIM strategy social recategorization was significantly related to the ability to be authentic at work, and regardless of whether the centrality of race to one's identity was high or low, the relationship between social recategorization

and participants' ability to be authentic at work was negatively related. No significant relationship was found between RIM strategy of positive distinctiveness and the ability to be authentic at work, regardless of the degree of racial centrality. The conceptual model developed for this study could not be validated due to low levels of variance around the construct of racial centrality.

Findings from this study provide empirical insights into the experiences of Black management consultants and contribute to theory, practice, and research regarding the challenges associated with navigating cross-cultural interactions in the workplace.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly globalized and diverse nature of the U.S. workforce has ignited the need for a more critical look at how contemporary organizations approach workforce diversity (Roberson, 2012). By 2024, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that minorities will make up nearly 45% of the civilian labor force, of which Hispanics will comprise 19.8%; Blacks, 12.7%; Asians, 6.6%; and those identifying as "all other groups," 3.7% (Toossi, 2015). In order to remain competitive within a demographically evolving society, organizations must be intentional in their efforts to foster organizational environments that are inclusive and welcoming to an increasingly diverse workforce.

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the experiences of Black management consultants and the relationships between the centrality of race, authenticity at work, and the use of race-based impression management (RIM) strategies. Black management consultants are often racial minorities within their organizations and profession. In order to understand the significance of race and ethnicity in the workforce as they relate to the experiences of Black management consultants, it is important to first distinguish between two social classifications that are often used interchangeably: racial categories and ethnicity. *Racial categories* index a set of characteristics that serve as the foundation of a social hierarchy and facilitate historical and current distinctions between a higher and lower group status (Fredrickson, 2002). This interpretation of race bespeaks the embedded significance of power and privilege and highlights how group membership and identification can shape the ways in which varying racial groups interact with one another (Markus, 2010). Markus (2010) noted, "When people [of color] claim association

with a particular racial group, they are often acknowledging, as a part of their identities, the history of unequal relations between their group and a dominant group" (p. 371). By contrast, *ethnicity* "focuses attention on [shared] meanings, values, and ways of living" (Markus, 2010, p. 371) and thus highlights culture-based factors such as nationality, ancestry, language, and collective belief systems that define particular ethnic groups' commonalities.

Given this study's focus on how social classifications play out in the workplace, the construct of race (rather than ethnicity) was examined exclusively. "Physiological differences like skin, eye color and hair texture have become associated with different behavioral outcomes, both positive and negative" (Markus, 2010, p. 370), and the manifestation of these behavioral outcomes plays out in a variety of social settings, including the workplace.

Organizations are highly socialized institutions, with implicit and tacit systems, structures, processes, beliefs, and policies in place that shape and define what is considered to be *normative* behavior. These socially constructed interpretations of normative organizational behaviors subsequently inform the context within which cross-cultural, racial, and ethnic interactions occur for organizational members on an interpersonal basis (Roberts, 2005).

In organizational settings, racial minorities often engage in the enduring process of constructing and negotiating their social identities. Identity negotiation often occurs within an organizational context where the significance of physiological differences is often magnified and can thus be a unique source of the stress or additional pressures that racial minorities experience (Alvesson & Billing, 1998; Carbado & Gulati, 2013;

Roberts, 2005). Roberts (2005) suggested that when negative attributes are associated with one's social identity group membership (such as race), *identity devaluation* occurs and can undermine constituents' and colleagues' perceptions of one's competence, character, and commitment. For example, African American men are often stereotyped as being less intelligent and more likely to engage in criminal behavior than Caucasian men (Conchas, Lin, Oseguera, & Drake, 2015; Stark, 2005; Way & Rogers, 2015). Similarly, Asian Americans are often stereotyped as being competent yet passive model minorities (Li, Lin, & Wang, 2014; Nguyen, 2016). Asian Americans are also frequently stereotyped as being technically competent, but lacking the social skills and authenticity that is required for effective or transformational leadership (Lai & Babcock, 2013; Shih, Young, & Bucher, 2013; Stark, 2005). East Asians in particular are stereotyped as being more professionally competent, less warm, and less dominant than their Caucasian colleagues and counterparts (Berdahl & Min, 2012). The process of combating these stereotypes and the concurrent process of engaging in identity negotiation can be infinitely burdensome and exhaustive for organizational minorities and may impact their ability to engage authentically with their colleagues and workplace (Bell, 1990; Hewlin, 2003; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Roberts, Cha, & Kim, 2014; Rossette & Dumas, 2007). This dissertation examined how such racial dynamics may impact authenticity at work. For the purpose of this study, authenticity at work was defined as the ability to present one's true or core self within the contextualized environment of the workplace (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2005a, 2005b).

In thinking about race and ethnicity as constructs, it is also important to address the distinction between *African American* and *Black*. While the terms are often used

interchangeably, Black as a racial classification refers to and encompasses a variety of ethnic groups, many of whom do not identify as African American (Gordon & Gordon, 2015; Hall, Phillips, & Townsend, 2015; Richeson & Sommers, 2016). While some immigrants of African and/or Caribbean descent identify exclusively with their ethnic identity as African American and/or Caribbean American, others acknowledge and view themselves as both Black and African American. This highlights the importance of understanding the theoretical as well as psychological distinctions between racial and ethnic identity, particularly in studying Blacks and/or African Americans. In this study, race was examined and the racial classification of Black was used exclusively.

Within this study, understanding of the unique experiences of Black management consultants was rooted in knowledge of the context within which their professional experiences were examined. The unique structure of the management consulting industry provides additional insight into many of the systemic and institutional barriers and challenges that Black management consultants face. To provide context for this study, the following section presents an overview of the management consulting industry.

Context

The Management Consulting Industry

Management consulting is an industry that is based on advising and equipping top executives, boards of directors, and organizations on how to improve and enhance performance and efficiency, reduce costs, and increase performance through strategy, organization, and restructuring (Perlow, 2012; Plunkett Analytics, 2016). Management consulting is a worldwide multibillion-dollar industry in which top consultants earn salaries ranging between $200,000 and $500,000 annually (Plunkett Analytics, 2016).

The nature of management consulting is inherently client driven and relational. Most management consultants provide contracted services to client organizations seeking their support and expertise. Management consultants address a variety of organizational needs, and the demand for these services continues to rise as organizations seek to increase efficiency and to control costs (Plunkett Analytics, 2016).

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) noted that *management analysts* (or management consultants) held 758,000 jobs in 2014 and projected an increase of 103,400 consultants between 2014 and 2024, a rate of 14% (Toossi, 2015), yet data on professionals within this industry remain scarce. While most management consultants are employed by management consulting firms, many professionals within this field work independently: within professional services firms or as internal consultants within professional organizations. This variation in structure and work environment makes the collection and aggregation of data within this industry challenging, and until recently, very minimal demographic information or data on management consultants was available. In 2016, Accenture became the first 'big' multinational consulting firm in the industry to publicly release a detailed breakdown of its race and gender statistics. Among its U.S. workforce, Accenture is "roughly half White and a third Asian"; further,

> While Blacks or African Americans make up roughly 13.3% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), Black employees make up [only] 7.4% of the company's workforce, while Hispanic or Latino employees hold 6.3% of jobs. The executive ranks are also notably less diverse, with Black and Hispanic employees accounting for just 4.4% and 3.7% of top jobs, respectively. (Bellstrom, 2016)

A 2004 survey by the American Evaluation Association's Independent Consulting Topical Interest Group presented the disproportionately low representation of racial minorities among independent consultants within the industry. With a 37% completion

rate, the survey found that 81% of independent consultants were White, 7% were African American, and 5% were Hispanic or Latino (Jarosewich, Essenmacher, Lynch, Williams, & Doino-Ingersoll, 2006).

Similarly, the 2012 U.S. Survey of Business Owners provided a profile of approximately 1.75 million businesses (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Within the administrative management and the general management consulting service industry, this survey found that, out of 66,100 firms with paid employees in the United States (higher than 58,893 in 2007), 86% of the firm owners were White (2% higher than in 2007), 6% were Asian (1% higher than in 2007), 3% were Hispanic (1% lower than in 2007), and 2% were Black or African American (no change since 2007) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007, 2012).

While the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau findings (which examine both race and ethnicity as collective measures) focused on firm owners, it is likely that these data are indicative of the industry at large, suggesting that the racial and ethnic minority representation within the industry is severely deficient. This highlights an industry-level disparity and stresses the need for additional research and data on race and diversity within the consulting industry.

The Pipeline for Talent

Similar to most corporate organizations, the management consulting industry looks to top-tier business schools as the primary suppliers of new talent. Rivera's research on cultural matching (2011) and diversity recruitment and hiring practices (2012) in professional service firms documents the industry's practice of sourcing talent almost exclusively from top-tier and Ivy League institutions, thereby arguably limiting access to students who attend these universities.

A 2012 article in the *Wall Street Journal* provided support for this claim by highlighting that, while many top-tier business school programs boast impressive statistics on ethnic and racial minority enrollment and graduation rates, Asian American students are statistically overrepresented if these data are examined in proportion to their numbers within the U.S. population (Korn, 2012).

Table 1.1 shows the breakdown of several top business schools' minority populations and underrepresented minority populations. The implications of these data for the management consulting industry are notable, given the steadfast competition for talent among corporate recruiters from all industries represented at these institutions and the relative absence of underrepresented minorities among the selection pool.

Table 1.1
Top Business Schools' Minority and Underrepresented Minority Populations

	Class of 2012		Class of 2013	
U.S. business school	Under-represented minorities	Minorities	Under-represented minorities	Minorities
Duke University's Fuqua School of Business	10.7%	22.3%	11.2%	23.9%
Yale School of Management	7%	20%	7%	25%
USC Marshall School of Business	8%	30%	6%	28%
Cornell University's Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management	15%	31%	12%	34%
University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business	NA	NA	NA	30%
University of Michigan's Stephen M. Ross School of Business*	8%	27%	10%	28%
Stanford Graduate School of Business	NA	23%	NA	27%
Columbia Business School	NA	35%	NA	30%

Note. Chart adapted from *Wall Street Journal*, "Degrees of Diversity." Data are from the schools. All figures are for 2-year, full-time MBAs.
*"Underrepresented" at Ross includes African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and mixed race.

Similarly, the Graduate Management Admission Council's 2016 report on underrepresented minorities and the business school pipeline sheds light on the historical and yet pervasive underrepresentation of African American and Hispanic American students in U.S. business schools. Despite making up 12% of the total U.S. population and 10% of bachelor's degree earners in the United States, African Americans represented only 8% of U.S. citizens who sat for the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) in 2015 (Daniel & Caruthers, 2016). Using GMAT participation data as an indicator of interest/intention to enroll in business school, Daniel and Caruthers (2016) also highlighted the professional and industry pipeline implications of this enrollment disparity, subsequently providing additional empirical support for the disproportionate underrepresentation of Black students who attend (or seek to attend) business schools in the United States.

Given these data, the representation of Blacks in the management consulting industry is systemically affected in a negative way. Despite increased recruiting efforts at historically Black colleges and universities, Rivera (2011, 2012) noted that Blacks and Latinos remain "particularly underrepresented among new hires compared to elite university graduates and the population at large" (p. 77). Top management consulting firms recruit heavily, if not exclusively, from the most elite business school programs in the United States and abroad, and the absence of Black students from these programs is arguably indicative of their absence from the top management consulting firms. This parallel highlights not only the need for organizations to make a more concerted effort to locate qualified minority talent, but also the organizational imperative of investing in the retention of this underrepresented population.

The Culture of Consulting: Work Demands and the Organizational Environment

Some of the most challenging aspects of the consulting industry are embedded within the culture and demands of the work. The attractive salaries, prestige, exciting and diverse work experiences, travel perks, and benefits are all attractive to the heavily recruited recent college graduates and MBAs that large firms most often target for recruitment. However, the challenges that accompany a grueling travel schedule, extreme work demands, lack of work-life balance, and the 24/7 nature of the work often result in high levels of stress, burnout, and turnover.

The management consulting industry has become increasingly globalized and provides services to organizations from all over the world, and depending on the scope of the work, management consultants often spend a considerable amount of time embedded within client organizations. For U.S.-based management consultants, a typical work week includes red-eye flights to the client site (often out of state or away from the city and state where the consultant is based), where they spend Monday through Thursday or Friday on site with the client organization and fellow consultants. This leaves only weekends for 'downtime' and/or time spent at home with family and friends.

In *Sleeping with Your Smartphone*, Perlow (2012) provided insight into the nonstop nature of this work by chronicling her professional engagement with a Boston Consulting Group team of management consultants. While this team was ultimately able to take a hard look at the impact of their nonstop work demands and adjust/change their approach, ultimately allowing them to be more efficient and effective, this is not a frequently occurring outcome.

The transient nature of the management consulting industry is challenging for all consultants, but for Black management consultants in particular, the nature of this work often leads to feelings of isolation. The consulting industry is notoriously racially homogeneous, and while no industry data exist, recently published data from Accenture, one of the industry's top U.S. firms, support this claim (Bellstrom, 2016). For Black management consultants, professionalism at work often involves varying forms of identity performance: "the purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviors relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity" (Klein, Spears, & Reicher, 2007, p. 3). Engaging in this work is frequently rooted in a desire to combat negative and inaccurate assumptions about competence, skill, and ability (Roberts, Settles, & Jellison, 2008; Wingfield & Alston, 2014). As such, this identity work can create unique challenges for Black management consultants when coupled with the rigorous nature of consulting work, which frequently involves extended periods of time spent away from home or on the road. Extended time away from home and on the road often limits opportunities for these consultants to 'recharge' or otherwise 'disconnect' from their professional identities. The inability to connect and/or engage with the social institutions, outlets, and individuals (i.e., church, civic/service organizations, family, sororities/fraternities, etc.) that allow these consultants to have 'downtime' and/or an opportunity to disengage from the performance of their professional identities can contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion and burnout.

The unique and industry-specific challenges that management consultants face are underexplored. For Black management consultants in particular, navigating the management consulting industry's many nuances is critical in improving the

representation and retention of underrepresented minorities within the field. As such, this study sought to establish an empirical relationship between the enactment of RIM strategies and authenticity at work, while seeking to determine what, if any, effect the centrality of race to one's identity has on this relationship.

Problem Statement

As workforce diversity becomes increasingly prevalent, "organizational members must learn how to effectively navigate their interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds so that they can build credibility, form high-quality relationships and generate high performance outcomes with their constituents" (Roberts, 2005, p. 685). Management consulting services are inherently relational and are largely dependent upon established social and professional capital and credibility (Alvesson, Kärreman, & Sullivan, 2015). For Black management consultants in particular, establishing professional credibility and rapport with colleagues and clients often requires the strategic management and presentation of their identities at work. In examining racial diversity in organizations, the significance that racial identity holds for racial minorities in predominantly White organizations is of interest. By definition, race is an inherently physiological classification, whereas Helms (1990) defined racial identity as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (p. 3).

Racial identity is an inherently socialized construct and is most commonly manifested and enacted within socialized contexts and environments, like the workplace (Alleyne, 2004; Harvey & Allard, 2015; Herring, 2009; Ragins, Cornwell, & Miller, 2003; Roberts et al., 2014; Thomas, Phillips, & Brown, 1998). Similarly, racial group

membership speaks to "the assignment of an individual into a particular group based on characteristics that are specific to that group, in accordance with widely held intersubjective definitions" (McClain, Johnson Carew, Walton, & Watts, 2009, p. 473). Racial group membership influences and informs the way in which individuals have been and will be viewed and treated by members of similar and different racial groups (Chen & Hamilton, 2015; DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Markus, 2010; Plaut, Thomas, & Hebl, 2014). Thus, the ability to express oneself publicly and the significance of one's racial identity are pivotal in presenting oneself in an authentic way.

When engaging in a variety of socialized interactions and contexts, individuals may find it necessary to be intentional and strategic in how they choose to express (or suppress) aspects of their social identities, including race. For racial minorities, this often means downplaying aspects of their identity that inherently link them to a particular racial group. For organizational minorities, this decision is often a response to organizational pressures to conform or assimilate to the dominant or majority culture. Choosing to downplay one's racial identity while at work, in an attempt to enhance one's alignment with the dominant organizational culture, arguably hinders one's ability to bring one's total self to work. Subsequently, this limits the organization's ability to truly benefit from having a diverse talent pool. If differences are to be valued and leveraged as a source of organizational innovation, creativity, and strength, organizational minorities need to present themselves in a way that authentically reflects who they are and how they see themselves (Ainsworth, 2014; Cox & Blake, 1991; Mathieson & Miree, 2015; Roberts, 2007; Roberts, Wooten, & Davidson, 2015; Thomas & Ely, 1996).

Black professionals, like members of other devalued, unrepresented, and stigmatized identity groups, often face challenges with impression management at work. Impression management refers to the actions and behaviors that are used to shape, inform, and influence the impressions that are formed by others (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Rosenfeld, Booth-Kewley, Edwards, & Alderton, 1994; Schlenker, 2006). Impression management attempts are often rooted in the desire to downplay the salience of an undesirable or devalued nature of one's identity (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Xin, 2004). The undesirable or devalued aspects of one's identity often vary depending on the context and are frequently rooted in social identity–based classifications, such as race (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010; Kahn, Lee, Renauer, Henning, & Stewart, 2016; Pérez, 2015; Roberts et al., 2008; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998; Wilton, Sanchez, & Garcia, 2013).

This study examined the impact of race on impression management strategies used by Black management consultants at work. In the United States, large professional service firms often serve as the overarching organizational structures that house the country's largest and most profitable management consulting businesses. The professional service industry also has a documented history of harboring a largely homogenous workforce in which professional advancement, growth, and development for gender- and race-based minorities are limited (Haynes, 2012; Kumra, 2014).

Management consulting services are highly relational and rooted in consultants' ability to establish a professional rapport with their clients and colleagues. In their work on professional service firms and identity, Alvesson et al. (2015) highlighted the challenges and pressures that are associated with working in an image-sensitive industry

that is largely focused on self-presentation, branding, and persuasion. While the importance of identity and image management for professional service firms as institutions is well documented (and critical, given the absence of a clear material base and/or product-demonstrating value that is associated with the nature of the work), the importance of industry professionals presenting a version of themselves that is viewed as credible (and the subsequent implications for not doing so) is less documented in the literature (Alvesson et al., 2015).

Similarly, Kipping and Clark (2012) noted that, from a relational standpoint, management consulting is rooted in management consultants' ability to establish trust with their clients through one of three approaches: personal experience, networked reputation, and public reputation-based trust. A professional association with a well-regarded and respected firm may serve as a preliminary qualifier for the establishment of a trusting relationship between client and consultant. However, the ability to overcome the subjective nature that is associated with being different or nonprototypical within the context of these professional associations can often be challenging for Black management consultants. This often results in more critical critiques and evaluations by their clients. Haynes (2012) noted that "some aspects of physical appearance, such as size, race, age, or physical disability, cannot be disguised, [thus] individuals may feel marginalized on a number of fronts due to their physical appearance" (p. 500). This subsequently impacts their ability to present an image that is consistent with what the client may view as *professional*.

Haynes (2012) noted that being and/or appearing physiologically different serves as the basis upon which subjective evaluations can be made in various professions (see

Wissinger, 2012). Within an organizational context, this is critical given the potentially industry-wide implications of systemic racism. The impact of the subjective assessments that minorities experience in this industry also manifests in other, less aesthetically driven organizational environments. In his study on racial disadvantage at large law firms, Woodson (2014) attributed many of the challenges that Black professionals (specifically attorneys) face to cultural homophily and racial disadvantages. Woodson (2014) suggested that the logic of homophily dictates that "Black associates, who share fewer social and cultural characteristics [based on ethnicity, nationality, race, etc.] with their colleagues, will receive less preferential treatment from them, not as a covert form of invidious group-based discrimination, but quite simply because they have less rapport with them" (p. 2568). He proceeded to note that, given the underrepresentation of minorities in many of the industry's largest and most successful law firms, the burden of developing a meaningful rapport with colleagues of other racial backgrounds most often rests with Black attorneys. This highlights the impact of race for Black professionals in informing the subjective evaluations and interactions between potential clients and colleagues.

In an 8-year study of Black women in corporate America, Bell and Nkomo (2003) found that African American women felt that acceptance within their predominantly White organizational environments hinged upon their ability to assimilate. Within this context, assimilation meant literally "los[ing] their Blackness [in order] for White colleagues to feel comfortable with them" (Bell & Nkomo, 2003, p. 13). Bell and Nkomo asserted that "White-dominated organizations often make cultural assimilation the price of acceptability for racial minorities" (p. 13). They also noted that this is viewed by

African American women not only as an insult to their identity, but also as a threat to their ambition, given the assertion that "maintaining a strong racial identity is an important grounding and coping mechanism" for race-based organizational minorities (Bell & Nkomo, 2003, p. 13).

Similar to the experiences described in Bell and Nkomo's work (2003), the hardships and challenges experienced by African American female professors working in predominantly White institutions have also been well documented (Alston, 2012; Gregory, 2001; Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013; Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Haynes, 2009; Hines, 2009; Jones, Hwang, & Bustamante, 2015; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Tillman, 2012; Turner, 2002). African American female faculty members often face pressure to shift, modify, or adapt their behaviors in order to be more in line with the majority institutional culture, often resulting in high turnover, experiences of 'double consciousness' (Hinton, 2010; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003), and challenges associated with attempting to balance dual identities (Harris, 2007). Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto's (2015) phenomenological study of Black women in corporate leadership positions also found that these women used coping strategies related to armoring: "specific behavioral and cognitive skills used by Blacks and other people of color to promote self-caring during direct encounters with racist experiences and/or racist ideologies" (Faulkner, 1983, p. 196), as well as shifting, actively modifying one's body language, speech, outlook, and clothing in an attempt to mitigate stereotypes in the workplace (Allison, 2010).

These studies highlight the fact that, when Black professionals are racial minorities in their organizations and industries, they often struggle to establish and create

alignment between their physiological membership in a particular race-based social identity group and the subjective evaluation and authentication of their professionalism by clients and employers. For Black professionals, when the subjective opinions of others are tied to inaccurate and/or false perceptions about the relationship between their race-based social identity group membership and their professional competence and capacity, the ability to engage authentically at work is significantly impacted.

The ability to be authentic refers to "the subjective experience of alignment between one's internal experiences and external expressions" (Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, & Settles, 2009, p. 151). Therefore, the ability to be authentically engaged at work refers to the ability to express one's interpersonal feelings, thoughts, values, and behavioral preferences in outward expressions (i.e., verbal and nonverbal behaviors and communications, outward appearance, and expressions of oneself) (Roberts et al., 2008). When people are unable to express their feelings, ideas, perspectives, and beliefs in an authentic way, they may suffer from negative psychological outcomes such as anxiety, stress, and alienation (Costello, 2005; Hewlin, 2003; Ramarajan, 2014; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Roberts, 2005). Similarly, the organization misses out on the organizational benefits that are associated with a diverse talent pool, such as innovation and creativity (Barak, 2016; Dye & Golnaraghi, 2015; Guillaume, Dawson, Otaye-Ebede, Woods, & West, 2017; Lambert, 2016; Peretz, Levi, & Fried, 2015; Phillips, 2014; Roberts, 2007; Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander, & Maznevski, 2010; Wooten, Davidson, & Roberts, 2016; Zhou & Hoever, 2014), thereby highlighting the importance of "uncover[ing] strategies for enhancing authenticity in the workplace" (Roberts, 2007, p. 330).

This study was grounded in the belief that a disconnection between one's authentic self and work self undermines one's ability to establish high-quality connections at work (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), and it sought to examine Black management consultants' experiences of authenticity with respect to their racial identities at work. This dynamic is especially relevant for consulting firms given the highly relational and client-based nature of consulting work.

The ability to establish a relational rapport with clients is critical in developing a successful client and consultant relationship (Alvesson et al., 2015; Kipping & Clark, 2012). As the workforce becomes increasingly globalized, so do the clients that many management consulting firms serve. As the demographic climate for consultancy clients continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly important for management consulting firms to have a talent pool that is reflective not only of this evolution in demographic diversity but also of the diversity of thought, innovation, and creativity that accompanies having an ethnically and racially diverse organization. For Black management consultants in particular, the ability to truly contribute to their organizations in a meaningful way is often tied to the ability to bring their *whole selves* to work. This allows organizations to truly unlock and benefit from the diverse experiences and perspectives that these individuals bring to their work.

Purpose of the Study

Research on RIM (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014)[1] has shed light on many of the underlying challenges that Blacks face as they seek to navigate

[1] It should be noted that L. Morgan (2002) and L. M. Roberts, who are referenced throughout this dissertation, are the same researcher.

racial-majority organizational environments, colleagues, and industries that consciously and unconsciously embody constructed perceptions, biases, and beliefs about the social identity groups to which racial and ethnic minority members in their organizations belong. Roberts (2005) suggested that racial minorities invest a considerable amount of time and energy into presenting a viable and positive image, by employing social identity–based impression management strategies aimed at managing the negative impact of stereotypes that are associated with "others' perceptions of their competence and character" (p. 687). Social identity–based impression management refers to the enactment of self-presentation strategies that are driven by a desire to shape the manner in which one is viewed, based upon membership in a social identity group such as race (Madera, King, & Hebl, 2012; Morgan, 2002; Plaut et al., 2014; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014).

In the past decade, there has been an influx of social-psychological and organizational research specifically addressing how individuals actively cope with and navigate issues around negative stereotypes and/or social group stigmatization resulting from membership in a stigmatized or devalued social identity group (Booth-Kewley, Edwards, & Rosenfeld, 1992; Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008; Xin, 2004). However, Roberts et al. (2014) suggested that "despite the proliferation of impression management research, relatively few studies have examined impression management in diverse work organizations, and hardly any have examined the influence of race on impression management at work" (p. 3). This study begins to fill that gap.

This study aimed to expand our understanding of how Black management consultants experience predominantly White organizational environments by examining

the psychological significance and impact of racial identity (as measured by centrality), RIM strategies (as measured by the behavioral correlates of social recategorization and positive distinctiveness), and authenticity at work (as measured by individuals' authentic behavior at work).

Significance of the Study

Research on racial minorities in the workplace has been limited in its examination of the intersection between social identities, work experiences, and outcomes (Holvino, 2010). This study contributes to both scholarship and practice by enhancing our understanding of the enactment of RIM strategies that are employed by Black management consultants, while also contributing to the scholarly literature on race, self-presentation behavior, and authenticity at work.

Theory

While several studies have been conducted on the enactment of social identity–based impression management and racial identity (Kenny & Briner, 2013; Little, Major, Hinojosa, & Nelson, 2015; Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014), further research is needed to advance our understanding of how varying organizational environments facilitate individual outcomes that can directly and indirectly be linked to organizational outcomes and performance (i.e., issues related to the recruitment and retention of minority talent). This study sought to establish an empirical relationship between the enactment of RIM strategies and authenticity at work, while seeking to determine what, if any, effect the centrality of race to one's identity has on this relationship.

Management consultants represent an underexplored population in scholarly literature, inconsistent with the growth that has occurred in the management consulting industry. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), "Employment of management analysts is projected to grow 14% from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations," thereby highlighting the need for further empirical research on this industry and its consultants.

Empirical research on racial minorities and organizational outcomes highlights the unique challenges that Black employees face in navigating majority organizational environments. In their research on organizational hierarchies in predominantly White organizations, Wingfield and Alston (2014) suggested that White workers' expectations regarding the enactment of "self-presentation, behavioral adjustments, and emotional work from their minority colleagues ultimately creates additional demands for workers of color" (p. 284), which contributes to racial minorities' feelings of isolation and marginalization in the workplace. Research also suggests that Black employees in predominantly White organizations must engage in additional work to prove their worthiness of promotion (Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005; Turner, 2002; Turner & Myers, 2000; Wilson, 1997), to avoid layoffs (Wilson & McBrier, 2005) and workplace discrimination (Roscigno, 2007; Zambrana et al., 2016), and to establish the social networks that are necessary for advancement (Chesler et al., 2005; Pierce, 2002; Wingfield, 2010; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2003).

Practice

This study examined the relationship between Black management consultants and the effective negotiation of cross-cultural interactions with their colleagues and clients.

Its findings increase our understanding of how Black management consultants establish rapport with their organizational counterparts and clients, based on what is known about the racially homogeneous nature of the management consulting industry. By highlighting the experiences of Black management consultants, this study demonstrates how a more in-depth understanding of the psychological process of negotiating cross-cultural interactions (through the use of RIM strategies) and the ability or inability to be authentic at work can impact an organization's ability to truly benefit from being racially diverse.

As organizations become increasingly diverse, the ability to recruit and retain minority talent becomes an important area of organizational interest, particularly in light of the underlying institutional barriers to success that women and racial or ethnic minorities face (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Pless & Maak, 2004; Sabharwal, 2014; Zambrana et al., 2016). Wingfield and Alston (2014) noted that, when organizational minorities "undertake the additional work of racial labor, they are engaging in efforts that uphold the institutional norms and practices that keep [their organizational environments] relatively unwelcoming for minority workers and more hospitable for Whites" (p. 283). The organizational outcomes that are associated with this work highlight the broader institutional implications that are associated with the enactment of RIM strategies.

Similarly, Schlenker and Pontari (2000) noted that "managing impressions of one's social [identity] group can be cognitively and emotionally taxing, given the amount of attention, effort, and identity negotiation that [this process] can require, particularly if the person is presenting an image that is inconsistent with his or her self-concept" (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 285). The perceived pressure to engage in impression management in the workplace can be compounded when racial minorities seek to

navigate the complexities of conflicting social identity group memberships in organizations or industries in which racial diversity is minimal. This study thus not only informs organizational discourse regarding how racially diverse organizations are experienced by these minorities, but also informs organizational retention, recruitment, and training initiatives.

Research

"Researchers have long noted that organizational structures produce hierarchies and reinforce status inequalities" (Wingfield & Alston, 2014, p. 275). Thus, in seeking to contribute to the scholarly conversation around RIM management, this study further authenticates the validity and significance of the conceptual framework that Morgan (2002), Roberts (2005), and Roberts et al. (2014) established and used to explore these phenomena. It also further advances and informs the contextualized validity and reliability of the RIM Subscale (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014) by administering it within a new context, the management consulting industry.

While a relationship between the centrality of race and social identity–based impression management and RIM has been established in previous literature (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005), this study expands those contributions by validating this relationship within a different organizational context. Additionally, while a theoretical relationship between authenticity and RIM has been established (Roberts et al., 2008), this relationship has not been empirically tested. By seeking to establish a relationship between the enactment of RIM strategies and authenticity at work among racial minorities, this study advances our understanding of how the enactment of impression

management strategies and the centrality of race can impact Black management consultants' ability to be authentic at work.

While research on the management consulting industry has increased (Engwall & Kipping, 2013; Harvey, Morris, & Santos, 2017; Mohe, 2004; Mohe & Seidl, 2011; Robinson, 2013; Sarvary, 1999), research on management consultants in the industry's larger firms remains scarce, which aids in perpetuating the lack of data available on the industry and its consultants (Gross & Poor, 2008). Between 2014 and 2024, the consulting industry is expected to grow by 14%, with key growth in the area of healthcare (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Given the growth that this industry is currently experiencing, the need for empirical work on the management consulting industry and its consultants is palpable (independent of research on the overarching professional service firms that house many management consulting firms). Conversely, given what we know about the racially homogeneous demographic of the industry, the need for data and research on this marginalized community is essential if the industry hopes to increase and retain its representation of racial-minority management consultants.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study highlights this researcher's interest in exploring RIM strategies and authenticity at work, while seeking to determine what, if any, effect the centrality of race to one's identity has on this relationship (Figure 1.1).

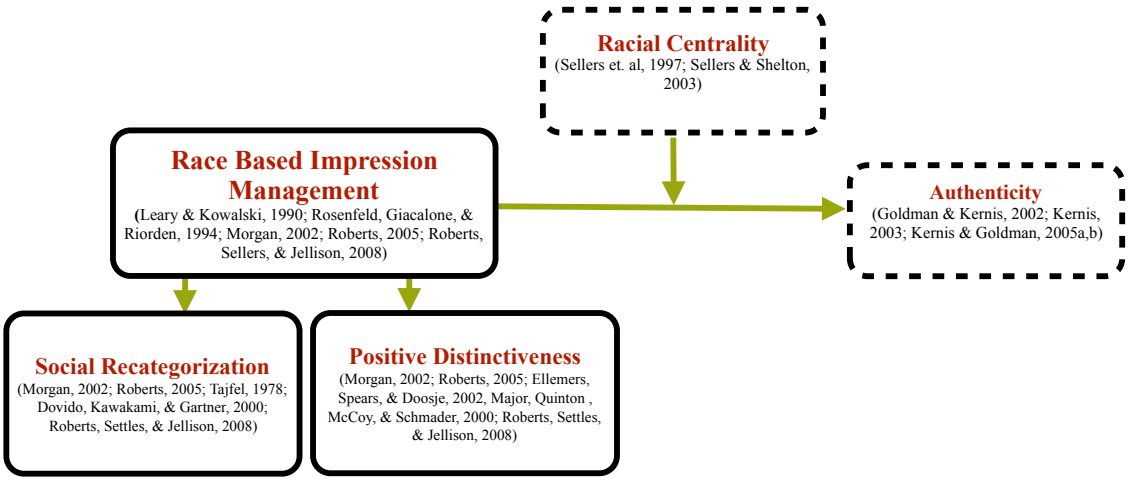

Figure 1.1. Conceptual framework.

Race-Based Impression Management

"The impression management process begins with a discrepancy between an actual and desired image" (Morgan, 2002, p. 18) and incites a desire to control or 'manage' how one is viewed by others (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Thus, the impression management process is often geared toward minimizing the disconnection between one's perception of self and one's perceived social identity group membership. At the core of impression management theory, Leary and Kowalski (1990) identified three distinct processes by which individuals engage in impression management: impression monitoring, impression motivation, and impression construction. Impression monitoring refers to individuals' cognitive awareness about how they are being viewed given their perceived membership in a particular social identity group (Morgan, 2002). Impression motivation refers to the circumstances or situations that motivate individuals to engage in impression management (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Merkl-Davies, Brennan, & McLeay, 2011). Lastly, impression construction entails identifying the type of impression that

individuals desire to make and determining how to do so (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). As individuals engage in social interactions with one another, they often consciously and unconsciously search for indicators or signals that illustrate how they are being perceived by others (Higgins, 1996). Impression management is an ongoing and iterative process, and these three processes are frequently used to inform one another and to affirm or combat how individuals are being perceived by others.

In this study, the social identity of race was explored within the context of the management consulting industry. RIM can be viewed as a subset of social identity–based impression management, as it entails the construction of impressions that are associated with one's racial group membership (Morgan, 2002).

Positive Distinctiveness and Social Recategorization

Morgan (2002; Roberts, 2005) identified two strategies for engaging in RIM: positive distinctiveness and social recategorization. Fredrickson (2002) suggested that the term *race* is used to index a history of characteristics that have enabled the establishment of a social hierarchy that facilitates the distinction between a higher and lower group status. The RIM strategies of positive distinctiveness and social recategorization bear on this, as they reflect the behavioral correlates that are used to manage and navigate membership within a social identity classification (race) that has been devalued historically.

Social recategorization refers to "a set of strategies group members employ to change negative perceptions [that] involve attempts to change the social category to which an individual or group of people is assigned in the interest of increased social mobility" (Morgan, 2002, p. 12). According to Morgan (2002), social recategorization

strategies seek to mitigate biases, prejudices, and discrimination that may often be associated with membership in a devalued social identity group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Allison & Herlocker, 1994; Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1979).

Turner, Oakes, Haslam, and McGarty (1994) suggested that this impression management strategy is rooted in the principle of functional antagonism: "as one category becomes more salient, others become less salient" (Morgan, 2002, p. 15). This conversely suggests that individuals who engage in social recategorization are less likely to be stigmatized and consequently may be able to avoid being negatively stereotyped (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998; Cross & Strauss, 1998; Dovidio, Gaertner, Schnabel, Saguy, & Johnson, 2010; Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Shelton, 2002; Turner & Crisp, 2010). Social recategorization seeks to facilitate social advancement at a highly individualized level, often by directing attention away from the physiological qualifiers for social identity group membership in the interest of reestablishing an emphasis on psychological characteristics.

Positive distinctiveness "communicates the notion that difference is valuable, which enables the mobility of one's entire social-identity group, as opposed to social recategorization strategies, which are geared toward personal [or individualized] mobility" (Morgan, 2002, p. 15). Rather than distance oneself from the devalued identity group altogether, positive distinctiveness seeks to improve the collective social mobility of an entire social identity group (Roberts, 2005), irrespective of its socially devalued positioning. Subsequently, persons who engage in positive distinctiveness choose to not downplay their racial identity, but rather to improve the devalued or stigmatized connotation that is associated with their racial group. In doing so, they not only affirm a

key premise of positive distinctiveness, namely that differences are valuable (Ellmers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002), but are also inherently choosing to present themselves in a way that is aligned with how they view themselves.

The enactment of RIM strategies is rooted in the variance that exists between one's actual and desired image. Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggested that, for minorities in particular, rejecting previously negative in-group associations (or devalued social identity group memberships) is reconciled by "developing a positive ethnocentric group identity" (p. 37). This implicitly refers to the behavioral correlates that are associated with positive distinctiveness, given that they demonstrate not only one's ability to contextually modify behaviors while maintaining a commitment to one's own racial identity (and thus the ability to be authentic at work), but also to communicate an interest in advancing the social status of a collective social identity group.

Previous research on RIM strategies has suggested that the use of social recategorization and positive distinctiveness strategies are in many ways concurrent with one another (Roberts et al., 2008). In their study on the strategic identity management of race and gender, Roberts et al. (2008) found that the more individuals employed one RIM strategy, the more they were inclined to also employ the other. This study found that "individuals who claimed their gender or race were also more likely to suppress that same identity" and subsequently noted that "this pattern suggests that individuals use different strategies in different situations, or may even use multiple strategies within the same situation" (p. 298). These findings suggest that positive distinctiveness and social recategorization do not occur independently, but are rather more likely to occur on a continuum.

Morgan (2002) and Roberts et al. (2008) examined the use of social identity–based impression management strategies by Black physicians in training, as well as by female scientists. Among these studies' notable findings were the positive relationship between positive distinctiveness and social recategorization. This positive relationship suggests that individuals with a high degree of race- or gender-based identity centrality are more likely to suppress that identity. The identification of a positive relationship between positive distinctiveness and social recategorization highlights the belief that social identity–based impression management strategies can occur concurrently, with individuals likely using multiple self-presentation strategies in varying contexts.

Research has suggested that individuals who do not see race as essential to their identity are more inclined to actively work to suppress their race during interracial interactions, arguably impacting their ability to be authentic at work (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Thomas, 1993). Subsequently, in examining an organizational context in which Black management consultants constitute a racial minority, the likelihood of minority organizational members engaging in RIM strategies (via social recategorization or positive distinctiveness) is significant.

Racial Centrality

Sociodemographic identities such as gender, ethnicity, and race tend to remain salient in varying situations and environments, given that they serve as the primary basis upon which people categorize one another (Moreland & Levine, 1989; Roberts, 2005). Similarly, according to social identity theory, individuals inherently tend to classify themselves and others into various social groupings and categories, such as religious affiliation, gender, race, ethnicity, and age (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, "a social group

is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225).

As individuals seek to navigate the socialized process of identification, social-psychological and organizational research addresses the challenges that are associated with how individuals actively cope with and navigate issues around negative stereotypes, devalued social identity groups, and/or social group stigmatization. This process is often mitigated by the extent to which race is a central and enduring aspect of one's perception of self. As racial minorities seek to respond to the backlash that is associated with their membership in a devalued identity group, they must frequently attempt to combat these negative connotations by endeavoring to redefine others' perceptions of their social identity group membership and subsequently of themselves (Roberts et al., 2008). However, for individuals who do not perceive race to be a central aspect of their identity, navigating these challenges may pose less of a problem, given that they lack personal identification with their devalued or stigmatized identity group membership (i.e., race). Based on Sellers, Smith, et al.'s (1998) definition of racial centrality, this construct is believed to be relatively stable across situations and subsequently applicable in a variety of socialized contexts, including the workplace.

Authenticity at Work

Current scholarly literature describes authenticity as staying true to one's self (Kira, Balkin, & San, 2012; Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a, 2014b). For the purpose of this research, authenticity was viewed as the unobstructed presentation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2005a, 2005b). Deci and Ryan (2000) highlighted the fact that individuals are

sensitive about the relationship between their true self, their environment, and the implications of their choices about how to present themselves in different contexts. A conscious awareness about these interactions is central to people's ability to be authentic, given that, when these commitments are not upheld, feelings of inauthenticity and anxiousness are likely to emerge (Erickson, 1995).

Authenticity speaks to the degree to which there is congruence between a person's internal and external expressions (Roberts, 2007). This highlights the core aspect of authenticity as being rooted in individuals' ability to achieve self-fulfillment as authentic humans by expressing their inner self through actions in the external world (Guignon, 2004). At work, the ability to behave authentically "facilitates the development of intimate relationships" (Roberts, 2007, p. 330) and aids in the establishment of an authentic understanding of diverse perspectives, characteristics, experiences, feelings, values, and cultural backgrounds in the workplace.

In examining the relationship between impression management and authenticity, the act of engaging in impression management strategies may conflict with individuals' inherent desire to engage authentically with their environment and those within it (Gecas, 1982; Ibarra, 1999; Morgan, 2002). In the workplace, this relationship manifests itself at a psychological level and refers to the challenges that racial minorities face in attempting to navigate challenges that are associated with being in the minority. The challenges that are associated with managing competing or conflicting desires to present oneself authentically at work can contribute to feelings of alienation (Goffman, 1959), stress and emotional labor (Costello, 2005; Hewlin, 2003; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Pugliesi, 1999;

Pugliesi & Shook, 1997; Ramarajan, 2014; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Roberts, 2005), as well as depression (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Goldman and Kernis (2002, 2004, 2006) suggested that authenticity can be broken down into four separate but interrelated components: awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation. The awareness component refers to "possessing, and being motivated to increase, knowledge of and trust in one's motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 294). Unbiased processing refers to "objectivity with respect to one's positive and negative self-aspects, emotions, and other internal experiences, information, and private knowledge" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 296). The behavior component involves "behaving in accord with one's values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting 'falsely' merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 299). Lastly, relational orientation "involves valuing and striving for openness, sincerity, and truthfulness in one's close relationships" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 300). Each of these four components addresses a distinct aspect of authenticity that, while related to the others, is not reflective or indicative of an interdependent relationship (Goldman & Kernis, 2006). This study examined how impression management strategies and the centrality of race affect racial minorities' ability to (behaviorally) present themselves authentically at work. Based on this interpretation, the *behavioral* component and corresponding subscale were used to measure authenticity at work in this study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study examined two primary research questions and tested the corresponding hypotheses:

RQ1. Is there a significant relationship between one's choice of RIM strategy and the ability to be authentic at work?

H1a. A significant positive correlation exists between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1b. A significant negative correlation exists between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1c. A significant positive correlation exists between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1d. A significant negative correlation exists between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work.

RQ2. If a significant relationship exists between the choice of RIM strategy and being authentic at work, is that relationship moderated by the centrality of race to an individual's identity?

H2a. The choice of RIM strategy that is employed by Black management consultants varies significantly according to their degree of racial centrality.

H2aa. The higher the degree of racial centrality, the more likely Black management consultants are to employ positive distinctiveness.

H2ab. The lower the degree of racial centrality, the more likely Black management consultants are to employ social recategorization.

H2b. The relationship between positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work is moderated by racial centrality, such that Black management consultants with a high degree of racial centrality who employ positive distinctiveness are more likely to be authentic at work than those with a low degree of racial centrality.

H2c. The relationship between social recategorization and authenticity at work is moderated by racial centrality, such that Black consultants with a high degree of racial centrality who employ social recategorization are less likely to be authentic at work than those with a low degree of racial centrality.

Research Question 1

While Research Question 1 and its resultant hypotheses have been theoretically explored in the existing literature (Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014), this study sought to provide empirical support for this relationship. Research Question 1 is rooted in Morgan's (2002) assertion that "contextual demands, such as working for a monolithic organization, may require some individuals to employ impression management strategies in order to create a favorable [professional] image" (p. 39). However, doing so may engender feelings of inauthenticity, particularly if it creates a conflict between how these individuals see themselves and how they are seen by others, thereby highlighting the shared behavioral aspects of enacting RIM strategies and being authentic at work.

Given the potential variances between the enactment of each RIM strategy and the ability to behave authentically at work, competing hypotheses are presented. This methodological approach allows for alternative hypotheses to be presented simultaneously and provides a framework for the systematic evaluation of data that are

consistent or inconsistent with each hypothesis. For example, the enactment of social recategorization may be positively related to authenticity in individuals who do not consider race a central aspect of their identity. However, the enactment of social recategorization may also be negatively related to these individuals' ability to be authentic at work, given that it may involve the suppression of certain aspects of their identity. Similarly, positive distinctiveness may be positively associated with individuals' ability to be authentic at work, given that publicly claiming and/or identifying with their racial identity allows them to behave authentically. However, as with social recategorization, positive distinctiveness may also be negatively correlated to one's ability to be authentic at work, given that the pressures that are associated with having to educate and advocate for an entire social identity group, rather than being able to simply focus on one's own self-expression, can be cumbersome.

Hypotheses H1a and H1b highlight the conditional relationship between the enactment of positive distinctiveness strategies and the ability to be authentic at work. While positive distinctiveness strategies include adaptive behaviors, they highlight a cognitive awareness around the potential disconnect between one's psychological perceptions of self and professionally acceptable outward expressions of self. Hypotheses H1a and H1b acknowledge the conditionally positive or negative effect that these behaviors can have on one's ability to be authentic at work.

Hypotheses H1c and H1d stress the conditional relationship between the enactment of social recategorization strategies and the ability to be authentic at work. Social recategorization efforts are rooted in a psychological desire to align oneself with the dominant/majority culture in an effort to increase one's social mobility. Individuals

who engage in the enactment of these strategies are believed to find inherent personal and professional value in this alignment and are more likely to feel able to be authentic at work. Thus, Hypotheses H1c and H1d acknowledge the conditionally positive or negative effect that these behaviors can have on one's ability to be authentic at work.

Research Question 2

Roberts et al. (2014) stated, "By conceptually and operationally decoupling racial identity and racial enactments, RIM research allows for the examination of the relative influence of racial identity on impression management use" (p. 8). Rooted in the findings from Research Question 1, Research Question 2 sought to establish the significance of racial centrality to the relationship between RIM and authenticity at work.

Hypotheses H2a, H2aa, and H2ab are rooted in the belief that individuals for whom race is a central and enduring aspect of their self-perception are likely to engage in impression management strategies that reflect the significance of race on their identity (Morgan, 2002). Conversely, individuals for whom race is not a central aspect of their identity are likely to engage in impression management strategies that are not driven or influenced by the racialized aspects of their identity (Morgan, 2002).

Hypotheses H2b and H2c posit that the centrality of race and the enactment of positive distinctiveness versus social recategorization moderates Black management consultants' ability to be authentic at work; these hypotheses are grounded in the theoretical relationship that was previously established among these variables (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014).

Overview of Methods

A quantitative research design was used to examine the relationships between the enactment of RIM strategies, the centrality of race, and authenticity at work. Black management consultants in the management consulting industry were studied, and an online survey was used to collect data.

While management consulting as a profession can be operationalized in a variety of organizational settings, this study specifically sought to target management consultants working in the industry's largest and most profitable firms. These firms include but are not limited to Bain and Company, Booz Allen, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLC, Mercer LLC, Accenture, IBM, McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, Ernst & Young LLP, Oliver Wyman, Mercer LLC, KPMG LLP, and Capgemini. These firms were chosen to gauge the psychological experiences of Black management consultants in an organizational environment that reflects the racially homogenous organizational context and environment that this study sought to explore. Only data from consultants who were based in the United States and who had resided in the United States for 11 or more years were used in the analysis. This specification was important, given the very specific historical undertones that are associated with how race is defined and viewed in the United States.

A convenience sample was used and incorporated snowball and referral-based sampling strategies. Gossnickle and Raskin (2001) reported that "snowball or referral sampling is used when the population being researched is difficult to reach" (p. 126) or scarce. This strategy essentially identifies an initial source with the desired sampling characteristics and uses their social networks to recruit additional participants who may

also have the identified characteristics that are being studied (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010). The survey instrument was distributed using a variety of snowball sampling strategies, including but not limited to the solicitation of LinkedIn members who were currently or previously employed at large, multinational consulting firms, personal referrals, solicitation via business and graduate school alumni and student listservs, and organizational/industry affinity groups.

Using the online tool Survey Monkey, the survey used for this study comprised three previously tested and validated instruments. Morgan's (2002) Race-Based Impression Management Scale was used to assess the enactment of the social identity–based impression management strategies: social recategorization and positive distinctiveness. The centrality dimension of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity instrument, as outlined by Sellers et al. (1997), was used to assess the centrality of racial identity, and the behavioral subscale of Goldman and Kernis's (2002, 2004, 2006) Authenticity Inventory was used to measure the behavioral manifestation of authenticity at work.

The original RIM Scale (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2014) was developed in 2002 and includes two dimensions: social recategorization and positive distinctiveness. The instrument was later modified (Roberts et al., 2014) and currently includes two additional dimensions (bridge building and racial humor). However, for the purposes of this study, only the nine items included in the social recategorization and positive distinctiveness dimensions were used. Similarly, the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (Sellers et al., 1997) measures four dimensions of Black identity: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology. Given this study's interest in exploring how the

centrality of race to one's identity informs impression management behaviors and strategies, only the four-item centrality dimension of this instrument was used.

Goldman and Kernis (2002, 2004, 2006) presented a conceptualization and framework for measuring authenticity through their development of the Authenticity Inventory, which highlights four related but distinct components of authentic behavior: awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation. A confirmatory factor analysis on a prior version of the Authenticity Inventory determined that this scale "measures these four discriminable components, which comprise a higher-order latent authenticity factor" (Goldman & Kernis, 2006, p. 344). Thus, the inventory can be used to measure one's *overall* authentic functioning, or the corresponding subscales associated with each of the dimensions can be used to measure specific aspects of one's authentic functioning. For this study, the 11-item behavioral subscale was used to measure an individual's authentic behaviors at work.

A pilot study was conducted, using a convenience sample of Black management consultants. Pilot study participants completed the survey and a secondary questionnaire where they provided feedback and insights on the instrument's clarity and ease of use. Study participants were provided with a research overview detailing the purpose of the study and information on the researcher and survey, with an electronic link to the online survey. Participants were asked to forward and share the survey link with additional colleagues or peers who may meet the research criteria.

In analyzing the findings from this study, Research Questions 1 and 2 were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM is a set of statistical methods used to assess latent constructs created from one or more observed variables (Schumacker

& Lomax, 2004). Unlike other forms of multiple regression and factor analysis, SEM allows for complex relationships between multiple latent variables to be examined simultaneously (Norman & Streiner, 2003). SEM was also used to test the conceptual models established for the two research questions, which sought to establish an empirical relationship between RIM and authenticity at work by arguing that the centrality of race to one's identity moderated this relationship.

Limitations, Assumptions, and Delimitations

This study focused only on the intersection of RIM strategies, authenticity at work, and the racial centrality of Black management consultants who were currently or previously employed by large multinational firms. Consequently, the following limitations to this study are highlighted:

1. Given the lack of published data on Black management consultants, the representativeness of the sample population could not be evaluated, thus making the findings of this study nongeneralizable.
2. The validity of self-report data is inherently rooted in the assumption that research participants are truthful in their responses to survey questions. Given the inherently sensitive nature of some of the survey questions, the potential for inaccurate or misleading responses exists.
3. The survey that was developed for this study comprised three independent subscales, which were derived from other instruments. Using subscales independently of their broader instruments can limit their reliability and validity. Similarly, combining independent subscales into one instrument can also impact

validity and reliability, as well as compromise the ability of each scale to accurately measure what it claims to measure.

In addition to these limitations, the following assumptions were made:

1. At the individual level of analysis, RIM strategies, racial centrality, and authenticity at work can be measured and analyzed by using quantitative methodology.
2. Participants' levels and perceptions of their racial identity and their enactment of RIM strategies can be exclusively contextualized within their organizational environment and remain consistent during the completion of the survey.
3. All constructs examined within the context of this study were treated as latent variables. Latent variables are those constructs or variables that are internal and nonobservable, but that can be measured and subsequently examined based on responses to questions designed to measure or quantify the variable being examined (Norman & Streiner, 2003).
4. For the purposes of this study, Likert-scale data were viewed as interval, which shows the order of things, with equal intervals between the points on the scale (Baggaley & Hull, 1983; Lane et al., 2014; Maurer & Pierce, 1998; Stumpf, Allen, & Seaman, 1997; Vickers, 1999). Data were viewed as interval given that parametric statistical methods like factor analysis and structural equation modeling are rooted in this assumption (Norman, 2010).

Definitions of Key Terms

Authenticity. The unobstructed presentation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2005a, 2005b).

Identity centrality. "The importance or psychological attachment that individuals place on their identities" (Settles, 2004, p. 487).

Identity work. "The range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of their self-concept" (Snow & Anderson, 1987, p. 1348).

Impression management theory. The process by which people control the impressions that others form of them (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008; Bolino, Long, & Turnley, 2016; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Positive distinctiveness. "Active attempts to create a more positive social meaning around a devalued social group by publicly claiming membership in the group, educating others about the positive qualities of the group or advocating for the group" (Roberts et al., 2008, pp. 273–274).

Race-based impression management. Impression management based upon one's membership in a race-based social identity group (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008).

Racial centrality. "The extent to which a person normatively defines her or himself with regard to race. It is a measure of whether race is a core part of an individual's self-concept" (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997, p. 806).

Racial identity."A sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1990, p. 3)

Social identity–based impression management. "One's cognitive awareness of how he/she is viewed by others as a member of his/her social-identity group in a given context" (Morgan, 2002, p. 22). "Social identity–based impression management strategies are aimed toward shaping the manner in which others view individuals in terms of their social-identity group memberships" (Morgan, 2002, p. 7).

Social recategorization. A set of strategies that group members employ to change negative perceptions, in an effort to increase social mobility (Morgan, 2002).

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is presented in three sections that explore the theoretical and conceptual foundations of race-based impression management (RIM), the centrality of race, and authenticity at work. Each section is divided into subsections that examine the seminal works, contemporary perspectives, and empirical research associated with each construct. This literature review provides insight into how each of these constructs informs the primary research questions: How is the relationship between RIM and authenticity moderated by racial centrality? If a significant relationship exists between the choice of RIM strategy and being authentic at work, is the relationship moderated by the centrality of race?

In examining the empirical research and theoretical foundations of the aforementioned constructs, the following academic literature databases were used: JSTOR, ProQuest, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Business Source Premier, and ERIC. Keywords and phrases that were searched in these databases included the following: *impression management, social identity and impression management, race and impression management, organizational impression management, racial centrality, racial identity, authenticity*, and *authenticity at work*. In order to include seminal works as well as the most contemporary perspectives and empirical works available, the timeframe for this literature search was 1950 to 2017.

Race-Based Impression Management Theory

The study of RIM stems from the overarching construct of social identity–based impression management. Social identity–based impression management is inherently grounded in the theoretical constructs of impression management and social identity and can be used to examine impression management strategies that are grounded in one's membership in a particular social identity group, such as race or gender. In seeking to examine the emergence of RIM as a theoretical construct, this section begins with an overview of impression management and social identity theory, constructs that serve as the theoretical foundation for social identity–based impression management. An understanding of these constructs is needed to chronicle the emergence of social identity–based impression management and how it was subsequently used to study RIM. In unpacking social identity–based impression management, the relationship between social identity theory, devalued social identities, and impression management is also examined.

Social Identity Theory

In examining the social identity theory rhetoric, it is important to note the distinction that is made between identity theory and social identity theory. According to Hogg, Terry, and White (1995), identity theory places a critical emphasis on the fact that individual identities are tied to the multiple roles that individuals occupy. In contrast, social identity places a critical emphasis on what Roberts and Creary (2012) termed *master statuses*, which refer to the more overt and often physiological means of social classification (i.e., race, gender, age). Social identity theory is rooted in the belief that individuals belong to varying social categories and that it is through self-categorization that they are able to classify and order their social environments, and consequently their

role within these environments (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Turner, 1987). Additionally, social identity theory can be used as an aid to interpret how and why individuals aim to construct identities that are viewed more favorably (Roberts & Creary, 2012).

The emphasis placed on being viewed favorably can be connected to the beliefs that, as members of a social group (as determined by social identity or identities), individuals' perceptions of self are tightly coupled with their membership in their respective social groups. Consequently, the establishment of a relative consensus regarding the way in which one's social group is viewed and subsequently evaluated can be critical in dictating how individuals in varying social groups are perceived (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Tajfel and Turner (1979) noted that social group members often make "favorable comparisons between their in-group and a relevant out-group in order to sustain their perception that the in-group is positively distinct from the out-group" (p. 41). Bearing this in mind, one's desire to establish such favorable comparisons can be influenced by the enactment of impression management strategies.

Because social identities are constructed within a socialized context, some social group memberships may be viewed as socially stigmatized or devalued, depending on their environmental or socialized context. In these instances, "People not only evaluate stigmatized persons unfavorably, but they also behave differently towards them" (Leary, 1996, p. 121). Similarly, stigmatized individuals engage in a number of impression management strategies that are designed to minimize the impact of their stigma on others' reactions toward them. Roberts et al. (2008) noted that most individuals belong to multiple social identity groups, some of which may contribute to experiences of stigmatization, given the socially devalued status of that particular social identity group.

Subsequently, individuals may not be considered legitimate members of one socially valued group because of their membership within another socially devalued group (Barbercheck, 2001; Roberts et al., 2008; Wyer, Barbercheck, Geisman, Ozturk, & Wayne, 2001).

Stigmas are socially constructed, and context and environment play a critical role in determining how specific characteristics or social identities are viewed in varying social settings (Crocker, Major, & Steel, 1998; Dovidio, Gaertner, Niemann, & Snider, 2001; Ragins, 2008). In examining stigmatized or devalued identities within an organizational context, Dutton et al. (2010) suggested that all "individuals form, transform and modify how they define themselves and others in the context of work-based situations and activities" (p. 265). For minorities in particular, the impact of conflicting social identity group memberships, and the negative stereotypes and stigmas that are associated with their membership in a devalued identity group, may have notable implications for academic and career advancement (Roberts et al., 2008). As such, many organizational minorities' work-related social identity reflects the valued social identity group membership that aids in their ability to downplay the devalued connotation that is associated with their conflicting or stigmatized social identity group membership (Bell & Nkomo, 2003; Bernstein, Crary, Biimoria, & Blancero, 2015; Dutton et al., 2010; Harrington & Hall, 2007; Kipping & Clark, 2012; Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al., 2008; Roberts & Creary, 2012; Settles, 2004).

Impression Management Theory and Self-Presentation

Seminal perspectives on impression management suggest that its primary purpose is to aid in defining how individuals determine and establish their placement within the

social fabric of society (Goffman, 1959). Impression management essentially sets the tone and direction for how individuals interact with one another and facilitates the performance of role-governed behavior (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In seeking to enhance our foundational understanding of how and why impression management is enacted, this section presents the seminal perspectives on this construct.

Leary and Kowalski (1990) defined impression management and/or self-presentation as "the process by which people control the impressions others form of them" (p. 34). This phenomenon has also been defined as "the process of controlling how one is perceived by other people" (Leary, 1996, p. 2). While the terms *self-presentation* and *impression management* are used interchangeably in the literature, this study uses the term *impression management* exclusively, given that it inherently refers to the socially constructed interest that is intrinsic to how humans are perceived and subsequently evaluated and classified by others.

The study of impression management began with the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, whose most notable contribution to this body of literature was *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Goffman's work on impression management began with the study of human behavior and placed a critical emphasis on understanding public self-images. Goffman noted, "When an individual appears in the presence of others there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interest to convey" (p. 4), thereby shedding light on the significance as well as the inherently public and socialized nature of impression management efforts.

Social psychologist Edward Jones is another seminal theorist in the study of impression management. Jones's interest in impression management centered on understanding how people determine what others are like (Leary, 1996). Jones (1990) suggested that "the study of impression management and self-presentation is an integral part of the study of interpersonal perception[s]" and noted that "we cannot understand how people perceive each other without at the same time understanding the dynamics of self-presentation" (p. 170). Jones and Pittman (1982) highlighted the fact that impression management efforts are not necessarily rooted in a desire to be viewed positively, but rather to seek to influence others' interactions with oneself.

While both Goffman and Jones made significant contributions to the study of impression management during the same era, the distinction between their perspectives is largely rooted in their methodological approaches to studying this phenomenon. Goffman chose to explore impression management by using an anthropological and symbolic interactionist perspective that included collecting data via field observations and the construction of narrative essays. Conversely, Jones contributed by shifting the study of impression management into the fields of sociology and psychology during the 1960s and chose to use laboratory experiments that were designed to confirm or disconfirm what factors informed the enactment of impression management. While theoretically similar in many ways, Jones's and Goffman's interpretations, definitions, and empirical approaches to the study of impression management were fundamentally rooted in divergent paradigms and empirical classifications.

Building upon the seminal works of Goffman (1959, 1974) and Jones (1990; Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Jones & Pittman, 1982), the next generation of impression

management theorists included Leary and Kowalski (1990), who conducted a review of the literature on impression management and introduced a two-component model for understanding the enactment of impression management. Leary (1996) also published a book entitled *Self-Presentation: Impression Management and Interpersonal Behavior*, which examines how human behaviors are directly and indirectly informed by interpersonal concerns with public impressions. It is noteworthy that Leary (1996) suggested that a certain degree of public interest and/or concern for how one is viewed by others is essential in ensuring smooth social interactions. Leary (1996) noted, "We glean cues about what others are like from their behavior and appearance, as well as from our stereotypes about what certain kinds of people are like" (p. 46). Subsequently, the enactment of impression management behaviors is critical in ensuring that people have sufficient information about one another to interact smoothly and effectively (Goffman, 1959; Leary, 1996). Leary and Kowalski's (1990) two-component model of impression management serves as the foundation for Roberts's (Morgan, 2002; Roberts, 2005) social identity–based impression management theory.

The Emergence of Social Identity–Based Impression Management

According to social identity theory, individuals tend to classify themselves and others into various social groupings and categories, such as religious affiliation, gender, race, ethnicity, and age (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Similarly, as individuals seek to navigate the highly socialized process of identification, social psychological and organizational research highlights the challenges that are associated with how individuals actively cope with and navigate issues around negative stereotypes, devalued social identity groups, and/or social group stigmatization. In seeking to respond to this, minority individuals

frequently combat the negative connotations that are associated with these devalued classifications by attempting to redefine others' perceptions of their social identity groups and subsequently of themselves (Roberts et al., 2008). This process refers empirically to the intersection of social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Miller & Brewer, 1986; Tajfel, 1978), devalued social identities (Crocker et al., 1998; Major et al., 2002; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and impression management (Goffman, 1959, 1974, 1975; Jones, 1990; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1996; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980). It is at the intersection of these constructs that Morgan's (2002) social identity–based impression management emerged.

Seminal Research on Social Identity–Based Impression Management

Impression management theory refers inherently to the "behavioral manifestation of managing socially devalued identity group memberships, as it links impression construction strategies to self-presentation behaviors" (Morgan, 2002, p. 16). At the core of Morgan's model of social identity–based impression management theory lies Leary and Kowalski's (1990) two-component model of impression management. This model identifies two very distinct processes by which individuals engage in impression management: impression motivation and impression construction. Leary and Kowalski (1990) reported that "people regularly monitor their impact on others and try to gauge the impressions other people form of them" (p. 35). This process is often enacted without an attempt to project a particular impression, but rather refers to an interest in ensuring that one's public persona remains intact (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). However, there are some instances in which people do have an interest in influencing how others view them. This process refers to what Leary and Kowalski termed *impression motivation* and reflects a

desire to create a specific impression of oneself in the minds of others. In response to the onset of impression motivation, individuals engage in impression construction, which "involves not only choosing the kind of impression to create, but deciding precisely how they will go about doing so" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 36). Based on these processes, Leary and Kowalski (1990) presented a two-component model of impression management, which "accounts not only for why people are concerned with others' impressions of them in a particular social setting, but also for why people adopt one impression management tactic rather than another" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 36).

From this two-part model of impression management, Morgan's (2002) conceptual model of social identity–based impression management emerged (Figure 2.1). This model refers to an individual's desire to associate with social identity groups that are believed to be valued and socially esteemed, particularly in an organizational context. This model details the process by which individuals who belong to socially devalued identity groups seek to realign themselves with alternate social identity groups that are more positively valued, a phenomenon that Morgan (2002) called *social recategorization*. Alternately, those who seek to alter the socially constructed perception of their devalued identity group in an effort to achieve a more favorable perception engage in what Morgan (2002) termed *positive distinctiveness*.

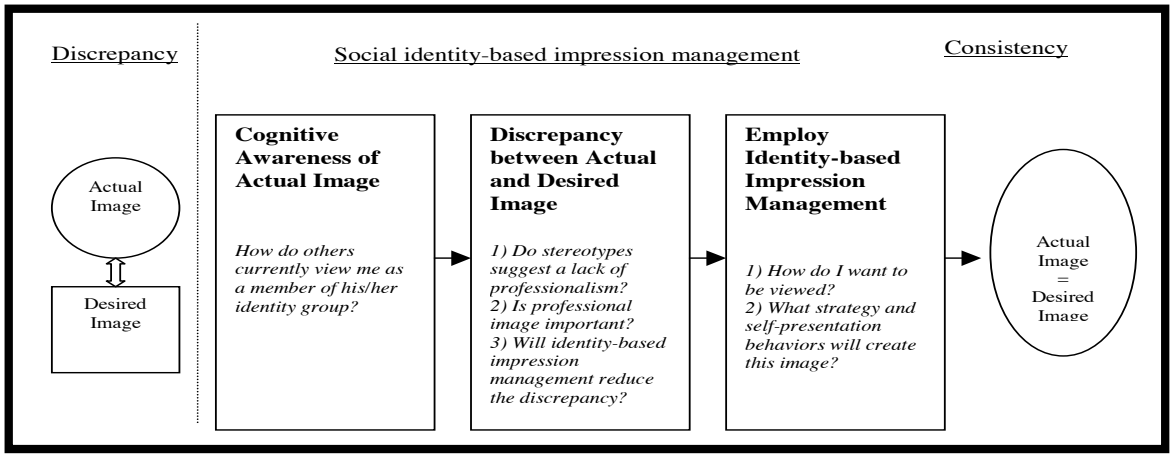

Figure 2.1. Morgan's (2002) conceptual model for social identity–based impression management.

As described by Roberts et al. (2008), Morgan (2002) examined "the influence of racial centrality, physician centrality, and perceived devaluation of one's racial group on the use of social recategorization strategies and positive distinctiveness strategies to manage the perception of race" (p. 283) on Black American medical school students. Morgan (2002) used social identity–based impression management theory to explore race, specifically as a social identity. Within this context, race reflects the means by which a group of people is classified on the basis of a common history, nationality, and/or geographic origin. In this study, Morgan (2002) developed and tested the Race-Based Impression Management Scale, which focuses on the use of the two distinct social identity–based impression management strategies, positive distinctiveness and social recategorization, as a means by which organizational minorities navigate racially homogeneous workplaces.

Positive Distinctiveness

Within organizations, racial and ethnic minorities often struggle with the challenges that are associated with navigating membership in a socially devalued identity

group, often impairing their ability to maintain and engage in the construction of a positive work-related identity. Positive distinctiveness "communicates the notion that difference is valuable, which enables the mobility of one's entire social-identity group, as opposed to social recategorization strategies, which are geared toward personal mobility" (Morgan, 2002, p. 15). Goffman (1963) addressed the role of stigmas on individuals' self-presentation strategies and the art of destigmatization. Similar to positive distinctiveness, Goffman suggested that one of the simplest approaches to addressing destigmatization is to simply deny that the devalued aspect of one's identity should be regarded in a negative way (Leary, 1996). Rather than distance oneself from the devalued identity group altogether, positive distinctiveness seeks to disavow the stigmatized connotation that is associated with one's identity group membership, in favor of seeking to improve the collective social mobility of the devalued or stigmatized social identity group. Roberts (2007) noted that "marginalized groups frequently unify around collective mobilizing efforts, such as advocacy groups, affinity networks, and professional organizations, to advance common interests within organizations and societies" (p. 349). As an example, Jones et al. (1984) noted that "the civil rights and Black power movements were designed to [not only aid in attaining] equal rights for Blacks, but also sought to destigmatize dark skin" (Leary, 1996, p. 122).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) noted that for minorities in particular, rejecting previously negative in-group evaluations (or devalued social identity group memberships) has for some been replaced by an interest in "developing a positive ethnocentric group identity" (p. 37). This refers implicitly to the behavioral correlates that are enacted in an effort not only to demonstrate individuals' ability to modify their

behavior contextually (while maintaining a commitment to their own racial identity), but also to communicate an interest in advancing the social status of their collective social identity group.

Individuals often consciously and subconsciously manage how they choose to present themselves, in the hope that others will see them as they see themselves (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1996; Schlenker & Weigold, 1990). This process inherently refers to the motivation that underlies the enactment of positive distinctiveness strategies.

Social Recategorization

Social recategorization reflects "a set of strategies group members employ to change negative perceptions" and involves "attempts to change the social category to which an individual or group of people is assigned in the interest of increased social mobility" (Morgan, 2002, p. 12). According to Morgan (2002), social recategorization strategies seek to mitigate biases, prejudices, and discrimination that may often be associated with membership in a devalued social identity group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Allison & Herlocker, 1994; Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1979). Similarly, Leary (1996) suggested that some impression management strategies and behaviors are performed so regularly that they become unconscious and/or mindless habits. Leary (1996) proceeded to note, "Although the behavior may have begun because the person consciously wanted to create a certain impression, the person now performs the behavior without consciously thinking about its self-presentational roots" (p. 61). This assertion refers to the potentially unconscious construction and enactment of social recategorization strategies.

Turner et al. (1994) suggested that social recategorization strategies are rooted in the principles of functional antagonism: "As one category becomes more salient, others

become less salient" (Morgan, 2002, p. 15). Similarly, Leary (1996) suggested that individuals are often not consciously aware of the stimuli that cause or trigger the enactment of social recategorization behaviors and strategies. Social recategorization directly and indirectly refers to the process of presenting oneself in a way that facilitates social and/or professionally based advancement at the individual level. This is often done by directing attention away from the physiological qualifiers for social identity group membership (such as race or gender), in favor of reestablishing an emphasis on psychological characteristics (Brewer, 1979).

In further examining the social recategorization process, Morgan (2002) identified three distinct ways in which negatively stereotyped professionals enact social recategorization. The first involves "active attempts to suppress one's social identity" (Morgan, 2002, p. 13), while the second involves "emphasizing similarities with the out-group" or desired social identity group (Morgan, 2002, p. 13). The last strategy involves deemphasizing the dimension of comparison and refers to an effort to "reduce the salience of the devalued/stereotyped identity" (Morgan, 2002, p. 14). As an example, Wingfield and Alston (2014) highlighted instances "when Black workers laugh at racist jokes [in an effort to] ingratiate themselves [with] White colleagues or [to] restrain themselves from showing anger because it makes White supervisors uncomfortable" (p. 280).

The phenomenon of assimilation is similar to that of social recategorization efforts. Morgan (2002) noted that "assimilation norms generally require that people suppress their dimensions of difference [such as their racial identity] and blend into the mainstream or dominant culture" (pp. 177–178). Attempting to do so often forces

minorities in particular to attempt to maintain competing social identity group memberships, thereby further contributing to the challenges that members of a devalued social identity group face.

As organizations become increasingly diverse and globalized, organizational efforts to cultivate workplace environments that are inclusive of a diverse workforce often inadvertently encourage assimilation (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002; Cox, 1994; Cox & Blake, 1991; Fine, 1996; Green, 2007; Marvasti & McKinney, 2004). In defining assimilation, Cox (1994) and Cox and Blake (1991) suggested that the assimilation of organizational minorities in their workplace is reflective of acculturation, by which diverse or *different* employees are expected to "deny or suppress certain aspects of their minority identities and conform to the norms of the organization" (Phillips, 2008, p. 2). Organizational norms refer implicitly to the beliefs, values, artifacts, and assumptions that define "the way things are done around here" (Schein, 1985, 1992), and it is through these norms that some organizations consciously and unconsciously employ policies and practices that are designed to ensure uniformity among employee behaviors. As Phillips (2008) noted, "Employees are more likely to leave [an organization] when they are dissimilar to others or when they perceive that there is not a fit between their norms and those of the organization" (p. 3). This assertion highlights the potential challenges that are associated with engaging in social recategorization, particularly for individuals whose race is central to their identity.

Contemporary Research on Social Identity and Race-Based Impression Management

Roberts et al. (2008) noted that "most people belong to multiple social groups, some of which can contribute to the experience of stigmatization" (p. 274). Social identity–based impression management theory can be used to explore these individuals' experiences and to enhance our understanding of how people manage others' perceptions of their membership in a devalued social identity group. Roberts (2005) described "how in the course of an interpersonal encounter, individuals attempt to leverage the positive impact of the diversity they bring and counteract the conflicts that differences may generate in work organizations" (p. 685). Morgan (2002) extended her seminal work and model of social identity–based impression management theory and included the phenomenon of professional image construction (Appendix A), which refers to how the projection of superficial and substantial characteristics contributes to the establishment of others' perceptions and subsequent expectations of an individual's competence and fit within the professional context (Goffman, 1959; Ibarra, 1999).

In a two-part study, Roberts et al. (2008) examined how people strategically claim or downplay their socially devalued identities. Roberts et al. examined women in science (Settles, 2004) and Black physicians in training (Morgan, 2002) based on their contextualized memberships within one valued social identity group (the science profession and medical school, respectively) and one devalued social identity group (gender and race, respectively). Roberts et al.'s study of social identity–based impression management found that believing one's social identity group to be devalued was positively correlated to the use of both social recategorization and positive distinctiveness

strategies. Similarly, Roberts et al. found that the enactment of social recategorization strategies was less related to one's identification with the devalued group than the enactment of positive distinctiveness strategies. However, only the study of Black physicians in training found that the identification with an alternate socially valued identity was positively related to social recategorization (Roberts et al., 2008). Through their examination of two devalued social identity group memberships (gender and race), Roberts et al. (2008) not only contributed to our understanding of how individuals enact social identity–based impression management strategies, but also informed our overarching understanding of how people manage devalued social identity group memberships. Roberts et al. (2008) stated that "members of devalued groups may seek to convince others of their legitimacy in the socially valued group by downplaying the devalued identity" (p. 275).

Roberts et al. (2014) used social identity–based impression management theory to explore the RIM strategies that are used by Asian American journalists. In addition to extending the original social identity–based impression management strategies (social recategorization and positive distinctiveness), Roberts et al. presented two additional strategies (bridge building and racial humor). Their findings posited that racial centrality directly and indirectly informs the use of RIM strategies within a racial/ethnic-majority work environment.

In examining the literature on the intersection between impression management and social identities such as race, it is important to acknowledge related streams of literature that have explored varying dimensions and interpretations of this relationship. Of note is Hewlin's (2003, 2009) work on *facades of conformity*, which draws a number

of parallels to Morgan's (2002) conceptualization of RIM. Hewlin (2003) defined facades of conformity as "false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values" (p. 663). Hewlin suggested that antecedents of these representations are constructed and established based on organizational reward systems, one's membership in a minority group, and engagement in self-monitoring tactics. While Morgan (2002), Roberts (2005), and Hewlin (2003, 2009) examined the psychological adaptations that are made by organizational minorities, the enactment of a *façade of conformity* is distinct, given that it is rooted in organizational members' desire to present themselves in alignment with their organization's values. Conversely, social identity and RIM strategies refer to a systematic attempt to influence others' perceptions and images of themselves, based on their membership within a particular social identity group (Morgan, 2002). Social identity and RIM strategies are aimed toward "shaping the manner in which others view individuals in terms of their social-identity group memberships" (Morgan, 2002, p. 7), which is different than seeking to alter one's behavior and mannerisms in an effort to increase personal alignment with organizational values.

Similarly, contemporary literature on impression management draws a number of parallels to *identity management*. Shih et al. (2013) introduced two interpretations of strategies that are used by minority individuals to mitigate the impact of organizational or workplace discrimination. They suggested that individuals use *identity switching,* which entails "the act of deemphasizing target identities and recategorizing to a more positively valued identity" and *identity redefinition,* which entails "stereotype reassociation and regeneration" (p. 145), both of which inherently refer to the contextualized influences

that social environments such as the workplace can have on people's ability to present themselves authentically.

While Shih et al. (2013) used different terminology to examine how organizational minorities seek to navigate racial-majority organizational environments through the usage of identity management, their understanding of the strategies that are used was similar to that of Morgan (2002) and Roberts (2005). However, Shih et al. argued that their interpretation of these identity management strategies was distinct from those identified by Roberts. They noted that impression management strategies focus heavily on the desire to alter others' opinions and perceptions of oneself, whereas they posited that identity management is viewed as a coping mechanism used by minorities who seek to manage discrimination and stigmas that are based on their membership within a particular social identity group (Shih et al., 2013). They noted that identity management strategies "apply to situations specifically associated with managing discrimination and stigma[s] and not just to the creation of professional images in general" (p. 148).

While Shih et al. suggested that their conceptualization of identity management strategies (identity stitching and identity redefinition) were distinct from Roberts's (2005) conceptualization of RIM strategies (social recategorization and positive distinctiveness), the parallels between these two constructs and their subsequent interpretation is arguable, but can be said to be empirically better supported by the work of Morgan (2002), Roberts (2005), and Roberts et al. (2008) on social identity and RIM. Roberts's interpretation of social identity and RIM has been cited in concurrence with works on identity construction/development (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Dutton et al., 2010; Koen, Van

Vianen, Klehe, & Zikic, 2016), stereotype threats (Block, Koch, Liberman, Merriweather, & Robertson, 2011), identity work (Atewologun, Sealy, & Vinnicombe, 2015), professional and work-related identities (Cech, 2015; Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2013; Little et al., 2015; Phillips, Williams, & Kirkman, 2016; Reid, 2015), image discrepancies and identity threats (Horton, Bayerl, & Jacobs, 2013; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Opie & Phillips, 2015; Petriglieri, 2011; Thomas, Johnson, & Jewell, 2016; Vough, Cardador, Bednar, Dane, & Pratt, 2012), and organizational diversity (Bernstein et al., 2015; Ely, Padavic, & Thomas, 2012; King et al., 2011; Ossenkop, Vinkenburg, Jansen, & Ghorashi, 2015; Roberts et al., 2014; Shih et al., 2013; Ward & Ravlin, 2017).

These contemporary perspectives bespeak the prevalence of impression management issues in both scholarship and practice and highlight the diverse contexts within which social identity and RIM are being studied. Given this study's interest in examining how membership in a specific social identity group and one's subsequent identification with that group influences or impacts the decision to modify one's behavior, Morgan's (2002) conceptualization of social identity–based impression management is used.

The Centrality of Race to One's Identity

Identity centrality can be described as the degree to which individuals consider their social group membership to be central to their self-concept or perception of self (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Smith et al., 1998). Social identities such as race provide minority individuals with social validation and a framework from which to interpret the world and their position in it (Settles, 2004). In this section, racial

identity, racial centrality, and the relationship that exists between the two variables is examined within the context of Black individuals.

Racial Identity

In defining racial identity theory, Helms (1995) and Helms and Cook (1999) suggested that racial identity explains the process by which people of color "establish a positive identity and affiliation with the culture and sociopolitical experiences of his/her ascribed group while living in a society that devalues his/her group" (Victoria, 2014, p. 14). This definition of racial identity not only highlights the inherent psychological connection that is associated with race, but also refers to the embedded significance and impact of membership within a socially stigmatized and devalued identity group. Similarly, Rodgers (2008) suggested that "racial identity refers to how one acknowledges, perceives and consequently adapts to the social and political experiences [of being] an African American, whereas [one's] ethnic identity reflects the connection that individuals have with other African Americans" (p. 112).

As previously noted, the term *Black* when used as a racial classification encompasses a variety of ethnic groups, many of whose members do not identify as being African American. Immigrants of African descent (e.g., Continental Africans, Caribbean Americans, Afro-Latinos, etc.) are often classified as Black Americans, though they may still or exclusively identify with their ethnic identities. This highlights the importance of understanding the theoretical distinction between racial identity and ethnic identity, particularly within the context of studying Blacks and African Americans. Thus, given its ability to be inclusive of a more vast representation, the use of Black as a racial classification is explored.

Seminal research. One of the most seminal theories of racial identity development was introduced by Cross (1971) and revised by Cross and Vandiver (2001). This theory of racial identity development refers specifically to Black identity and expands Cross's (1971) model of Black identity development by outlining eight types of identities. These identities are developed and enacted by Blacks and/or African Americans over the course of a three-part spectrum that is rooted in psychological health. Cross and Vandiver suggested that where individuals fall on this spectrum is rooted in their previous experiences and noted that the varying stages that are outlined within this model highlight the level of racial identity development from least to most developed. While the stages that are outlined in this model are believed to be evolutionary, the theoretical belief that individuals transition from one stage to the next has remained consistent throughout the empirical evolution of this theory. Cross and Vandiver's (2001) theory of racial identity development continues to be heavily cited in social-psychological studies around racial and ethnic identities (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cokley, 2005; Elion, Wang, Slaney, & French, 2012; Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015; Lee & Ahn, 2013; Porter & Dean, 2015; Quintana, 2007; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003; Szymanski & Lewis, 2015).

The initial and concluding stages that are outlined in Cross and Vandiver's (2001) developmental theory support Morgan's (2002) operationalization of social recategorization and positive distinctiveness. Cross (1991) suggested that individuals within the pre-encounter stage of racial identity development believe that race does not matter and subsequently do not afford much credence to their membership within that social identity group (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). Arguably, this may be

connected to the foundational premises that underlie the enactment of social recategorization strategies. Conversely, Cross (1991) noted that individuals at the internalization stage of development seek to use their membership and commitment to their racial identity group as a platform toward elevating the social status of Blacks and/or African Americans within a particular context and society at large (French et al., 2006). This stage of development corresponds directly to the desire to advance the status of one's social group through education and by creating positive interactions, as demonstrated through the enactment of positive distinctiveness.

In light of the parallels between Cross's (1971, 1991) and Cross and Vandiver's (2001) models of racial identity development and Morgan's (2002) and Roberts et al.'s (2008, 2014) social identity and RIM strategies of social recategorization and positive distinctiveness, it is important to note that, while similar, these constructs are distinct. Cross's and Cross and Vandiver's theory of racial identity development suggests that the transition from pre-encounter to internalization occurs as an evolutionary process. Conversely, research on positive distinctiveness and social recategorization supports the claim that these two impression management strategies are distinct: while they may overlap, empirical findings do not currently suggest that they evolve from one to the other (Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014).

In her work on the disclosure of stigmatized identities, Ragins (2008) noted the following:

> Individuals who view themselves in terms of their stigma may be intrinsically motivated to disclose their identity in order to obtain congruence between their self-views and the views others have of them and that the centrality of the identity to the individuals' self-concept increases their need for affirmation and the subsequent disclosure of their stigmatized identity. (p. 200)

In seeking to enhance our theoretical understanding of how membership in a devalued racial identity group is manifested, Sellers, Smith, et al. (1998) suggested that at least four ideologies specifically capture how African Americans view membership within their racial group. These ideologies are (a) a nationalist ideology that focuses on being of African descent, (b) an oppressed minority ideology that highlights similarities between African Americans and other oppressed groups, (c) an assimilationist ideology that finds similarities between African Americans and mainstream American society, and (d) a humanist ideology that focuses on and stresses the shared characteristics of all humans (Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

Sellers and Shelton's (2003) conceptualization of African American racial identity, particularly in adults, continues to be connected to and studied in social psychological research (Bauman, Trawalter, & Unzueta, 2014; Brown & Segrist, 2016; Hoggard, Jones, & Sellers, 2016; Hughes et al., 2015; Hughes, Kiecolt, & Keith, 2013; McLeod, 2015; Neville, Viard, & Turner, 2014; Rosette, Carton, Bowes-Sperry, & Hewlin, 2013; Settles & Buchanan, 2014).

Contemporary perspectives. The significance of one's racial identity can be connected to varying individual outcomes, including self-esteem (Demo, 2015; Hughes & Demo, 1989; Hughes et al., 2015; Jones, Cross, & Defour, 2007; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998), academic performance (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Baldwin, Duncan, & Bell, 1987; Chavous et al., 2003; Cokley, McClain, Jones, & Johnson, 2012; Ford & Harris, 1997; O'Brien, Martinez-Pons, & Kopala, 1999; Robinson-Wood, 2016; Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998), physical and mental health (Franklin-Jackson & Carter, 2007; Hughes et al., 2013; Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman,

2003; Williams, Spencer, & Jackson, 1999), perceptions of discrimination (Hall & Carter, 2006; Lee & Ahn, 2013; Neblett & Roberts, 2013; Sellers & Shelton, 2003), and career aspirations (Helms & Piper, 1994; Morgan, 2002; Tovar-Murray, Jenifer, Andrusyk, D'Angelo, & King, 2012; Wong, 2015). Racial identity as a social-psychological construct has been extensively explored in adolescents and has been connected to psychological outcomes (Hurd, Sellers, Cogburn, Butler-Barnes, & Zimmerman, 2013; Kramer, Burke, & Charles, 2015; Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards, & Ragsdale, 2009; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Rodgers, 2008; Seaton, Neblett, Upton, Hammond, & Sellers, 2011; Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2009; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006; Stock et al., 2013; Tang, McLoyd, & Hallman, 2016). Sellers et al. (2006) found that racial identity plays a critical role in determining the relationship between African American students' racial discrimination and psychological outcomes. Similarly, Rodgers (2008) used an expectancy model framework to explore how the interaction between racial identity, racial centrality, and giftedness in African American adolescents informed motivational patterns.

The intersection of race and identity emerges at the individual level, but manifests itself within socialized contexts, such as the workplace (Alleyne, 2004; Harvey & Allard, 2015; Herring, 2009; Ragins et al., 2003; Roberts et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 1998). While contemporary explorations of race in organizational settings have increased (Ainsworth, 2014; DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Offerman et al., 2014), additional insights and research are needed in order to understand the impact and evolution of the unique experiences that Black professionals face in the workplace.

Racial Centrality

Settles (2004) defined identity centrality as "the importance or psychological attachment that individuals place on their identities" (p. 487). This section examines the centrality of race to one's identity and presents seminal and contemporary perspectives.

Seminal works. The centrality of one's identity refers to how individuals are intrinsically connected to a particular social group or identity (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Chavous et al. (2003) defined racial centrality as "the importance of race to an individual's self-definition" (Rodgers, 2008, p. 133) and asserted that the centrality of race essentially refers to the extent to which individuals personally identify with their racial group and subsequently the extent to which they see themselves as similar to members of this group (Rodgers, 2008). An identity only becomes *central* "when it is valued, frequently used, and incorporated into [one's] self-concept" (Ragins, 2008, p. 199). Conversely, when the central identity is one that is viewed as socially stigmatized or devalued, Jones et al. (1984) noted the following:

> All of us belong to categories that are evaluated negatively in at least some contexts, and within these contexts, we can be described as being stigmatized, but a person only possesses a stigmatized *identity* when membership in one, generally negative, category dominates all [of] his or her interactions. (p. 157)

In thinking about the centrality of race, Jones et al. (1984) highlighted the psychological nature by which membership within a stigmatized or devalued identity group is experienced and how the centrality of race to one's identity is impacted by that identity's socially constructed classification as stigmatized or devalued.

A number of studies on racial centrality sought to understand the link between this construct and academic achievement. Ford and Harris (1997) found that African

American students with higher levels of racial centrality were more likely to be gifted than those with lower levels of racial centrality. Chavous (2000) also found that higher levels of racial centrality were positively linked to higher levels of ethnic fit in African American college students. One of the seminal empirical works to examine the centrality of race in African Americans is that of Sellers et al. (1997, 1998). In seeking to further examine the role that racial identity plays in determining one's sense of self, Sellers et al. (1997) conducted a study that was designed to reconcile the inconsistencies in theory and research on the construction of racial identity. In doing so, they created the multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI). The MMRI was an attempt to extend our understanding of social identity theory by providing a means to specifically explore the social identities of Black Americans. The MMRI seeks to describe the attitudes and beliefs that are most likely to influence an individual's behavior, in an effort to amalgamate our collective understanding of the social identities that are encompassed by Black Americans.

Aiming to delineate the significance and psychological meanings of race, the MMRI identifies four key dimensions: (a) racial identity salience, (b) racial identity centrality, (c) racial identity ideology, and (d) racial identity regard. Sellers et al. (1997) noted the following:

> The dimensions of centrality and saliency are related in the sense that the more often racial identity is salient, the more likely it is to become a more normative way in which the person defines her or himself. At the same time, the more central a person's racial identity [is to their perception of self] the more likely it is to become salient in racially ambiguous situations. (p. 806)

However, Sellers et al. (1997) noted that the centrality of race (unlike salience) is generally stable and not contextually specific. Given this study's interest in understanding

how the psychological aspect of one's identity plays out within an organizational context, the centrality dimension of the MMRI was used exclusively.

In contrast to empirical findings that connect high levels of racial centrality to positive outcomes, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) argued that strong identification with one's racial group could place African Americans at risk for adverse effects associated with the stigma attached to being Black. Conversely, Azibo (1992) argued that higher levels of identification with being Black or African American can be viewed as a protective factor or buffer against racism. This incongruence in how racial identification is interpreted highlights the need for additional empirical data on how racial identity plays out in organizations.

Contemporary perspectives. Racial identity and centrality are often studied in tandem with one another (Hughes et al., 2015; Hurd et al., 2013; Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014; Rodgers, 2008; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998; Yap, Settles, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2011), given that

> The decision to claim or suppress a social identity may depend on a person's psychological attachment to the group; because claiming a central identity allows the persons to behave in a manner that is consistent with his or her self-perception. (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 275)

As a result, many contemporary perspectives and empirical works were highlighted in the previous section on racial identity. However, several contemporary studies offer new insights into how the centrality of race can be connected to varying outcome variables.

Rogers, Scott, and Way (2014) examined racial and gender identity, private regard, and how these identities impact adjustment in Black adolescent males over time. Data from this study indicated that racial and gender identity were strongly correlated, with racial centrality increasing and gender centrality declining over time. Both racial and

gender identity were found to contribute to higher levels of well-being and academic adjustment.

In a pilot study, Tatini-Smith et al. (2013) examined the centrality of race and racial group regard in college students attending a historically Black college or university and found Blackness to be a central aspect of participants' identities. Participants also reported high degrees of racial regard, race-based pride, positive self-image, and connectedness to other African Americans.

Okeke, Howard, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2009) examined the relationship between academic self-concepts and academic race stereotypes in African American seventh- and eighth-grade students. Using expectancy value theory, which is rooted in the belief that behavior is a function of the interaction between individuals' expectancies about the outcomes of actions and the value that they place on those outcomes, this study determined that "among students with high racial centrality, endorsement of traditional race stereotypes was linked to lower levels of self-perceptions of academic competence" (Okeke et al., 2009, p. 366). Conversely, the stereotype and self-concept relationship was deemed to be nonsignificant in participants who considered race less central to their perceptions of self. This study's findings support the perception that high levels of racial centrality may serve as a buffer against negative stereotypes, given the social support that individuals receive from other social identity group members. Conversely, lower levels of racial centrality can also be viewed as an inadvertent buffer against negative stereotypes, given that these individuals are less likely to view the stereotypes as personally applicable (Okeke et al., 2009).

Neblett, Shelton, and Sellers (2004) conducted a study of African American college students and found that individuals for whom being Black was not central to their self-perception were more likely to experience stress, depressive symptoms, and anxiety in response to the daily conditions that are associated with attendance at a predominantly White college or university, whereas individuals who reported high levels of racial centrality were unaffected by these conditions. Both studies highlighted the influence of racial centrality on varying psychological outcomes.

Sellers et al. (2003) examined the relationship between racial identity, racial centrality, experiences of racial discrimination, perceived stress, and psychological stress in African American adults. They identified racial centrality not only as a risk factor or predictor for experiences of racial discrimination, but also as a protective factor in buffering the negative effects of racial discrimination.

In contrast, Cokley and Helm (2001) highlighted the inherent danger in examining and assessing the centrality of race in individuals. They suggested that such assessments are too often inaccurately connected to psychological and mental health issues (i.e., self-hatred) and subsequently may be used to suggest an inaccurate correlation between racial centrality and psychological health. With this in mind, this study sought to connect the centrality of race to behavioral correlates and psychologically based outcome variables, rather than psychological outcomes.

Much like in the case of racial identity, empirical works within this field of study have been mostly limited to adolescent and young adult populations. Similarly, the centrality of race within an organizational context has been underexplored and highlights a gap in the literature. This study contributes to bridging this gap by connecting the

psychological centrality of individuals' racial identity to the enactment of RIM strategies and examining how such strategies impact their ability to be authentic at work.

Authenticity

Seminal conceptions of authenticity date back to Greek philosophy, with theorists such as Aristotle and Socrates contemplating what it means to be authentic. While the origins of authenticity are rooted within a philosophical context, perspectives on what it means to be authentic are also rooted in psychological perspectives. This section examines the seminal perspectives and empirical research on authenticity and explores the evolution of the construct to its contemporary perspectives.

Seminal Research

Authenticity as a construct stems from Greek philosophy, in which philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates shed light on how authentic behaviors are manifested through our actions, understanding of self, and interactions with others. The philosophical foundation of authenticity is rooted in existentialism and emerged in the 19th century, with Heidegger making some of the most notable contributions (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). The existentialists viewed authenticity as a process since the pursuit of authentic functioning is rooted in an ongoing quest to achieve authenticity and is indicative of the challenges that are associated with trying to reach one's potential (Ryan & Deci, 2004). This concentration is consistent with the linguistic interpretation of the Greek *authenteo*, which means "to have full power," or loosely, "I am the master of my own domain" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Trilling, 1971).

In the 16th century, the distinction between true-self and false-self behaviors began to emerge and provided a number of relevant parallels to authenticity. Baumeister (1987) suggested that the emergence of interest in individuals' ability to distinguish between that which is private and concealed versus that which is outwardly observable served as the basis upon which individuals began to question the ability of others to purposefully conceal or withhold aspects of who they are (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). False-self behaviors reflect the ongoing tension between an individual and external social structures—the desire to adhere to and enact behaviors that are consistent with one's personal inclinations while combating social obligations to conform. Kernis and Goldman (2006) noted that the parallels that are drawn between false-self behaviors and philosophical conceptions of authenticity are manifested in contemporary explorations of self-monitoring behavior (Snyder, 1987), impression management strategies, and strategic self-presentations (Goffman, 1959; Leary, 1996; Schlenker, 1980). These parallels highlight the seminal origin of the theoretical relationship between authenticity and impression management strategies.

Contemporary Perspectives

As theories on authenticity have continued to evolve over time, the philosophical understanding of what it means to be authentic has evolved and emerged as a psychological construct. Contemporary perspectives suggest that authenticity occurs on a continuum that spans from inauthentic to authentic behavior (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). Deci and Ryan (2000, 2002) suggested that individuals seek to find a balance between their true self and the external environment (Kira et al., 2012; Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). When this

balance cannot be achieved, feelings of inauthenticity emerge. The challenges that are associated with managing competing or conflicting desires to present oneself authentically can contribute to feelings of alienation (Goffman, 1959; Rae, 2010; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008), stress and emotional labor (Boyraz, Waits, & Felix, 2014; Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Pugliesi, 1999; Pugliesi & Shook, 1997; Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014), and depression (Boyraz et al., 2014; Gipps, 2015; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Several perspectives of authenticity are grounded in self-determination theory (Deci, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002), which posits that "people are authentic when their actions reflect their true- or core-self, that is, when they are autonomous and self-determining" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 293). This conceptualization serves as the basis upon which Goldman and Kernis (2004) established their multicomponent framework of authenticity. Kernis and Goldman (2006, 2002) defined authenticity as "the unobstructed operation of one's true- or core-self in one's daily enterprise" (Kernis, 2003, p. 13).

This multidimensional conceptualization of authenticity suggests that authenticity can be broken down into four separate but interrelated components: awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation. The awareness component refers to "possessing, and being motivated to increase, knowledge of and trust in one's motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 294). Unbiased processing refers to "objectivity with respect to one's positive and negative self-aspects, emotions, and other internal experiences, information, and private knowledge" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 296). The behavior component involves

"behaving in accord with one's values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting 'falsely' merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 299). Lastly, relational orientation "involves valuing and striving for openness, sincerity, and truthfulness in one's close relationships" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 300).

Each of the four components addresses a distinct aspect of authenticity that, while related to the others, is not indicative of an interdependent relationship. In tandem with the establishment of this multidimensional conceptualization of authenticity, Goldman and Kernis (2002) also constructed the Authenticity Inventory. Revised twice (Kernis & Goldman, 2005, 2006), the Authenticity Inventory consists of 45 items, which are broken down into four subscales: (a) self-awareness (12 items), (b) unbiased processing (10 items), (c) behavior (11 items) and (d) relational orientation (12 items). While the sum of these items forms a composite authenticity score, each of the subscales can be used independently to measure a specific aspect of authenticity.

Kernis and Goldman's (2002, 2004, 2006) conceptualization of authenticity and the Authenticity Inventory have been used to study authenticity empirically within a variety of contexts. Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, and Sels (2015) used the Authenticity Inventory to examine the role of authentic followership in the previously established relationship between authentic leadership and follower in-role and extra-role performance behaviors. Wickham, Williamson, Beard, Kobayashi, and Hirst (2016) incorporated the Authenticity Inventory into their study on the role of trait authenticity in buffering individuals from the negative effects of psychological conflict. Spitzmuller and Ilies (2010) used the Authenticity Inventory to study transformational leadership and

authenticity in leaders. Lakey, Kernis, Heppner, and Lance (2007) also used the Authenticity Inventory to examine the extent to which individual differences in authenticity and mindfulness could be used to predict defensiveness. Lastly, Kernis and Goldman (2006) used the inventory to examine authenticity in intimate heterosexual relationships, thus highlighting the diverse contexts within which this instrument is applicable. This study examined how impression management strategies and the centrality of race impact racial minorities' ability to (behaviorally) present themselves authentically at work. Given the study's emphasis on behavioral authenticity in the workplace, only Kernis and Goldman's (2006; Goldman & Kernis, 2002) behavioral component of authenticity and the Authenticity Inventory was examined.

In thinking about the behavioral manifestation of authenticity, authentic behavior is a mindful action that is driven by "an honest assessment of one's self-aspects via the awareness and unbiased processing components" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 299). Conversely, inauthentic behavior involves ignoring and/or modifying aspects of *self*-behavior in relation to one's behavioral and/or environmental context. Kernis and Goldman (2006) suggested that authentic behaviors must reflect a free and natural expression of one's core feelings, motives, and inclinations. Kernis and Goldman (2006) noted that, when environmental or contextualized conditions interfere with or challenge one's ability to behave freely and in an authentic manner, short-term conflict can arise.

Conflict at this psychological level can have significant implications for how individuals interact with their social environment. This conflict highlights the challenges that are associated with the inherent desire to allow one's outward expressions and behaviors to be guided by one's internal perceptions of self, rather than by conditional or

external demands. However, in some socialized environments, such as the workplace, the financial and professional implications associated with behaving authentically and honoring one's perceptions of self may further compound this process. In light of the emergence of psychological conflicts that are associated with the interplay between the self and environmental influences, the body of literature on the topic of authenticity in the workplace has grown.

Authenticity at Work

Empirical studies on authenticity have been highly prevalent in the psychological sciences (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Harter, Marold, Whitesell, & Cobbs, 1996; Leroy et al., 2015; McGregor & Little, 1998; Neff & Harter, 2002; Reis, Trullen, & Story, 2016; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997; Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). However, additional empirical studies of authenticity at work are needed (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). Ménard and Brunet (2011) empirically examined and assessed the relationship between authenticity and well-being in the workplace, as well as the *meaning of work* as a mediating variable among these two constructs. Menard and Brunet found "authenticity [to be] positively associated with well-being at work, and noted that the meaning of work is a partial mediator of the relationship between authenticity and subjective well-being at work" (p. 331). While authenticity at work is often examined in relation to well-being, empirical works examining authenticity and leadership have been more widely studied in contemporary literature (Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016; Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey, 2009; Hmieleski, Cole, & Baron, 2012; Leroy et al., 2015; MacNeill, Tonks, & Reynolds, 2013; Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Okey, 2011; Wong & Cummings, 2009).

While authentic leadership as a construct was not the focus of this study, studies examining authentic leadership in demographic minorities have provided a number of relevant parallels to the challenges that minorities face at varying organizational levels in struggling to be authentic at work.

Hewlett et al. (2005) shared the experience of Angela Williams, a vice president at Sears Holding and Company. In discussing how minority women must interact and engage with their White colleagues, Williams commented:

> A highly qualified woman of color feels she can't be overly assertive, or show her cards, or use her strengths—doing so may undermine her professionally or be used against her. For example, women of color will refrain from making presentations together in order not to overwhelm upper management. (p. 7)

Williams's account of what it means to be a gendered and racial minority in the workplace highlights how engaging in inauthentic behaviors undermines the fundamental principles and promises that diversity in the workplace can offer. If differences are to be valued and leveraged as a source of organizational innovation, creativity, and strength, then organizational minorities have to be empowered to legitimately present themselves in a manner that is authentically aligned with who they are and how they see themselves (Cox & Blake, 1991; Thomas & Ely, 1996; Roberts, 2007).

Roberts (2005, 2007) suggested that individuals who are unable to express themselves in a true and authentic way are more inclined to suffer from psychological and relational outcomes, including feelings of tension, anxiety, and alienation. These outcomes highlight the traumatic outcomes that are associated with suppressing one's authentic self and shed light on the importance of cultivating an organizational environment that fosters the enactment of authentic behaviors at work. In speaking about the relationship between engagement and authenticity in organizations, Donnelly (2013)

suggested that "[organizational] environments that encourage authenticity and engagement leverage the passion and strength of employees, helping companies attract and retain the right people to navigate change and propel them forward with a stronger, more cohesive workforce" (p. 28), thereby highlighting the significance of creating organizational environments that foster and encourage the enactment of authentic behaviors at work.

Summary

This chapter has presented a review of the literature that was consulted in order to ground this study theoretically and empirically. It began by examining social identity–based impression management and its theoretical foundation, origin, evolution, and contemporary perspectives. Next, the emergence of RIM, and the behavioral correlates that are associated with this construct (social recategorization and positive distinctiveness), were addressed. Seminal theoretical and empirical origins of racial centrality were presented next, and this chapter concluded by providing a philosophical and psychological review of the literature on authenticity. Contemporary perspectives and empirical works were presented and were followed by a presentation of literature and empirical works on contextualized authenticity in the workplace. This literature review provides the theoretical and empirical foundation upon which this study's research questions were based and answered.

Broadly, the intersection of the theoretical constructs discussed in this chapter sought to shed light on the process of identity negotiation used by Black management consultants. The management consulting industry, and specifically large multinational

consulting firms, provided the context within which issues of identity negotiation, the centrality of race, and authenticity were examined.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODS

For organizational minorities, balancing competing and/or conflicting social identities can be arduous, as this process fundamentally challenges the ability of these individuals to engage authentically with their workplace and colleagues and subsequently has implications for employee morale, retention, and stress. In light of these challenges and organizational implications, this study sought to establish an empirical relationship between the enactment of race-based impression management (RIM) strategies and authenticity at work, while seeking to determine what, if any, effect the centrality of race to one's identity had on this relationship.

The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1. Is there a significant relationship between one's choice of RIM strategy and the ability to be authentic at work?

RQ2. If a significant relationship exists between the choice of RIM strategy and being authentic at work, is that relationship moderated by the centrality of race to an individual's identity?

This chapter details the methodology used to answer these research questions and describes the quantitative, survey-based research design used. The sampling strategy is then outlined and details related to data collection and analysis are presented.

Research Design

This study's research questions were designed to test and validate conceptual models linking RIM to authenticity at work. Therefore, the research design chosen for

this study was quantitative, with structural equation modeling (SEM) used to analyze the data. SEM provides a framework for statistical analysis and is often viewed as a hybrid approach to factor analysis and regression or path analysis (Hox & Bechger, 1998). For the purposes of this study, SEM was used to test the conceptual models established for Research Questions 1 and 2.

Research Question1 sought to empirically determine and validate the theoretical relationship that exists between RIM strategies and Black management consultants' authenticity at work (Figure 3.1).

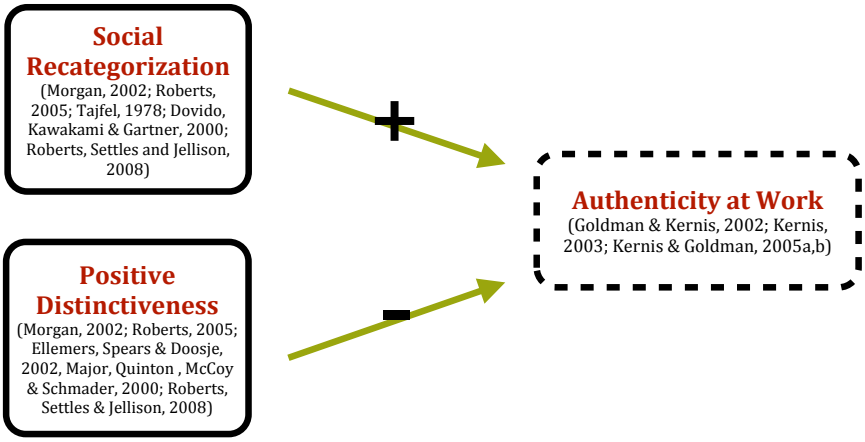

Figure 3.1. Conceptual framework for Research Question 1.

Research Question 2, rooted in the empirical validation of Research Question 1, was designed to test whether the centrality of race to one's identity moderates the relationship between RIM strategies and authenticity at work (Figure 3.2).

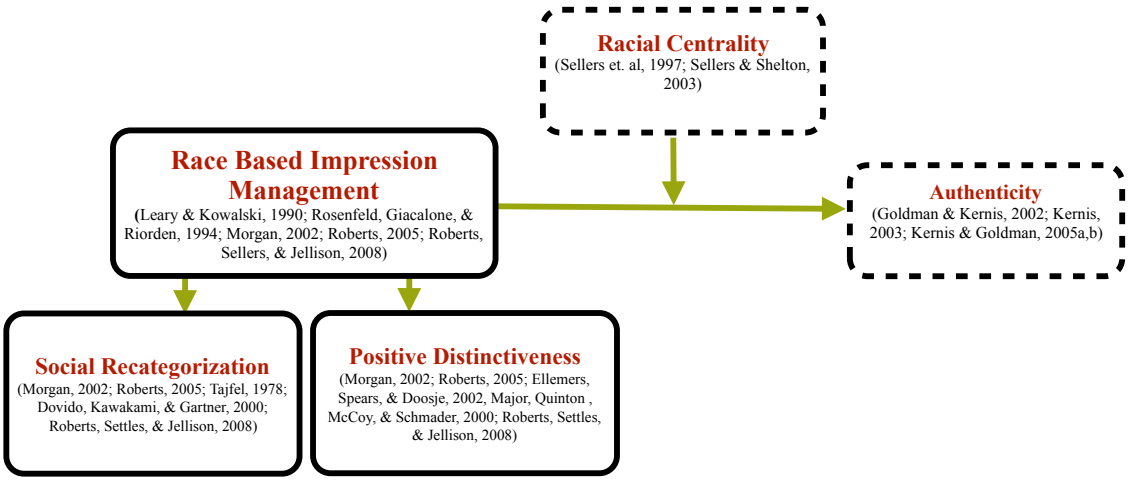

Figure 3.2. Conceptual framework for Research Question 2.

The sample population for this study was U.S.-born and professionally based management consultants who self-identified as Black and currently and/or previously worked for large, multinational management consulting firms with more than 100,000 employees. Data from individuals who were not born in the United States were not included unless they had resided in the United States at least 11 years.

Snowball and referral-based sampling strategies were used. For the purposes of this study, a survey comprising three previously tested and validated instruments was used to collect data. Morgan's (2002) Race-Based Impression Management Scale was used to assess the enactment of two RIM strategies: social recategorization and positive distinctiveness. The centrality dimension of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) instrument, as outlined by Sellers et al. (1997), was used to assess the centrality of racial identity, and the behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory (Goldman & Kernis, 2002, 2004, 2006) was used to measure participants' authenticity at work.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

RQ1. Is there a significant relationship between one's choice of RIM strategy and the ability to be authentic at work?

H1a. A significant positive correlation exists between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1b. A significant negative correlation exists between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1c. A significant positive correlation exists between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1d. A significant negative correlation exists between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work.

RQ2. If a significant relationship exists between the choice of RIM strategy and being authentic at work, is that relationship moderated by the centrality of race to an individual's identity?

H2a. The choice of race-based impression management strategy employed by Black consultants varies significantly according to their degree of racial centrality.

H2aa. The higher the degree of racial centrality, the more likely Black management consultants are to employ positive distinctiveness.

H2ab. The lower the degree of racial centrality, the more likely Black management consultants are to employ social recategorization.

H2b. The relationship between positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work is moderated by racial centrality, such that Black management consultants with a

high degree of racial centrality who employ positive distinctiveness are more likely to be authentic at work than those with a low degree of racial centrality.

H2c. The relationship between social recategorization and authenticity at work is moderated by racial centrality, such that Black consultants with a high degree of racial centrality who employ social recategorization are less likely to be authentic at work than those with a low degree of racial centrality.

Conceptual Framework

Social identity–based impression management theory speaks inherently to the behavioral manifestation of managing socially devalued identity group memberships by linking impression construction strategies to self-presentation behaviors (Morgan, 2002). Membership in a devalued social identity group, like race, often highlights the perceived pressure to engage in the strategic management of one's social identity. This pressure is manifested behaviorally via the use of social identity–based impression management strategies known as positive distinctiveness and social recategorization. In this study, race as a social identity group was examined using the social identity–based impression management scale. Critical in isolating our understanding of why Black management consultants, in particular, might choose one of these strategies over another is, arguably, an understanding of the relationship that exists between the centrality of race and the enactment of one of these strategies versus the other (Sellers et al., 1997; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). The conceptual framework for this study is rooted in the use of social identity–based impression management theory to explore race-based impression management strategies and to enhance our understanding of how the centrality of race to one's identity influences authenticity at work (Figure 3.3).

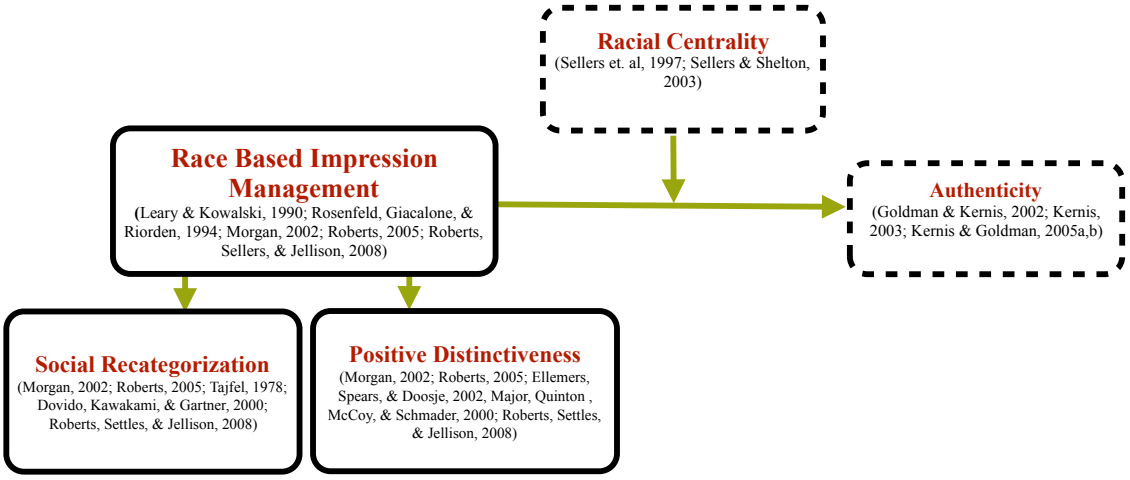

Figure 3.3. Conceptual framework for the study.

Instrumentation

The survey (Appendix B) used for this study comprised questions from the Race-Based Impression Management Scale (Morgan, 2002), the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (Sellers et al., 1997), and the behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory (Goldman & Kernis, 2002, 2004, 2006). Table 3.1 describes each instrument and the variable it was used to measure. A discussion of each instrument follows.

Table 3.1
Instrument Used to Measure Each Research Variable

Variable	Instrument	# of items	Range of scores*
Race-based impression management strategies			
Positive distinctiveness	Race-Based Impression Management Scale	5	5–25
Social recategorization	Race-Based Impression Management Scale	4	4–20
Centrality of race	Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity	4	4–20
Authenticity at work	Authenticity Behavioral Scale	11	11–55

*Items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree.*

Race-Based Impression Management Scale

The Race-Based Impression Management Scale was designed to "assess individuals' attempted use of social recategorization and positive distinctiveness strategies to manage others' perceptions of their racial group" (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 278). Derived from the Social Identity–Based Impression Management Scale, the Race-Based Impression Management Scale can be used to examine the enactment of impression management strategies by any social identity group. The scale's developer, Morgan (2002), chose to specifically examine the construct of race as a social identity, subsequently modifying the item wording and title of the scale, resulting in the development of the Race-Based Impression Management Scale (Morgan, 2002). The scale was originally used to assess which RIM strategy (social recategorization or positive distinctiveness) Black and/or African American physicians in training were more inclined to use.

In order to determine the statistical reliability of the Race-Based Impression Management Scale, Morgan (2002) conducted exploratory factor analyses on the frequency, comfort, effort, and benefit dimensions. Additionally, internal reliability coefficients were computed based on the 10 theoretically derived strategies that represented social recategorization and positive distinctiveness frequency, effort, comfort, and benefit. Findings from these analyses informed both the statistical reliability and validity of the instrument (Morgan, 2002).

The Race-Based Impression Management Scale was modified and extended in 2014 (Roberts et al., 2014) and now includes two additional dimensions (bridge building and racial humor). Roberts et al. (2014) explored the use of RIM strategies among Asian-

American journalists and reworded instrument items to address this social identity group and its respective context. The extended Race-Based Impression Management Scale includes additional items not included in previous studies, and an exploratory factor analysis supported the validity of these new items. The extended Race-Based Impression Management scale (now including bridge building and racial humor) produced a test-retest reliability of 0.69, very close to the generally accepted cut-off for retest reliability of 0.7, further supporting the reliability of this instrument (Roberts et al., 2014).

For the purposes of this study, only the social recategorization dimension (four items) and positive distinctiveness dimension (five items) of the Race-Based Impression Management Scale were used. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was used to provide responses. A high social recategorization score highlights attempts to affiliate with an alternate, more highly regarded social group via the active suppression of a devalued social identity, like race (Roberts et al., 2008). A high positive distinctiveness score highlights attempts to "create a more positive social meaning around a devalued social group by publicly claiming membership in the group, educating others about the positive qualities of the group, or advocating for the group" (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 272).

Given that consultancy is a client-based profession, consultants often spend extensive time embedded in client organizations. In light of this, the RIM questions were presented twice. Participants were asked to respond once to the items based on their interactions with colleagues at their *home firm,* and a second time based on their interaction with colleagues at their respective *client organization(s)*.

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity

The MIBI was developed to operationalize Sellers et al.'s (1997) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity, which sought to "provide a conceptual framework for understanding both the significance of race in the self-concepts of African Americans and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of that racial category" (Sellers et al., 1997, p. 19). The MIBI was developed using previously constructed identity scales and subscales and by adapting aspects of the model.

Smith et al. (1998) evaluated the reliability and validity of the MIBI using a sample of 474 African American college students from one predominantly White and one predominantly African American university. Smith et al. (1998) reported that acceptable alpha coefficients (α range from 0.70 to 0.79) were found in the centrality and ideology subscales. Evidence from the private and public regard subscales were deemed to be only moderate by the researchers, which subsequently led to several revisions and additional factor analyses. The subsequent analyses produced findings that were deemed highly correlated by the researchers, thus providing further validation for the overarching survey instrument.

Researchers have used the MIBI to examine the racial identities of college students and teens nationally and internationally (Johnson, Robinson Kurplus, Rayle, Arrendondo, & Tovar-Gamero, 2005; Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen, 2008; Walsh, 2001), and the MIBI has been confirmed as valid and reliable. Cokley and Helm (2001) tested the validity of the scores on the MIBI using confirmatory factor analysis and correlations, finding support for construct validity.

The completed scale comprises four subscales, one of which focuses specifically on the centrality of race. Morgan (2002) used the centrality of race subscale in her original study. A 5-point Likert scale is used to respond to the four items within this subscale. High centrality of race is found in individuals who identify strongly with their racial group and are thus more likely to attempt to change negative perceptions of that social group (Roberts et al., 2008). Conversely, individuals who identify less with their racial identity are more likely to downplay their membership in their racial identity group and score lower on the centrality of race subscale (Roberts et al., 2008).

Authenticity Behavioral Subscale

The behavioral subscale is a component of Goldman and Kernis's (2002, 2004, 2006) Authenticity Inventory. This instrument was developed to measure the four components of authentic behavior: awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation. The behavioral subscale is designed to measure the behavioral manifestation of authenticity.

In validating each of the subscales included in the Authenticity Inventory, Goldman and Kernis (2006) conducted confirmatory factor analysis on a previous version of the Authenticity Inventory and determined that this scale "measures these four discriminable components, which comprise a higher-order latent authenticity factor" (p. 344). Goldman and Kernis (2006) reported coefficient alphas for the inventory as a whole (0.90) and for each of the subscales (awareness = 0.79, unbiased processing = 0.64, behavior = 0.80, and relational orientation = 0.78), which were deemed acceptable. Test-retest reliabilities (over approximately 4 weeks, n = 120) were high (total = 0.87, awareness = 0.80, unbiased processing = 0.69, behavior = 0.73, and relational orientation

= 0.80). The inventory can be used to measure one's overall authentic functioning, or the corresponding subscales associated with each of the dimensions can be used to measure specific aspects of one's authentic functioning. For the purposes of this research, only the 11-item behavioral subscale was used to measure individuals' authentic behaviors at work. These questions were presented using a 5-point Likert scale.

A high level of authenticity speaks to an individual's ability to behave in ways congruent with his or her inherent values, preferences, and needs (Kernis & Goldman, 2004). Kernis and Goldman (2004) acknowledged the impact environmental pressures may have on one's ability to behave authentically, supporting the use of this subscale to explore behavioral authenticity within the context of a corporate and racially homogenous work environment.

Demographic Data

In addition to questions from the Race-Based Impression Management Scale (Morgan, 2002), MIBI (Settles et al., 1997), and behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory (Goldman & Kernis, 2002, 2004, 2006), the survey also included demographic questions related to gender, age, race/ethnicity, alma mater type, organizational position, and educational background (Appendix C). To ensure a robust sample, demographic questions related to place of birth, number of years living in the United States, and previous versus current employment with a large multinational consulting firm were incorporated into the survey. The inclusion of these questions sought to ensure that participant experiences could be reasonably aligned with the desired sample population for this study. While not included in the analysis, these data also provide context and

insight into additional variables and considerations impacting Black management consultants' experiences at work.

Population Description

The population for this study consisted of U.S.-born and professionally based management consultants who self-identified as Black. To increase participation, data were collected from Black management consultants currently or previously employed by large multinational consulting firms with 100,000 or more employees. To participate, individuals needed to have been born in the United States or resided in the United States for at least 11 years. Previously employed participants were asked to reflect upon their experiences while employed at one of these firms when answering survey questions.

While management consulting as a profession can be operationalized in a variety of organizational settings, this study looked specifically at Black management consultants currently or previously employed by the industry's largest and most profitable firms, given the underrepresentation of Blacks in the consulting industry and the growing prevalence of voluntary attrition (Robinson, 2013). Similarly, firm size was of significance given that larger firms are structurally reflective of a corporate environment and thus are more likely to reflect the racially homogenous organizational context that this study sought to explore. Firms of interest included but were not limited to Bain and Company, Booz Allen, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLC, Mercer LLC, Accenture, IBM, McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, Ernst & Young LLP, Oliver Wyman, KPMG LLP, and Capgemini.

Given the historical undertones associated with race that are inherently relevant and unique to this country, only data collected from consultants who self-identified as

Black and who were based in the United States were used in the study. Roberts et al. (2008) noted that "both race and gender relations in the U.S. have been shaped by centuries of structural inequality in the forms of chattel slavery for Blacks, legal segregation for Blacks, and denial of full citizenship for Blacks" (p. 271). Based on this, it can be assumed that Blacks in the United States have similar and shared experiences related to race and subsequently have a more unilateral perspective about being Black in America than Blacks born and/or living outside of the United States. However, a number of individuals, while not born in the United States, have spent much of their adult and professional lives living and working in the United States. Many of these individuals have subsequently experienced and shared the "lived experiences" of Blacks born in the United States. To account for these perspectives, data from individuals who were not born in the United States but who had resided in the country for at least 11 years were included. (Of the 21 participants who indicated that they were not born in the United States, 18 had lived in the United States at least 11 years.)

Sampling Strategy

In seeking to examine an underrepresented population within the management consulting industry, this study was initially designed to be conducted within one large multinational consulting firm (Firm A). Firm A agreed to allow internal access to its organization's minority consultants by providing assistance with the internal distribution of the survey for this study. However, in developing the survey, working through multiple rounds of revisions, and having conversations with members of Firm A's risk management and legal teams, it was determined that accommodating Firm A's requested revisions to the survey would ultimately water down, alter, and undermine the

overarching direction and impact of this study in a way that did not align with the researcher's area of interest and focus.

As a result, the sampling strategy was revised to solicit participation from Black management consultants currently or previously working at any of the large multinational professional services/management consulting firms. A convenience sampling method that incorporated snowball and referral-based sampling strategies was used to collect data. Introductory emails and solicitations for participation were sent to members of the researcher's personal and professional networks. In addition, based on the researcher's access to and relationships with some organizations, a recruitment letter, including a research overview and link to the online survey, was electronically distributed to several listservs. The recruitment letter contained a request for participation and/or distribution to other potential participants meeting the identified criteria. These listservs were selected on the basis of their probable access to members of the management consulting industry. Listservs and organizations contacted included members of professional/academic associations, such as Academy of Management (Organizational Consulting Division and Gender and Diversity in Organizations Division), National Black MBA, American Management Association, Academy of Human Resource Development, and Society for Human Resource Management; Black and/or African American affinity group leadership at Booz Allen, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLC, Deloitte, Bain, and Accenture; and current students and alumni at The George Washington University, The University of Georgia Graduate School of Education, and Vanderbilt University's Peabody College.

While this strategy yielded some responses, survey participation quickly plateaued. At this point, the social media networking site LinkedIn was used to solicit

participation. Information about the study and the link to the survey were posted on the researcher's professional profile on this website. Additionally, the "search" feature on the LinkedIn website was used to identify individuals working at large multinational professional services/management consulting firms. Profile pictures were then reviewed by the researcher to identify persons likely to identify as Black or African American (based on physiological traits, such as complexion and skin color). These persons were then individually solicited for participation via direct messaging. While race is inherently rooted in shared physiological traits and characteristics, the use of these criteria to identify participants was not without its limitations. Not all persons that "appear" to be Black or African American are, and all persons that physiologically appear to be Black or African American do not necessarily identify with these racial and/or ethnic classifications. As such, survey question 38 asked participants to select the racial or ethnicity group they most identified with. The use of LinkedIn to solicit study participation significantly increased survey participation and responses and garnered a lot of interest and support from participants. Sample email and LinkedIn correspondence appears in Appendix F.

While flexibility is a key strength of SEM, this feature also can make it difficult to develop indiscriminate guidelines regarding sample size requirements (Wolf, Harrington, Clark, & Miller, 2013). Boomsma (1982, 1985) and Kline (2011) recommended a minimum sample size of 100 to 200 for SEM, so the data collection process continued until enough responses were received to provide a sample of at least 200 cases for analysis.

Of the 295 participants who opened the link to the survey, only 210 finished the survey, which may be attributed to a variety of factors, including but not limited to the length of the survey, interruptions and distractions while attempting to complete the survey, and confusion about the questions, wording, and/or instructions. One individual did not identify as Black, and eight did not work for multinational firms, either now or in the past. Therefore, 201 cases were used to answer the research questions.

Pilot Study

Since the different instruments used in this study's survey had not previously been used together and one scale was presented twice in an effort to account for two different contexts, that is, interactions with home firm colleagues and interactions with client organizations, a pilot study was conducted to assess the face validity of the survey. Five Black management consultants known to the researcher were asked to participate in the pilot study. Participants were asked to complete the online survey and then a secondary survey with multiple choice and open-ended questions on the structure, ordering, and clarity of the instrument (Appendix E). Participants provided insights about the structure of the survey (i.e., appropriateness of survey length, clarity of directions, levels of comfort/discomfort in answering questions) and overall support. To improve clarity, the use of "parent organization" was changed to "home firm." No other significant changes were made to the survey instrument as a result of the pilot study. Pilot study participant data were used solely to determine face validity and were not included in the final analysis.

Procedures

The survey used for this study was distributed electronically using Survey Monkey, an Internet-based survey tool. Email invitations sent to potential participants included an overview of the study with information on the researcher. The anonymity of the survey responses was addressed, and a link to the online survey was provided. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were asked to consider forwarding or sharing the survey link with friends or colleagues who may fit the study's desired sample population requirements.

While survey research is cost effective and provides generalizable and reliable data, it is also viewed as inflexible and creates issues regarding validity. However, for this study, an online survey was chosen to provide a systematic way to gather data from the target population. An online survey tool not only increases response rates, but also allows for design flexibility. Data collected using this online survey were automatically stored in an online database. This data collection and storage method provided automated data handling and decreased the probability of data entry errors.

Statistical Analysis and Presentation

In analyzing the findings from this study, Research Questions 1 and 2 were analyzed using SEM. SEM is a set of statistical methods used to assess latent constructs created from one or more observed variables (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Unlike other forms of multiple regression and factor analysis, SEM allows for complex relationships between multiple latent variables to be examined simultaneously (Norman & Streiner, 2003). SEM was also used to test the conceptual models established for the two research questions, which sought to establish an empirical relationship between RIM and

authenticity at work by arguing that the centrality of race to one's identity moderated this relationship.

The models created from the use of SEM highlight the relationships that exist between latent variables and observed variables. For the purposes of this study, each of the constructs examined (RIM, the centrality of race to one's identity, and authenticity at work) were viewed as latent variables. Latent variables are those constructs or variables that are internal and nonobservable, but that can be assessed by responses to a survey or questionnaire designed to measure or quantify the variable being examined (Norman & Streiner, 2003). Each of the questions included in the subscales used in this study (Race-Based Impression Management Scale, the centrality subscale of the MIBI, and the behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory) were viewed as an independently observable variable influencing the broader variable it sought to measure.

In SEM diagrams, latent variables are shown as ovals and observed variables are designated by rectangles. SEM provides numerical estimates (shown as arrows) for each of the parameters in the model to indicate the strength of relationships. In this way, the use of SEM allowed the researcher to determine which observed variables were good indicators of the latent variables, subsequently providing empirical support for the validity of each subscale's ability to measure what it says it measures.

Data Handling and Storage

In the interest of addressing concerns regarding the privacy of the human subjects being surveyed for this study, all research materials (including but not limited to survey drafts, survey data, emails, analyses, and any data or documentation identifying/linking participants to their respective organizations) have been saved and will be stored in two

separate locations for 5 years. All electronic files were stored on the researcher's laptop and on an external hard drive. In the interest of reducing this researcher's carbon footprint, no hard copies of data or relevant information were used for this study.

Ethics and Human Subjects Considerations

The study was approved by the George Washington University institutional review board before data collection began. The survey instrument used for this study was distributed electronically. Items within the survey instrument spoke to issues that may have been considered sensitive, personal, and/or controversial to some participants, thus increasing the potential for nonresponse and concerns about confidentiality. In an effort to combat apprehension regarding participation in this study, participants were provided with a research briefing (Appendix D) designed to address the nature, context, and purpose of the data collected for the study. This briefing provided an overview of the research, details regarding the actual survey instrument, and information about the researcher. Additionally, the briefing explicitly addressed issues of anonymity. Participants were assured that no identifying information (including IP addresses) would be linked to their responses and the researcher did not have access to any data that could potentially link individual participants to their responses.

Permission to Use Instruments

Permission to use the Race-Based Impression Management Scale was provided by its developer, Dr. Laura Morgan Roberts. Written permission to use the MIBI centrality dimension was obtained from one of its developers, Dr. Robert Sellers. Repeated

attempts to secure written permission from Dr. Brian Goldman to use the behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory in this study were unsuccessful.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

This study sought to provide insight into the social identity–based impression management strategies used by Blacks in the management consulting industry in the interest of furthering our understanding of race-based impression management (RIM) strategies and how they are manifested in the management consulting industry. An online survey was developed for management consultants who self-identified as Black and who currently or previously worked for large multinational consulting firms with more than 100,000 employees. Usable responses were collected from 201 Black management consultants meeting this criterion. This chapter presents the data provided by survey participants and the results of the data analyses used to answer this study's research questions.

Description of the Data

Almost 300 potential respondents (n = 295) opened the link to the online survey. However, only 210 participants worked to the end of the survey. The overall participation rate for this study is unknown. The use of convenience sampling means that the total number of participants who received an invitation for participation could not be tracked. Nine participants were deemed ineligible to participate, lowering the final sample size used to answer the research questions to 201.

Thirty-nine percent of the variables had missing values, 9.95% of the cases had missing values, and 0.30% of the values were missing. Given the small sample size, Little's missing completely at random test was used to minimize the exclusion of data.

The percentage of missing values was very small, and Little's test, which speaks to the probability that missing data are not related to either the specific value that is supposed to be obtained or the set of observed responses (Kang, 2013), was not statistically significant [χ^2 (df = 416) = 439.92, p = 0.20]. Therefore, it was concluded that the missing values were at random.

Given that the sample size was not large enough for adequate power and the use of snowball sampling limited the researcher's ability to determine whether the data were representative of the target population, multiple imputation was used to replace missing values and a predicted value was identified based on the information provided on nonmissing items. Doing so ensured that for highly correlated items, the missing value was replaced with the participants' responses to other items also highly correlated to that item. Replacing missing values is not without its limitations and can distort the association between variables by arguably fabricating data to some degree, which may overestimate the precision of survey estimates, ultimately dampening results (Brick & Kalton, 1996).

The reliability of the scales used in the survey was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (see Table 4.1). Values obtained were within the acceptable range (>0.70) as defined by DeVellis (2012). In addition to reliability, the correlation of the scales to each other was also calculated (see Table 4.2). The scales, as represented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, contain the items as designed by the developers of each scale. Individual items were used in the initial structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, and some items were removed because they did not fit the parameters of SEM. Therefore, the presentation of the data in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 is for informational purposes only.

Table 4.1
Reliability of Scales Used in the Survey

Scale	# of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Positive distinctiveness at home firm	5	.74
Social recategorization at home firm	4	.71
Positive distinctiveness at client firm	5	.81
Social recategorization at client firm	4	.80
Centrality of racial identity	4	.88
Authenticity at work	11	.78

Table 4.2
Correlation of Scales

	SR at home firm	PD at client firm	SR at client firm	Centrality of racial identity	Authenticity at work
PD at home firm	-.195*	.620*	-.061	.229*	.029
SR at home firm		-.154*	.560*	-.215*	-.209*
PD at client firm			-.167*	.206*	.046
SR at client firm				-.214*	-.225*
Centrality of racial identity					.169*

*$p < 0.05$. SR indicates social recategorization; PD, positive distinctiveness.

Data Analysis Procedure

The subscales used in this study employed Likert scales, which provide participants with a range of responses by which to gauge their attitudes and/or feelings on a particular subject (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). The scales of measurement used to examine Likert items have been hotly contested in the literature, with varying perspectives on how to view these scales and how their data should be viewed and subsequently analyzed. While a number of theorists have suggested that Likert scales and data can only be viewed as ordinal, which ranks or orders items (Jakobsson, 2004; Jamieson, 2004; Knapp, 1990; Kuzon, Urbanchek, & McCabe, 1996), just as many suggest that these scales and data can in fact be viewed as interval, which shows the order of things, with equal intervals between the points on the scale (Allen & Seaman, 1997;

Baggaley & Hull, 1983; Lane et al., 2014; Maurer & Pierce, 1998; Vickers, 1999). Allen and Seaman (1997) suggested that "intervalness [here] is an attribute of the data, not the labels" (p. 2), highlighting the importance of viewing Likert-scaled items independent of Likert scale data, which can be viewed as interval irrespective of the scale itself being viewed as ordinal or interval (Brown, 2011).

For the purposes of this study, Likert scale data were viewed as interval, given that parametric statistical methods like factor analysis and SEM are rooted in this assumption (Norman, 2010). Parametric statistical tests, like regression analyses and SEM, are based on normal distributions and are believed to be more powerful (based on central limit theorem) and easier to interpret than nonparametric alternatives (Allen & Seaman, 2007; Knapp, 1990). "Modern parametric statistical methods like factor analysis, hierarchical linear models, structural equation models are all based on an assumption of normally distributed, interval-level data" (Norman, 2010), thus providing support for the use of SEM with interval data.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the measurement model to determine if the data fit the model in the measurement of outcome measures: positive distinctiveness at home firm, positive distinctiveness at client firm, social recategorization at home firm, social recategorization at client firm, centrality of race to one's identity (CRI), and authenticity at work, respectively. The following two items (one from each RIM subscale) were dropped through examinations of bivariate correlation matrices suggested by Byrne (1998):

- Q5 (*I use race to my advantage at work*) was dropped due to a high correlation (r = 0.69) with Q15 (*I use race to my advantage at client organization*) because this may cause redundancy.
- Q35 (*I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true self*) was dropped because this item had an overall low correlation with all other variables in the same construct (mostly less than 0.10).

The goodness of the fit of the CFAs was evaluated with fit indices such as the χ^2 statistic, standardized root mean square residual, root mean square error of approximation, comparative fit index, and goodness-of-fit index. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested a combination rule of comparative fit index > 0.90 and standardized root mean square residual < 0.05 as indicators of good fit of a model. In this study, combinations of all goodness-of-fit indices were examined for multiple reasons. First, the cut-off criteria for fit indices suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) have been challenged as being based on very restrictive assumptions and rejecting adequately fitting models (Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004). Second, some research studies have questioned the validity of Hu and Bentler's (1999) two-index strategy in model fit assessment (Fan & Sivo, 2005).

The suggestions provided by LISREL, a statistical software package used in SEM, to add paths from observable variables to latent variables were followed for only a few items due to concerns about mechanically fitting the model, which speaks to ensuring that the actual observed sample covariance was not manipulated to fit the model implied population covariances (Barrett, 2007; MacCallum, Roznowski, & Necowitz, 1992). The following pairs of items were allowed to covariate to improve the overall goodness-of-fit values because these pairs were written similarly and were theoretically related: one

group (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q8, and Q9) was about consultants' experiences at their "home firm" and the other group (Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q18, and Q19) was about consultants' experiences at a "client organization." These adjustments were made to ensure the validity of the conceptual framework developed for this study. Doing so also ensured that the data collected fit the model, thereby affirming that the relationships highlighted in the conceptual framework did, in fact, exist. After adjusting these items in the measurement model, SEM models were employed to test the relationships among the measured outcomes in order to answer this study's two research questions.

When the moderating variable is measured on a continuous scale, the moderating effect is usually tested by creating a new variable that is the product of the variable that is being moderated and the variable that is moderating. This interaction term is then entered into the regression equation after the linear main effects on the outcome variable of the moderating and the moderated variables are estimated (Little, Card, Bovaird, Preacher, & Crandall, 2007). There are many technical and theoretical issues with testing the moderating effect, including but not limited to the collinearity of the product (interaction term) with the moderating variable, centering method, sample size requirement, and latent variable interactions within the context of SEM (e.g., Algina & Moulder, 2001; Little et al., 2007). Hu and Bentler (1999) cautioned that the goodness-of-fit indices based on maximum likelihood estimation tend to overreject true population models at small sample sizes and thus are less preferable when the sample size being explored is small.

Considering the sample size for this study (n = 201) and the fact that a majority of the participants selected either 4 (*agree*) or 5 (*strongly agree*) for the items used to

measure CRI, several steps were taken to test the moderating effect of CRI on the relationship between RIM and authenticity at work:

- The relationship between RIM and CRI (H2a) was tested.
- The relationship between CRI and positive distinctiveness (H2aa) was tested.
- The relationship between CRI and social recategorization (H2ab) was tested.
- The structural equation model for CRI, social recategorization, and positive distinctiveness was tested.
- The differences in the path between RIM and authenticity at work for participants with high levels of CRI (n = 113) and participants with low levels of CRI (n = 88) were tested.

Results

The descriptive statistics for each measured outcome are presented in Table 4.3. Results from CFA and SEM are presented in Table 4.4. Appendix G presents the analysis models, with the complete measurement model presented in Figure A.1.

Table 4.3
Descriptive Statistics of Measured Variables (n = 201)

	Positive distinctiveness at home firm	Positive distinctiveness at client firm	Social recategorization at home firm	Social recategorization at client firm	Racial identity centrality	Authenticity
M	2.53	2.16	2.93	3.26	4.47	3.56
SD	0.89	0.89	0.92	1.05	0.66	0.56

Note. Means range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*)

Table 4.4
Goodness-of-Fit Indices for Each Measurement Model and the Complete Measurement Model

Latent	χ^2	*Df*	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	LL	UL
PDwork	3.34	2	.99	.02	.06	.01	.16
PDclient	57.17	5	.92	.07	.23	.18	.28
SRwork	13.77	2	.94	.05	.17	.11	.23
SRclient	15.46	2	.97	.05	.18	.11	.27
ABS	82.65	35	.92	.06	.10	.06	.11
CRI	2.34	2	.99	.02	.03	.01	.02
Complete	852.28	308	.84	.08	.09	.09	.10
SEM_1	961.32	314	.80	.14	.10	.09	.11
SEM_2	792.78	319	.84	.08	.09	.08	.09
SEM_3	588.91	319	.78	.10	.09	.08	.10
SEM_4	551.00	319	.79	.10	.09	.08	.10

Note. CFI indicates comparative fit index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; LL, lower limit of the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA; UL, upper limit of the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA; PD, positive distinctiveness; SR, social recategorization; ABS, authenticity at work; CRI, centrality of race to one's identity; complete, complete measurement that includes all outcome measures in a single CFA; SEM_1, model for Research Question 1; SEM_2, model for Research Question 2 without the moderating effect; SEM_3, model for Research Question 2 for the group with high levels of racial centrality; SEM_4, model for Research Question 2 for the group with low levels of racial centrality.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant relationship between one's choice of RIM strategy and the ability to be authentic at work?

H1a. A significant positive correlation exists between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1b. A significant negative correlation exists between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1c. A significant positive correlation exists between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work.

H1d. A significant negative correlation exists between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work.

As shown in the SEM model (Figure A.2), the relationship between positive distinctiveness at the home firm and one's ability to be authentic at work ($r = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$), as well as that between positive distinctiveness at the client organization and one's ability to be authentic at work ($r = 0.05$, $p > 0.05$), were not statistically significant. However, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between social recategorization at the home firm and one's ability to be authentic at work ($r = –0.40$, $p < 0.05$) as well as between social recategorization at the client organization and one's ability to be authentic at work ($r = –0.37$, $p < 0.05$).

The null hypothesis was not rejected for H1a and H1b. There was no correlation between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and one's ability to be authentic at work (at either the home firm or the client firm). However, sufficient evidence was found to reject the null hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work (H1c). A significant negative correlation was found between the enactment of social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work (at either the home firm or the client firm), providing sufficient evidence to support Hypothesis H1d.

Research Question 2

If a significant relationship exists between the choice of RIM strategy and being authentic at work, is that relationship moderated by the centrality of race to an individual's identity?

H2a. The choice of RIM strategy that is employed by Black management consultants varies significantly according to their degree of racial centrality.

H2aa. The higher the degree of racial centrality, the more likely Black management consultants are to employ positive distinctiveness.

H2ab. The lower the degree of racial centrality, the more likely Black management consultants are to employ social recategorization.

H2b. The relationship between positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work is moderated by racial centrality, such that Black management consultants with a high degree of racial centrality who employ positive distinctiveness are more likely to be authentic at work than those with a low degree of racial centrality.

H2c. The relationship between social recategorization and authenticity at work is moderated by racial centrality, such that Black consultants with a high degree of racial centrality who employ social recategorization are less likely to be authentic at work than those with a low degree of racial centrality.

Research Question 1 determined that participants' ability to be authentic at work did not differ when working within their home firm versus a client organization for either positive distinctiveness or social recategorization. As a result, for Research Question 2, the latent variables of positive distinctiveness at the home firm and positive distinctiveness at the client organization were combined into one single latent variable (positive distinctiveness). Similarly, the latent variables of social recategorization at the home firm and social recategorization at the client organization were combined into one single latent variable (social recategorization).

Figure A.3 shows the SEM model for RIM and the ability to be authentic at work. To test the moderating effect of CRI in the relationship between one's choice of RIM strategy and ability to be authentic at work, a measurement model for CRI was tested.

This construct was measured using survey questions 21 to 24. The measurement model is shown in Figure A.4, and the goodness fit indices are included in Table 4.5.

A SEM procedure was run to test the null hypotheses that the choice of RIM strategy employed by Black management consultants does not vary according to their degree of racial centrality (H1a). The goodness-of-fit indices are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model for the Choice of Race-Based Impression Management Strategy

Index	χ^2	*Df*	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	LL	UL
Value	935.98	428	.86	.08	.08	.07	.08

Note. CFI indicates comparative fit index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; LL, lower limit of the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA; UL, upper limit of the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA.

As shown in the SEM model presented in Figure A.5, a significantly positive correlation was found between positive distinctiveness and racial centrality ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$), and a significantly negative correlation was found between social recategorization and racial centrality ($r = –0.30$, $p < 0.05$). This means that Black consultants with "above-average" levels of racial centrality employed positive distinctiveness (H2aa) and Black consultants with "below-average" levels of racial centrality employed social recategorization (H2ab).

The sample was split into high levels of racial centrality and low levels of racial centrality. The distribution of responses to the four items (Q21–Q24) used to measure racial centrality were reviewed (Table 4.6). Nearly all respondents (90%–98%) chose 4 (*agree*) or 5 (*strongly agree*) when responding to each item. This is likely due to response bias, which is caused when only people who are interested in the topic respond to a survey, or to social desirability, the tendency to answer questions in a manner that will be

viewed favorably by others. The sample size of the group with a low level of racial centrality was too small to run a SEM if 3 (*neutral*) was used as the cut-off point for each item. Therefore, the distribution of the latent variable CRI was examined. The median score of CRI was 4.75. Therefore, a score of 4.75 was used as the cut-off to separate "above-average" (n = 113) versus "below-average" (n = 88) levels of racial centrality. The models for these two groups of participants are presented in Figures A.6 and A.7.

Table 4.6
Responses to Questions in the Centrality of Racial Identity Scale

Variable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.	2*	4	15	49	131
I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.	0	4	20	50	127
I have a strong attachment to other Black people.	0	4	28	55	114
Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.	1	1	19	55	125

* Number of responses.

Figure A.6 shows that the relationship between social recategorization and authenticity at work was $r = -0.31$ ($p < 0.05$) for participants with a high degree of racial centrality. However, this relationship was $r = -0.32$ ($p < 0.05$) for participants with a low degree of racial centrality (Figure A.7). This is to say, whether or not high or low levels of racial centrality were reported, the relationship between social recategorization and authenticity at work was statistically the same (H2c). Conversely, the relationship between positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work was not statistically significant for either participants with a high degree of racial centrality ($r = 0.05$) or participants with a low degree of racial centrality ($r = 0.13$) (H2b).

Summary

In analyzing data from 201 Black management consultants, currently and/or previously employed by large multinational consulting firms, this study found that the RIM strategy social recategorization was significantly related to the ability to be authentic at work. A negative correlation indicated that the higher an individual scored on social recategorization, the lower that individual's ability to be authentic at work (at either the home firm or the client organization). In addition, regardless of whether one's racial centrality was above-average or below-average, the relationship between social recategorization and one's ability to be authentic at work was negatively related. However, no significant relationship was found between positive distinctiveness and the ability to be authentic at work, regardless of the degree of racial centrality.

Lastly, the use of SEM provided additional empirical support and validation for each of the subscales used in this study: the Race-Based Impression Management Scale, the MIBI centrality dimension, and the behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory. However, the conceptual model and framework developed for Research Question 2 could not be validated, which can conjecturally be attributed to participants' high levels of racial centrality, which may have inhibited any explanatory power this construct may have had in moderating the relationship between RIM and authenticity.

CHAPTER 5:

INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to establish an empirical relationship between the enactment of race-based impression management (RIM) strategies and authenticity at work, while seeking to determine what, if any, effect the centrality of race to one's identity had on this relationship. The following research questions were used to guide this quantitative study: Is there a significant relationship between one's choice of RIM strategy and the ability to be authentic at work? If a significant relationship exists between the choice of RIM strategy and being authentic at work, is that relationship moderated by how important race is to an individual's identity?

The sample population for this study was U.S.-born[2] and professionally based management consultants who self-identified as Black and who currently and/or previously worked for large, multinational consulting firms with more than 100,000 employees. Usable data were collected from 201 participants.

The survey used for this study (Appendix B) comprised three existing instruments. Morgan's (2002) Race-Based Impression Management Scale was used to assess the enactment of two RIM strategies: social recategorization and positive distinctiveness. The centrality dimension of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity instrument, outlined by Sellers et al. (1997), was used to assess the centrality of race to participants' identities, and the behavioral subscale of the Authenticity Inventory

[2] Data from individuals who were not born in the United States, but who resided in the United States for at least 11 years, were also included in the final data set. Among 21 participants who indicated that they were not born in the United States, 18 lived in the country at least 11 years.

(Goldman & Kernis, 2002, 2004, 2006) was used to measure the behavioral manifestation of participants' authenticity at work.

This chapter provides a summary of this study's key findings, interpretations, and conclusions. Implications for theory and future research and recommendations for practice are also presented.

Summary of Key Findings

Research Question 1 sought to determine if a significant relationship existed between one's choice of RIM strategy and the ability to be authentic at work. Hypothesis H1a posited that a significant positive correlation would exist between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work. Hypothesis H1b posited that a significant negative correlation would exist between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work. The null hypotheses for both H1a and H1b were not rejected, as there was no correlation between the enactment of positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work. Conversely, Hypothesis H1c posited that a significant positive correlation would exist between the enactment of social recategorization and authenticity at work, and H1d posited that a significant negative correlation would exist between the enactment of social recategorization and authenticity at work. The null hypotheses for H1c and H1d were rejected, as a significant negative correlation was found between the enactment of social recategorization and authenticity at work.

Research Question 1 determined that participants' ability to be authentic at work did not differ when working within their home firm versus client organization for either positive distinctiveness or social recategorization. As a result, for Research Question 2, the latent variables of positive distinctiveness at home firm and client organization and

social recategorization at home firm and client organization were combined into single latent variables (positive distinctiveness and social recategorization, respectively) in an effort to improve the overall goodness-of-fit values required for structural equation modeling (SEM). These adjustments were made to ensure the validity of the conceptual framework developed for this study, and doing so ensured that the data collected fit the model, thereby affirming that the relationships highlighted in the conceptual framework did, in fact, exist.

Building upon these findings, Research Question 2 sought to determine what if any effect the centrality of race had on the relationship between RIM and authenticity at work. To answer this research question, four hypotheses were presented. Hypothesis H2aa posited that Black management consultants with a high degree of racial centrality would employ positive distinctiveness. A significantly positive correlation was found between positive distinctiveness and racial centrality. Conversely, Hypothesis H2ab posited that Black consultants with a low degree of racial centrality would employ social recategorization; a significant negative correlation between social recategorization and racial centrality was found. This means that Black management consultants with a higher degree of racial centrality were more likely to employ positive distinctiveness (H2aa), while Black consultants with a lower degree of racial centrality were more likely to employ social recategorization (H2ab). These findings supported Hypotheses H2a, which posited that the choice of RIM strategy employed by Black consultants would vary significantly according to their degree of racial centrality.

Hypothesis H2b posited that Black management consultants with a high degree of racial centrality employing positive distinctiveness strategies were more likely to be

authentic at work than those who employed social recategorization. H2c posited that Black consultants with a low degree of racial centrality who employed social recategorization strategies were more likely to be authentic at work than those who employed positive distinctiveness. For both H2b and H2c, the respective relationships between positive distinctiveness and social recategorization and authenticity at work were found to be statistically insignificant irrespective of the Black management consultants' levels of racial centrality.

Discussion and Interpretation of Primary Findings

To provide context for the primary findings of this study, the impact of response bias on this study's findings is discussed. Given the underrepresentation of Black management consultants in the industry's large multinational firms, a convenience sampling strategy was used to identify participants for this study. The use of convenience or snowball sampling can often lead to the oversampling of a particular network of participants, which can cause response bias (Heckathorn, 1997). Response bias may occur when only people who are interested in the topic respond to a survey, and it can also be driven by social desirability, the tendency to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favorably by others. The sampling strategy for this study included soliciting study participants via race-based organizational affinity groups as well as race-based collegiate listservs and alumni databases. Membership in these organizations and listservs arguably speaks to a strong identification with one's racial identity and may have contributed to the high levels of racial centrality reported by participants.

The sample size of the group with a low level of racial centrality was too small for SEM if 3 (*neutral*) was used as the cut-off point for each item. Therefore, the distribution

of the latent variable racial centrality was examined. The median score for racial centrality was 4.75; therefore, a score of 4.75 was used as the cut-off to separate "above-average" (n = 113) versus "below-average" (n = 88) levels of racial centrality. This adjustment was necessary given the large number of participants (90%-98%) indicating high degrees of racial centrality.

SEM, a set of statistical methods used to assess latent constructs created from one or more observed variables (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004), was the statistical method chosen for this study. Unlike other forms of multiple regression and factor analysis, SEM allows for simultaneous examination of complex relationships between multiple latent variables (Norman & Streiner, 2003). SEM was also used to test the conceptual models established for Research Questions 1 and 2, which sought to establish an empirical relationship between RIM and authenticity at work by arguing that the centrality of race to one's identity moderated this relationship.

The remainder of this section discusses the primary findings of this study within the context of existing theory and research on RIM, the centrality of race, and authenticity at work.

Finding 1

Social recategorization negatively impacted authenticity at work. Research Question 1 sought to determine if a significant relationship existed between the use of RIM strategies (positive distinctiveness and social recategorization) and authenticity at work. Data from this study found that the higher Black management consultants scored on social recategorization, the lower their reported levels of authenticity at work.

Roberts et al.'s (2008) study of Black physicians in training found that identification with an alternate, more socially valued identity (i.e., physician in training) was positively related to social recategorization (Roberts et al., 2008). In that study, the ability of Black physicians in training to align themselves with a socially valued and esteemed professional identity is understandable given that social recategorization strategies seek to decrease the salience of race while increasing the salience of other identities by enhancing and drawing attention to similarities with other racial groups (Roberts et al., 2008). Roberts et al. (2008) found identification with one's profession to be an important factor in predicting the use of social recategorization. While professional identity was not examined or explored in this study of Black management consultants, parallels can be drawn between the management consulting and medical professions. The impact of professional identity on physicians in training potentially offers insight into additional factors that may influence Black management consultants' use of RIM strategies at work.

U.S News and World Report's 2017 "100 Best Jobs Report" highlighted both management consultants and physicians as professions in the top 100 best jobs and highlighted several key parallels between these industries, including low unemployment rates, high starting salaries, high stress levels related to work, and significant opportunities for upward mobility. The parallels between these industries provide support for the argument that alignment with positively viewed and socially esteemed professions like management consultant and physician may provide minorities in these professions with similar opportunities to establish positive professional identities.

Phillips (2008) empirically examined perceived pressure to assimilate by African American faculty and staff. Findings from Phillips's (2008) study suggested that when employees were different from their colleagues and peers, the perceived lack of alignment between their personal values and norms and those of the overarching organization increased turnover. Phillips (2008) defined assimilation as "a form of acculturation where diverse employees are expected to deny or suppress certain aspects of their minority identities and conform to the norms of the organization" (p. 2)—based on Cox's (1994) and Cox and Blake's (1991) theory of acculturation and assimilation. Similarly, social recategorization refers to "a set of strategies group members employ to change negative perceptions [that] involve attempts to change the social category to which an individual or group of people is assigned in the interest of increased social mobility" (Morgan, 2002, p. 12), which is similar to Cox's (1994) and Cox and Blake's (1991) interpretations of acculturation and assimilation. While Phillips's (2008) study explicitly examined perceived pressure to assimilate and ethnic identity, the experiences and challenges faced by African American faculty and staff also offered significant insights into the experiences of Black management consultants participating in this study, particularly those that strongly identified with the social identity of race.

Authenticity at work inherently speaks to the ability to present one's true self within the contextualized environment of the workplace (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2005). Subsequently, as individuals actively seek to create alignment between their true selves and their organizational environments, the inability to do so can cause feelings of inauthenticity to emerge (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2002; Hewlin, 2015; Leroy et al., 2015; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a, 2014b). The

negative relationship between social recategorization and authenticity at work in this study provides support for the argument that engaging in social recategorization strategies can create a disconnect between how Black management consultants see themselves and how they choose to present themselves at work, given the misalignment that engaging in social recategorization can create in individuals who perceive race as a central aspect of their identity.

Finding 2

Engaging in positive distinctiveness strategies did not impact Black management consultants' ability to be authentic at work. Roberts et al. (2014) suggested that "individuals with high racial centrality [are] more likely to use RIM strategies that publicly claim or embrace, and less likely to use strategies that suppress, their racial group membership during interracial encounters" (p. 531). In their empirical study of Asian American journalists, Roberts et al. (2014) found that the use of enhancement (i.e., positive distinctiveness) enabled authentic self-expression. However, despite the majority of participants in this study indicating a high degree of racial centrality, the use of positive distinctiveness had no impact on Black management consultants' ability to be authentic at work.

The use of positive distinctiveness strategies can be influenced and motivated by a variety of factors and interactions (Roberts et al., 2014). In some instances, positive distinctiveness may be enacted defensively and in response to negative social interactions (e.g., inappropriate racial humor, stereotyping, an unwelcoming diversity climate). Conversely, positive distinctiveness can also be proactively driven by an interest in sharing and providing insights about the racial perspectives and experiences of

minorities. Engaging in these self-presentation strategies highlights the potential impact that the motivation behind positive distinctiveness strategies may have in influencing and informing individuals' perception about how these behaviors inform their perspectives on authentic versus inauthentic self-expression.

Individuals often consciously and subconsciously manage how they choose to present themselves in an effort to help others see them as they see themselves (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013; Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1989; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1996; Leary & Tangney, 2011; Schlenker & Weigold, 1990; Tedeschi, 2013). Creating alignment between one's sense of self and how one is viewed by colleagues and peers is a motivating factor in the enactment of positive distinctiveness strategies and subsequently provides critical insight into why Black management consultants' use of positive distinctiveness did not impact their authenticity at work in this study.

Finding 3

The centrality of race did not moderate the relationship between RIM strategies and authenticity at work. Data from this study indicated that the centrality of race did not impact or inform the negative relationship that exists between social recategorization and authenticity at work and, similarly, did not impact positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work. Given that the majority of participants in this study strongly identified with being Black, engaging in social recategorization strategies for these individuals arguably meant enacting behaviors or strategies that were not aligned with how they viewed themselves; as such, engaging in social recategorization strategies was likely viewed as inauthentic and arguably in direct opposition to these individuals' established values around their racial identities (Roberts et al., 2008).

Similarly, high levels of racial centrality and the enactment of positive distinctiveness strategies may highlight shared values and norms associated with an individual's racial identification. Identity theorists have suggested that "individuals who are psychologically attached to a group will be more likely to publicly claim that identity, and less likely to suppress it" (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 296). As such, engaging in positive distinctiveness strategies arguably did not engender feelings of inauthenticity at work for Black management consultants because the enactment of positive distinctiveness strategies arguably reflects an outward expression of their identification with their racial identity.

Finding 4

The choice of RIM strategy varied significantly based on Black management consultants' levels of racial centrality. This study found that Black management consultants with above-average levels of racial centrality were more likely to employ positive distinctiveness, while consultants with a below-average level of racial centrality were more likely to employ social recategorization. Similarly, Roberts et al.'s (2008) findings suggested that "the extent to which individuals perceive that others devalue their social identity impacts the strategic management of that identity, as do identity importance and impression management concerns" (p. 294). Roberts et al.'s findings offer insight into the empirical findings from this study by linking membership in a devalued social identity (in this instance, being Black) to the strategic management of that identity via impression management strategies. This study also offers support for the use of one impression management strategy over the other based on membership and identification with a devalued social identity group.

Conclusions

Based on the four primary findings of this study, two conclusions are presented.

Conclusion 1

For Black management consultants with high levels of racial centrality, engaging in social recategorization strategies results in inauthentic interactions at work. When examining RIM, social recategorization strategies inherently seek to draw attention away from one's racial identity, minimizing focus on physiological qualifiers linking individuals to a devalued social identity group. Among individuals who consider race a central aspect of their identity, engaging in these behaviors can engender feelings and actions that are inauthentic. As such, it can be concluded that for the Black management consultants participating in this study, social recategorization negatively impacts authenticity at work (Brewer, 1979; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Roberts, 2005; Roberts et al., 2008).

Similarly, a key finding from this study suggests that Black management consultants with above-average levels of racial centrality were more likely to employ positive distinctiveness, while those with below-average levels of racial centrality were more likely to employ social recategorization. This key finding provides additional support for this conclusion by highlighting how the relationship between the centrality of race to one's identity and membership in a devalued social identity group (i.e., being Black in a racially homogeneous work environment) is likely to inform the strategic management of that identity via the use of RIM strategies (Roberts et al., 2008).

Conclusion 2

The context of work plays a key role in informing the relationship that exists between RIM and authenticity at work. While not the focus of their study of female scientists and Black physicians in training, Roberts et al. (2008) found that while social recategorization and positive distinctiveness were distinct and separate RIM strategies, they were positively related to one another, highlighting the contextualized impact of social environments like the workplace on the use of RIM strategies. Roberts et al. (2008) suggested, "Individuals use different strategies in different situations, or may even use multiple strategies within the same situation" (p. 298). These findings offer insight on how and why Black management consultants may situationally and contextually engage in both positive distinctiveness and social recategorization strategies, particularly given the contextually diverse and varied nature of consulting work.

The behavioral manifestation of authenticity is also an inherently contextualized construct, and the ability to align one's personal perceptions of self with authentic outward expressions and behaviors that align with that internal and psychological perception of self can vary significantly depending on the context. Sociological perspectives on social identity suggest that identities are malleable and that the manifestation of one's identity changes according to context (Côté, 2006; Funder & Colvin, 1991; Goffman, 1959; Shelton & Sellers, 2000). Deci and Ryan (2000, 2002) also suggested that individuals seek to find a balance between their true selves and the external environment (Kira, Balkin & San, 2012; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a), subsequently highlighting the potential impact one's socialized environmental context may have on one's use of RIM strategies and one's ability to be authentic at work.

Situational and contextualized environments, like the workplace, can play a critical role in informing the self-presentation strategies used to navigate socialized interactions for minorities at work. Black management consultants who participated in this study were asked to share their insights based on their contextualized experiences working within the management consulting industry. As such, the context of large multinational management consulting firms provided a lens through which participants shared their experiences in managing cross-cultural interactions at work, subsequently highlighting the context of work as a potential contributing factor to the variance that exists in Black management consultants' use of RIM strategies and their ability to be authentic at work.

Implications

This section discusses the implications of the primary findings and related conclusions for theory and research and presents recommendations for practice.

Implications for Theory

Race-based impression management. Since its inception, Morgan's (2002) model of social identity–based impression management has been used to examine the experiences of women in science (Roberts et al., 2008), Black physicians in training (Morgan, 2002), and Asian American journalists (Roberts et al., 2014). This study's use of the social identity–based impression management model and corresponding scale to examine race as a devalued social identity contributes to this emergent body of work, first by exploring RIM within a new environmental context, industry, and profession. This study also contributes to RIM literature and theory by expanding our theoretical

understanding of this construct in the empirically underexplored environmental context of large, multinational management consulting firms. The nature of management consulting work is inherently relational, and for Black management consultants in particular, professionalism at work often involves engaging in varying forms of identity performance, "the purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviors relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity" (Klein et al., 2007, p. 3). Engaging in this work is frequently rooted in a desire to combat negative and inaccurate assumptions about competence, skill, and ability (Roberts et al., 2008; Wingfield & Alston, 2014). The industry-specific challenges faced by Black management consultants are often compounded by the unique and rigorous nature of consulting work. This study provides insight into our understanding of these experiences by examining the RIM strategies used to combat these challenges.

This study also expands the theoretical body of literature on RIM by examining its relationship to the construct of authenticity at work, a relationship not empirically explored in the literature, and providing additional validation for the previously established relationship that exists between RIM and racial centrality (Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al., 2008, 2014). Research Question 2 in this study sought to establish a direct relationship between RIM and authenticity, an empirical and theoretical relationship that did not currently exist. The conceptual model and framework developed for this research question could not be validated, which can conjecturally be attributed to participants' high levels of racial centrality; high average levels of racial centrality may have inhibited its explanatory power in moderating the relationship between RIM and authenticity.

Lastly, this study provides empirical support and validity for the RIM model, theory, and instrument.

Racial centrality. The centrality of race within the context of organizational environments remains relatively underexplored. Despite this study's inability to establish a moderating relationship between RIM and authenticity at work, this study contributes to the literature on the centrality of race by examining this construct within an empirically underexplored environmental context. In examining the centrality of race within the context of large multinational management consulting firms, this study provides empirical insights into how psychological perspectives on the centrality of race can manifest themselves within the context of work.

A key finding from this study suggests that Black management consultants with above-average levels of racial centrality were more likely to employ positive distinctiveness, while those with below-average levels of racial centrality were more likely to employ social recategorization. These findings offer insight into how the centrality of race may inform the impression management strategies and behaviors used by Black management consultants to navigate cross-cultural interactions in the workplace. Subsequently, this contributes to our theoretical understanding of how the centrality of race is enacted within an organizational context and contributes to contemporary explorations into the intersection of race and identity in socialized contexts like the workplace (Alleyne, 2004; Harvey & Allard, 2015; Herring, 2009; Holvino, 2010; Morgan, 2002; Roberts et al. 2008; Roberts et al., 2014).

Authenticity at work. Kernis and Goldman (2006) suggested that when environmental or contextualized conditions interfere with or challenge one's ability to

behave freely and in an authentic manner, conflict can arise. Conflicts like this often occur at the psychological level and can subsequently have significant implications for how individuals interact with social and contextualized environments, like the workplace. Kernis and Goldman's (2006) work offers insight into the unique challenges and conflicts impacting Black management consultants' ability to be authentic at work. For these individuals, conflict can arise when seeking to establish personal and professional alignment with a culturally dissimilar organizational environment and the enactment of social recategorization strategies that may ultimately undermine and/or compromise Black management consultants' ability to freely express the importance of race to their identity at work. While not the focus of this study, Kernis and Goldman's work on interpersonal conflict offers insight into our understanding of this study's findings and how the strategic management of one's racial identity at work can engender feelings of contextualized inauthenticity. This study's findings highlight the conflict described by Kernis and Golman (2006) and expand our theoretical and empirical understanding of how the centrality of race and contextualized authenticity intersect and play out in the workplace.

Additionally, the findings of this study provide support for the establishment of an empirical relationship between the overarching construct of RIM strategies and authenticity. Social recategorization was negatively linked to authenticity at work, a relationship not previously examined in the literature. This contribution to theory is notable and provides the foundation upon which future empirical and theoretical explorations into this relationship can take place.

Implications for Research

Race-based impression management. Participants' high levels of racial centrality offer additional insight into the negative relationship found between social recategorization and authenticity at work. Roberts et al. (2008) found that employing social recategorization strategies negatively impacted the medical career commitment of Black physicians in training, which they attributed to the suppression of one's social identity, which engendered feelings of identity conflict and poor professional fit (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, & Tucker, 1980; Bell, 1990; Settles, 2004). Similarly, findings from this study suggest that given the high levels of racial centrality reported by participants, engaging in social recategorization strategies creates a disconnect between how participants view themselves and how they choose to present themselves at work. The inability to present oneself publicly or professionally in a way that aligns with one's perceptions of self subsequently fosters and engenders feelings of inauthenticity.

Additionally, this study found a positive correlation between Black management consultants' use of RIM strategies at their home firm and client firm, highlighting the cross-situational stability of RIM in an organizational context. Future research on RIM in organizational settings should consider additional explorations around the distinction between the use of RIM strategies in organizational versus personal contexts.

Lastly, while this study exclusively examined RIM, this construct stems from the broader phenomenon of social identity–based impression management, which speaks to the enactment of impression management strategies that are rooted in and/or motivated by one's membership in a devalued social identity group. While the findings of this study specifically address the experiences of Black management consultants, the experiences of

these individuals offer insight that may also be applicable to members of other devalued social identity groups (i.e., persons with disabilities, women, other racial or ethnic minorities) attempting to navigate organizational environments while traversing the challenges associated with devalued social identity group membership in organizational environments.

Racial centrality. The centrality of race to one's identity has been extensively explored in college students and young adults (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Neblett et al., 2004; Rowley et al., 1998; Sellers et al., 1998, 2003; Cooke, 1998). Neblett et al.'s (2004) study of African American college students found that individuals who did not consider being Black a central aspect of their self-perception were more likely to experience stress, depressive symptoms, and anxiety in response to the daily conditions associated with attendance at a predominantly White college or university. Conversely, individuals reporting high levels of racial centrality were unaffected by these conditions. Given that the majority of this study's participants reported high levels of racial centrality, Neblett et al.'s (2004) findings offer an interesting perspective on how high levels of racial centrality may actually help mitigate Black management consultants' negative experiences at work. Additional empirical work provides support for this and suggests that a high degree of racial centrality often serves as a buffer or protective factor against issues of racism and discrimination for Blacks and other minorities (Azibo, 1992; Sellers et al., 2003). Findings from this study contribute to these bodies of work by providing insight into how the centrality of race impacts and informs the experiences of Black management consultants, while also highlighting opportunities for additional exploration.

Authenticity at work. While authenticity at work is frequently examined in relationship to well-being (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Ménard & Brunet, 2011; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014; Wood et al., 2008) and leadership (Banks et al., 2016; Clapp-Smith et al., 2009; Hmieleski et al., 2012; Leroy et al., 2015; MacNeill et al., 2013), empirical work examining the constructs of race and authenticity at work remain scarce (Fleming, 2009).

In this study, the ability to be authentic at work was negatively impacted by the enactment of the RIM strategy social recategorization. Social recategorization speaks to the process by which individuals belonging to socially devalued identity groups seek to realign themselves with alternate social identity groups that are more positively valued. When one identifies strongly with the devalued identity (in this instance race), engaging in modification behaviors or seeking to align oneself with a more valued group can result in feelings of inauthenticity. Findings from this study not only provide empirical support for Goldman and Kernis's (2006) Authenticity Inventory's behavioral subscale, but also contribute to the establishment of a new empirical relationship between authenticity at work and social recategorization.

Lastly, this study examined the construct of authenticity at work and the centrality of race and shed light on a key consideration for future explorations. Discussions of race and identity in the workplace are often challenging and uncomfortable, particularly when not properly facilitated. However, the concept of authenticity represents a less threatening and universally applicable construct that in many ways can get at and examine a number of the unique aspects of one's membership in a devalued social identity group that can

often make it difficult for minority organizational members to engage authentically with colleagues and clients and truly compromise their ability to be their "best selves" at work.

Recommendations for Practice

Industry trends suggest that management consulting will continue to become increasingly globalized, requiring firms to be more intentional in their efforts to secure and retain multiethnic and multilingual employees (Plunkett Analytics, 2016). Annual revenues from the industry's elite firms exceed billions of dollars annually, with top consultants earning between $200,000 to $500,000 each year and billing as much as $5,000 daily plus expenses (Plunkett Analytics, 2016).

Consultants are key revenue drivers in the management consulting industry, given the unique knowledge and content capital they possess. Subsequently, the ability to retain top talent is essential, and the impact and expense associated with turnover is significant (Glebbeek & Bax, 2004). The findings of this study provide insight into the unique pressures and challenges Black management consultants face as they seek to navigate the use of RIM strategies that don't always align with their perceptions of self. In seeking to acknowledge and better account for these experiences, the following recommendations are presented.

Firms and the broader management consulting industry must commit to investing in, exploring, and understanding the unique experiences of Black management consultants. As evidenced through this study, the art of managing a socially devalued identity like race is complex and often compounded by many of the consulting industry's unique features (e.g., extensive travel schedules, long hours, high burnout rate). Subsequently, a more detailed understanding of how Black management

consultants (newly hired and veterans) attempt to navigate the process of being authentic at work may be valuable in informing management consulting firms and the broader consulting industry's efforts around cultivating organizational environments and conditions that are more inclusive and welcoming for minorities.

The consulting industry is notoriously privatized, often limiting public access to firm or industry data critical in advancing empirical and theoretical explorations and publications in this space. For firms truly committed to honoring and investing in the value of diversity, collaborating with and allowing access to academic and/or external researchers highlights an invaluable opportunity to not only inform key firm and industry initiatives around minority recruitment and retention, but also provide and inform in many instances seminal theoretical and empirical contributions to our very limited understanding of this industry and its minority employees. This access would subsequently offer an invaluable and significant contribution to scholarship and practice.

This study provides empirical findings and insight into the lack of alignment between Black management consultants' personal norms and values and how RIM strategies are used to mitigate this disconnect. Once firms have a better understanding of the unique challenges Black management consultants face, additional efforts and resources must be invested in cultivating organizational environments that are truly inclusive.

Management consulting firms must commit to establishing clearly defined value propositions and cultural norms that seek to ensure that the value of diversity inherently honors employees' ability to be authentic at work. Representing one of the highest virtues in the 21st century business world (Dolliver, 2001), authenticity

"facilitates the development of intimate relationships, as it helps people to build more complex, accurate, and appreciative understandings of each other's characteristics, experiences, feelings, values, and cultural backgrounds" (Roberts, 2007, p. 330). As such, a demonstrated commitment to embracing value propositions and cultural norms that inherently honor employees' ability to be authentic at work establishes an institutional standard around honoring and embracing the unique and divergent experiences consultants bring to their work. For Black management consultants in particular, an organization's alignment with this value proposition demonstrates an inherent acknowledgment, value, and understanding of the impact and significance that authentic engagement at work can have on its employees.

At work, minorities often engage in what Hewlin (2003) called "facades of conformity," which speaks to the art of consciously creating facades at work that create a discrepancy or misalignment between one's personal values and the values of the organization. For many, attempts to reconcile this discrepancy are often exhausting and can lead to ambivalence and stress (Hewlin, 2003; Roberts, 2007). Conversely, the ability to bring one's "whole self" to a welcoming work environment enables these individuals to reach optimal effectiveness, productivity, and performance (Hoppe & Houston, 2004; Roberts, 2007), which arguably contributes to increased job satisfaction and retention.

The vast majority—90% to 98%—of Black management consultants participating in this study reported a high degree of racial centrality (CRI median score, 4.75), arguably shedding light on the importance of being able to authentically express a valued aspect of one's identity, particularly in social environments like the workplace. Findings from this study highlight the potentially negative impact of working in organizational

environments in which the value of one's racial identity cannot be openly expressed. Cable et al. (2013) noted that "encouraging newcomers to consider and express their authentic best selves, organizations can positively affect their job attitudes, performance, and retention" (p. 11). To provide better support for these employees, organizations must view diversity as a key strength and competitive advantage that yields unique skills and insights, fosters creativity and growth, and challenges the norms of the majority culture (Cox & Blake, 1991; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Establishing and investing in value propositions and cultural norms that ensure the value of diversity inherently honors employees' ability to be authentic at work as a key step in this work.

Finally, retention efforts that acknowledge and account for the unique challenges faced by Black management consultants must be identified and implemented, to ensure management consulting organizations and their clients are truly able to benefit from the diverse perspectives and experiences minority consultants bring to their work. The consulting industry has a well-documented history of burnout and turnover given the high stress and grueling hours that can be found at most firms (Hewlett, Luce, Southwell, & Bernstein, 2007; Kelan, 2012). For Black management consultants in particular, the impact of these stressors is arguably compounded and intensified when coupled with the pressures associated with membership in a devalued social identity group.

While many management consulting firms have been more intentional in expanding their recruitment efforts to include many of the United States's top historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), these expanded efforts lose their impact when

not meaningfully supported by retention efforts that truly account for and address the unique experiences, challenges, and pressures Black management consultants face.

Roberts (2007) noted that "marginalized groups frequently unify around collective mobilizing efforts, such as advocacy groups, affinity networks, and professional organizations, to advance common interests within organizations and societies" (p. 349). Subsequently, to better support and ultimately retain minority talent, firms will need to invest in critical social support services and systems (e.g., minority mentoring programs, intentional professional development opportunities, affinity groups, soft skills training) to support organizational minorities.

More broadly, the industry will need to look at redefining the traditional model of consultancy. The time that consultants spend embedded in client organizations results in grueling travel schedules and extended time away from home. For Black (and arguably other minority) management consultants, this schedule limits and, in many instances, is void of much-needed opportunities to 'recharge' by connecting and/or engaging authentically with what Bell (1990) called the "private spheres" and institutions that are embedded within the Black community and that reflect and connect to these individuals' sense of self (i.e., social institutions that align with aspects of one's identity deemed to be valued: church, civic/service organizations, family, sororities/fraternities, etc.). The inability to engage and interact with these social support systems and institutions on a frequent and regular basis is arguably a key contributor to minority turnover rates in the industry. Odom, Roberts, Johnson, and Cooper's (2007) study of minority medical students provided support for this recommendation, highlighting that "support from friends, family, and community were particularly important facilitators of minority

medical students' success; and many students expressed the need to remain connected to individuals and institutions that would support their academic and professional pursuits" (p. 151).

Mid-sized firms like North Highland, based in Atlanta, Georgia, are paving the way for industry change by primarily assigning consultants to clients in the cities where they live, ultimately negating the need for extensive travel and providing a more sustainable work/life balance for its consultants (Plunkett Analytics, 2016).

While systemic industry change will take time, firms can consider some of the following steps to help cultivate more inclusive organizational environments:

- Establish and expand existing partnerships with HBCUs to include early internships, industry exposure, targeted recruitment efforts, and mentoring programs designed to help new consultants acclimate and adjust to many of the industry-specific stressors and to provide coaching around the tacit soft skills required to successful navigate a predominantly White organizational environment.
- Develop and implement programming and training designed to help employees identify their own unconscious biases and the impact of these biases in the workplace.
- Adapt hiring practices to ensure that organizational minorities are able to see themselves at all levels of the organization. Consider implementing requirements that ensure at least one member of an underrepresented group is interviewed for every leadership position.

- Leverage the concept of authenticity at work as a launch pad for engaging all employees and organizations in conversations about why being authentic at work matters. Discussions about race and identity in the workplace can be uncomfortable and destructive if not properly facilitated. For many, authenticity represents a much less threatening construct; therefore, it can be leveraged as a pathway for engaging all employees in critical conversations about what it means to bring your "whole self to work" and may shed light on how this work varies significantly for organizational minorities.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

As with all research, this study was not without limitations. The use of a snowball sampling strategy, while simple, cost-efficient, and beneficial in identifying and reaching obscure and difficult-to-find populations, resulted in several limitations. Snowball sampling can often lead to oversampling a particular network of participants, which can cause response bias, ultimately limiting the researcher's ability to guarantee the representativeness of the sample. This was evidenced by nearly all participants (90%-98%) indicating high degrees of racial centrality. Similarly, the sampling strategy for this study included soliciting study participants via race-based organizational affinity groups as well as race-based collegiate listservs and alumni databases. Membership in these organizations and listservs arguably speaks to a strong identification with one's racial identity and may have also contributed to the high levels of racial centrality reported by participants.

While the variance in levels of racial centrality was not high among participants in this study, the variance across other demographic variables was robust (Appendix C)

and may offer additional insights into the experiences of Black management consultants. These demographic variables may also provide additional insights and support for the constructs examined in this study. Particular interest should be given to examining gender and the use of social identity–based impression management strategies (Roberts et al., 2008; Singh, Kumra, & Vinnicombe, 2002), gender and the management consulting industry (Kipping & Clark, 2012; Kipping & Engwall, 2002; Meriläinen, Tienari, Thomas, & Davies, 2004), and the centrality of race and HBCU attendance (Cokley, 2001; Steinfeldt, Reed, & Steinfeldt, 2010; Tatini-Smith et al., 2013; Van Camp, Barden & Sloan, 2009).

In seeking to examine an underrepresented population within the management consulting industry, this study was initially intended to be conducted within one large multinational consulting firm. However, in developing the research model and methods for this study, members of the selected firm's risk management and legal teams were ultimately uncomfortable with explicitly questioning employees about race and decided to withdraw their interest in participating in this study. As a result, the sampling strategy was revised to solicit participation from Black management consultants currently or previously working at any of the large multinational professional services/ management consulting firms. The use of a convenience/snowball sampling strategy ultimately resulted in response bias and oversampling. To reduce this bias, future studies may consider revisiting the original sampling method by limiting participation to a specific organization or organizations as a way of capturing the experiences of a more captive and robust sample population.

Another limitation of this study was the small sample size (201 participants) and the specificity of the industry and organizations explored in this study, both of which limit the generalizability of the findings from this work to other populations and/or contexts. The experiences of Black management consultants documented in this study are likely to resonate with other minority professionals working in racially homogeneous organizations, environments, and industries. As such, future research might consider examining the use of RIM strategies, the impact of racial centrality, and authenticity at work among minorities in other racially homogeneous organizations and industries (e.g., information technology, fashion, architecture, marketing and advertising, construction, collegiate and professional athletics).

Lastly, a variety of psychological and environmental factors/variables may influence one's ability to be authentic at work and/or the decision to enact one RIM strategy over another. The inability to account for the impact of outlying variables in this study also limits our ability to view the relationships established from this study as exclusive and independent of additional variables.

The findings from this study only begin to scratch the surface in unpacking and giving voice to the lived experiences of Black management consultants and how they navigate each day. The quantitative data collected for this study provide an empirical foundation upon which additional qualitative explorations can be established. Data collected via interviews and focus groups with Black management consultants may offer additional insights into the personal experiences and motivations for engaging in various levels of RIM to further develop the model and should be considered in future studies.

Summary

In summary, this study found that Black management consultants' ability to be authentic at work was significantly impacted by the enactment of social recategorization strategies. Social recategorization efforts are rooted in an interpersonal desire to align oneself with the dominant/majority culture in an effort to increase one's social mobility. For Black management consultants, engaging in these efforts created a lack of alignment between enacting behaviors that authentically align with how they saw themselves and behaving in a way that created better alignment with the cultural beliefs of the dominant culture in their organizations.

Positive distinctiveness inherently seeks to improve the collective social mobility of an entire social identity group by honoring the notion that difference is valuable. While findings from this study found no relationship between positive distinctiveness and authenticity at work, the context of work, specifically within the management consulting industry, offers additional insight into how environmental and organizational contexts may inform the relationship between RIM and authenticity at work.

Final Thoughts

"Racial identity is the foundation of status in America. To live post-racially is to live in a world post privilege, and privileges often aren't easily relinquished" (Bush, 2016, para. 16).While some might suggest that we have indeed entered into a postracial society (Pew Research Center, 2016), for many Blacks and African Americans, the election of a Black president 8 years ago simply was not enough to undo a history of systemic and institutional oppression rolled out for centuries by a country founded and built on the backs of minorities (Bush, 2016).

Contemporary social and political issues have served as catalysts for a much-needed look at race relations in the United States, and for many, organizational environments serve as reflective microcosms of these broader social and systemic issues. For many Black professionals who consider race a personally valued aspect of their identity, navigating this new and increasingly complex terrain only exacerbates the already delicate art of seeking alignment between the devalued identity of race and the valued identity of a dominant/homogeneous organizational environment.

Findings from this study highlight the importance, for Black management consultants, of presenting themselves in a way that is securely aligned with how they view themselves and is inherently tied to their ability to engage authentically at work. As organizations work to cultivate diverse and inclusive organizational environments, understanding the additional impact that these social and political pressures place on Black employees will be essential in cultivating work environments where they feel welcome and free to share their unique and diverse experiences and perspectives.

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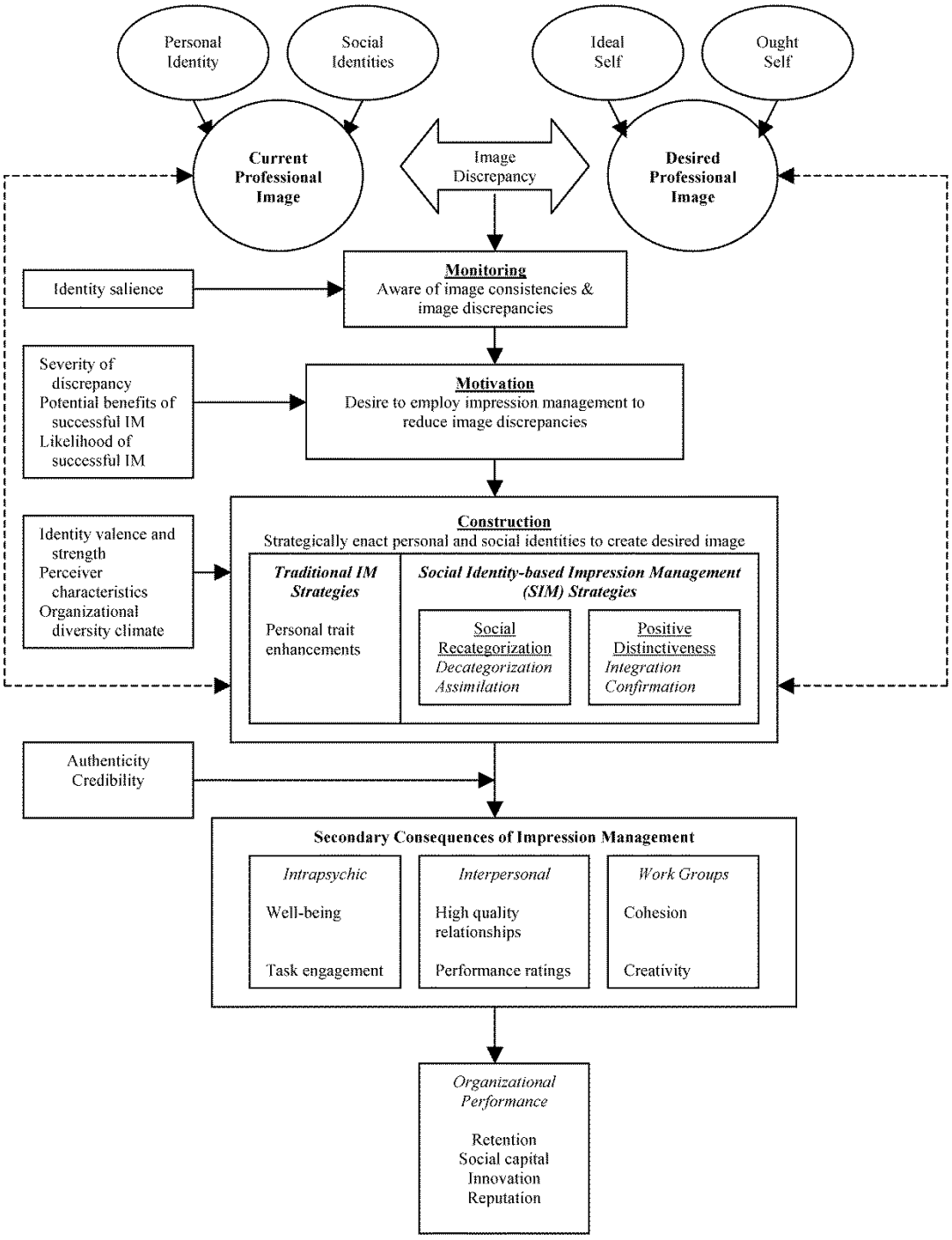
APPENDIX A:

FIGURE OF MORGAN'S MODEL



Source: Roberts, L. M. (2003). *Changing faces: Professional image construction in diverse organizational settings* [Working paper 03-087]. Retrieved from http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/03-087_7ddb7908-0fa7-42e7-bab6-e35be76a9ae2.pdf.

APPENDIX B:

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Informed Consent Form

This consent form outlines the purpose of the study and provides an overview of your involvement and rights as a participant.Please read this document carefully. Your electronic consent is required for participation in this study. Please provide your consent to participate if you agree with the following statements:

1. I am a Black management consultant over the age of 18.
2. I have been asked to participate in a confidential research study about the techniques Black management consultants employ in negotiating cross-cultural interactions with their professional colleagues and clients. I am aware that all of the information collected will remain confidential and will not be directly connected to my answers to this survey.
3. I understand that the extent of my participation in this research study involves completing this survey.
4. I acknowledge that my participation in all or part of this study is completely voluntary. I have the right to refuse to answer all or part of this survey.
5. I understand that the researcher believes that participating in this study will not cause me any significant harm. If I have any concerns that this study may cause me any harm I am welcome to terminate my participation at any time.

If you desire a copy of this consent form, you may request one and it will be provided to you. For further information about this research study, please feel free to contact Brook Dennard at brook.dennard@gmail.com

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact

GWU Office of Human Research
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 300-A
Washington, DC 20037
202-994-2715
ohrirb@gwu.edu

* Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

PLEASE NOTE:

As you respond to the items in this questionnaire, please draw on your experiences (current or past) as a management consultant working at a large multinational consulting firm (including, but not limited to, one of the "Big 4," Bain and Company, Booz Allen, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLC, Mercer LLC, Accenture, IBM, McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, Ernst & Young LLP, Oliver Wyman, Mercer LLC, KPMG LLP and Capgemini).

Below is a list of strategies Black management consultants might use during cross-cultural interactions in the workplace. Please respond to each statement regarding your use of each strategy when interacting with your non-Black colleagues in your ***CONSULTING FIRM*** (the consulting firm that employs you). There is no right answer to any of these items. I am interested in learning about your personal experiences. Use the scale to respond to each statement.

Remember: Think about your interactions with your non-Black colleagues in your ***CONSULTING FIRM*** (the consulting firm that employs you).

		Not at all like me	2	3	4	Very much like me
1	I attempt to teach my non-Black colleagues about the best way to interact with members of my racial/ethnic group.	○	○	○	○	○
2	I attempt to be seen as an advocate for my racial/ethnic group at work.	○	○	○	○	○
3	I attempt to educate my non-Black colleagues about the strengths and achievements of members of my racial/ethnic group.	○	○	○	○	○
4	I try to take advantage of the assumption that I am an expert on racial/ethnic issues in my job.	○	○	○	○	○
5	I use my race/ethnicity to my advantage at work.	○	○	○	○	○
6	I steer clear of engaging in discussions about race/ethnicity issues with my non-Black colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
7	I limit discussions of my participation in race/ethnic-focused activities with my non-Black colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
8	I try to avoid being pigeonholed as someone who is only concerned about race/ethnicity issues at work.	○	○	○	○	○
9	I try to draw as little attention to my race/ethnicity as possible at work.	○	○	○	○	○

10

Do you employ any other strategies when interacting with non-Black colleagues in your ***CONSULTING FIRM***? If so, please list and describe them.

4

Below is a list of strategies Black management consultants might use during cross-cultural interactions in the workplace. Please respond to each statement regarding your use of each strategy when interacting with your non-Black colleagues at your ***CLIENT ORGANIZATIONS*** (those organizations you are assigned to by your employer). There is no right answer to any of these items. I am interested in learning about your personal experiences. Use the scale to respond to each statement.

Remember: Think about your interactions with your non-Black colleagues at your ***CLIENT ORGANIZATIONS*** (those organizations you are assigned to by your employer).

	Not at all like me	2	3	4	Very much like me
11 I attempt to teach my non-Black colleagues about the best way to interact with members of my racial/ethnic group.	○	○	○	○	○
12 I attempt to be seen as an advocate for my racial/ethnic group at work.	○	○	○	○	○
13 I attempt to educate my non-Black colleagues about the strengths and achievements of members of my racial/ethnic group.	○	○	○	○	○
14 I try to take advantage of the assumption that I am an expert on racial/ethnic issues in my job.	○	○	○	○	○
15 I use my race/ethnicity to my advantage at work.	○	○	○	○	○
16 I steer clear of engaging in discussions about race/ethnicity issues with my non-Black colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
17 I limit discussions of my participation in race/ethnic-focused activities with my non-Black colleagues.	○	○	○	○	○
18 I try to avoid being pigeonholed as someone who is only concerned about race/ethnicity issues at work.	○	○	○	○	○
19 I try to draw as little attention to my race/ethnicity as possible at work.	○	○	○	○	○

20

Do you employ any other strategies when interacting with non-Black colleagues at your ***CLIENT ORGANIZATIONS***? If so, please list and describe them.

6

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements regarding your racial group membership. While attitudes and beliefs may change depending on your situation, I would like you to provide your most general response (i.e., what you would answer in most situations).

		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
21	In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.	○	○	○	○	○
22	I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.	○	○	○	○	○
23	I have a strong attachment to other Black people.	○	○	○	○	○
24	Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.	○	○	○	○	○

The following statements involve people's perceptions about themselves. Please indicate how much you agree with each statement.There are no right or wrong responses, so please answer honestly. Respond to each statement by selecting the response you feel most accurately characterizes you.

		disagree strongly	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
25	I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don't.	○	○	○	○	○
26	I've often used my silence or head-nodding to convey agreement with someone else's statement or position even though I really disagree.	○	○	○	○	○
27	I am willing to change myself for others if the reward is desirable enough.	○	○	○	○	○
28	I find it easy to pretend to be something other than my true-self.	○	○	○	○	○
29	I try to act in a manner that is consistent with my personally held values, even if others criticize or reject me for doing so.	○	○	○	○	○
30	I've often done things that I don't want to do merely not to disappoint people.	○	○	○	○	○
31	I find that my behavior typically expresses my values.	○	○	○	○	○
32	I find that my behavior typically expresses my personal needs and desires.	○	○	○	○	○
33	I rarely if ever, put on a ''false face'' for others to see.	○	○	○	○	○
34	I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me.	○	○	○	○	○
35	I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things.	○	○	○	○	○

36

In the past 3 months, how often have you thought seriously about leaving the management consulting industry?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Once or twice
- ◯ At least once per week
- ◯ At least once per day
- ◯ Many times per day

9

37

38

39

40

What is your gender?

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

To which racial or ethnic group do you most identify?

- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Latino or Hispanic

41

Did you attend a HBCU (historically Black college/university) for your undergraduate degree?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If so, which school did you attend?

11

42

Do you *CURRENTLY* work for a large multinational consulting firm (including, but not limited to, one of the "Big 4," Bain and Company, Booz Allen, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLC, Mercer LLC, Accenture, IBM, McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, Ernst & Young LLP, Oliver Wyman, Mercer LLC, KPMG LLP and Capgemini)?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

12

43

44

What is your level in your current organization?

- ◯ Partner/Principal
- ◯ Firm Director
- ◯ Senior Manager
- ◯ Manager
- ◯ Senior/Senior Consultant
- ◯ Staff/Consultant
- ◯ Junior Staff/Consultant

45

Have you in the *past* worked for a large multinational consulting firm (including, but not limited to, one of the "Big 4," Bain and Company, Booz Allen, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLC, Mercer LLC, Accenture, IBM, McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, Ernst & Young LLP, Oliver Wyman, Mercer LLC, KPMG LLP and Capgemini)?

- Yes
- No

14

When did you work at a large multinational consulting firm?

- In the past 12 months
- Between 13 to 24 months ago
- Between 25 months and 60 months ago
- Between 5 years and 10 years ago
- More than 10 years ago

15

47

* Were you born in the United States?

- Yes
- No

16

48

How long have you lived in the United States?

- less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- more than 20 years

17

Thank you for your participation!

18

APPENDIX C:

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table A.1
Demographic Characteristics (*n = 240)*

Variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	94	39.16
Male	114	47.50
Did not respond	32	13.33
Race/ethnicity		
Asian	0	0
Black or African American	205	85.41
Latino or Hispanic	2	.833
Native American or Alaska Native	0	0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0
White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	1	.416
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0
Other (please specify)	32	13.33
Age		
Under 25	37	15.41
26-35	108	45.00
36-45	43	17.91
46-55	12	5.00
56-65	8	3.33
Over 65	0	0
Did not respond	32	13.33
Education level		
Some college	2	.8333
BS or BA degree	76	31.66
Master's degree	103	42.91
Law degree or other professional degree	8	3.333
Doctoral degree	18	7.500
Other (please specify)	0	0
Did not respond	33	13.75
HBCU attendance		
Yes	54	22.50
No	154	64.16
Did not respond	33	13.75
Level at current organization		
Partner/principal	2	.8333
Firm director	5	2.083
Senior manager	8	3.333
Manager	27	11.25
Senior consultant	49	20.41
Staff consultant	34	14.16
Junior staff/consultant	26	10.83
Client services—other support	0	0

Variable	*n*	%
Intern	0	0
Did not respond	89	37.08
Currently working at larger multinational consulting firm		
Yes	152	63.33
No	55	22.91
Did not answer	33	13.75
Length of time with current organization		
Less than 3 months	4	1.666
More than 3 months but less than 1 year	34	14.16
More than 1 year but less than 2 years	42	17.50
More than 2 years but less than 5 years	47	19.58
More than 5 years but less than 10 years	19	7.916
More than 10 years	5	2.083
Did not respond	89	37.83
Have you in the PAST worked for a large multinational consulting firm?		
Yes	47	19.58
No	8	3.333
Did not respond	185	77.08
When did you work at a large multinational consulting firm?[1]		
In the past 12 months	15	6.250
Between 13 to 24 months ago	6	2.500
Between 25 and 60 months ago	11	4.583
Between 5 tears and 10 years ago	5	2.083
More than 10 years ago	10	4.166
Did not respond	193	80.41
Born in the United States		
Yes	186	77.50
No	21	8.750
Did not respond	33	13.75
Length of time living in the United States[2]		
Less than 1 year	1	0.416
1 to 5 years	1	0.416
6 to 10 years	2	.8333
11 to 20 years	10	4.166
More than 20 years	8	3.333
Did not respond	218	90.83

[1]Only applicable to participants indicating they have PREVIOUSLY worked at a large multinational consulting firm

[2] Only applicable to participants indicating they were not born in the United States

APPENDIX D:

RESEARCH BRIEFING

The Study

The goal of this study is to identify the various techniques Black management consultants employ in effectively negotiating cross-cultural interactions with their professional colleagues and clients. The information collected from this questionnaire will increase our understanding of how Black management consultants establish rapport with their counterparts and clients. By highlighting the experiences of Black management consultants, we can demonstrate how a more acute understanding of the interpersonal process of negotiating cross-cultural interactions translates into the successful recruitment and retention of minority talent.

The Questionnaire

This questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All information collected will remain confidential. No identifying data will be linked back to your responses to these questions. This questionnaire is a part of a research study and seeks to better understand how you define yourself and how you present yourself to your colleagues and clients during interpersonal interactions. The questionnaire will also request information about your experiences, opinions, and beliefs about being a Black management consultant. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the option of skipping any questions you are not comfortable answering or withdrawing from participation at any time, without penalty, if you are uncomfortable. Your personal responses will only be seen by the researcher and will not be shared with any other persons internal or external to your organization. The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number (202) 994-2715, can provide further information about your rights as a research participant.

The Researcher

Brook D. Jones is a doctoral candidate in the field of human and organizational learning at The George Washington University. She holds a bachelor of science degree in human and organizational development with a minor in women's studies and sociology from Vanderbilt University's Peabody School of Education, in addition to a master's of education in human resources and organizational development from The University of Georgia. Brook's commitment to scholarship and practice is evidenced by her involvement with the Academy of Management as a peer reviewer and panel conversant and her frequent conference presentations on issues surrounding organizational diversity. For more information about this study, please feel free to contact Brook D. Jones via email at brook.dennard@gmail.com. If you have any concerns or questions regarding this study's research methods or protocols, please contact:

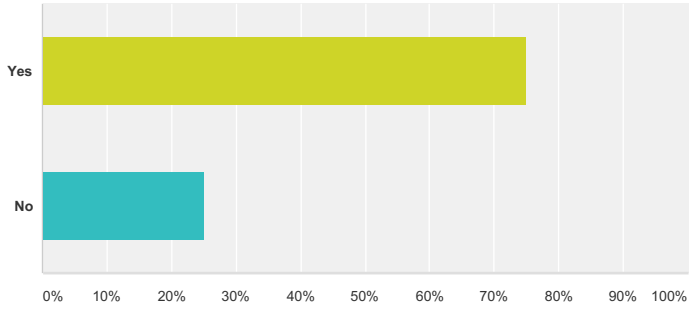
GWU Office of Human Research
2100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 300-A
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: 202-994-2715
ohrirb@gwu.edu

APPENDIX E:

PILOT STUDY INSTRUMENT AND DATA

Q1 Do the questions and items reflect what is important to Black management consultants?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 1

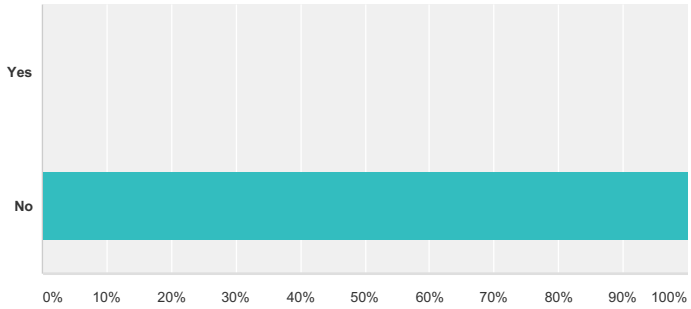


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**75.00%**	3
No	**25.00%**	1
Total		**4**

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	The focus is or should be on client success.	8/10/2015 11:26 AM
2	I think what black consultants want to know is if they can remain true to themselves and still navigate the ranks of leadership within the consulting industry. It will be interesting to see if the responses and research can answer related questions.	8/8/2015 1:27 PM
3	I think I could identify with all questions asked. It may be too broad, but I also have to navigate my interactions with my non-Black colleagues outside of work (i.e. Happy hours, extracurricular events) to ensure the team remains "cohesive". There are also few to no non-Black managers. I don't feel that hinders my opportunities for advancement, however, I feel like that plays a role in navigating as a Black consultant in the management consulting field.	8/3/2015 10:18 AM
4	I would reorder the questions in some sections so that the more 'positive' statements appear before the 'negative' statements. You may want to ask if they participate in racial/ethnic affinity groups at work (e.g., african american affinity groups) and/or if they also participate in other groups (e.g., women affinity group, LGBT, etc.). Also, I know some mgmt consulting firms have minority programming such as conferences for black staff at a certain level..you can ask if these programs exist, and if so, whether they share their participation in these programs with their non-black colleagues.	8/3/2015 9:36 AM

Q2 Was the length of time to complete the questionnaire too long?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

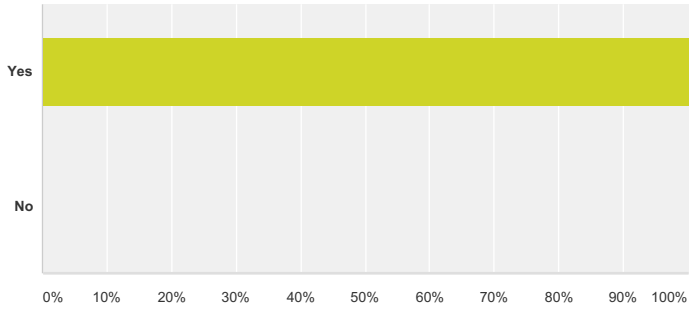


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	5
Total		5

#	Other (please specify)	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q3 Are the directions clear for each section?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	4
No	0.00%	0
Total		4

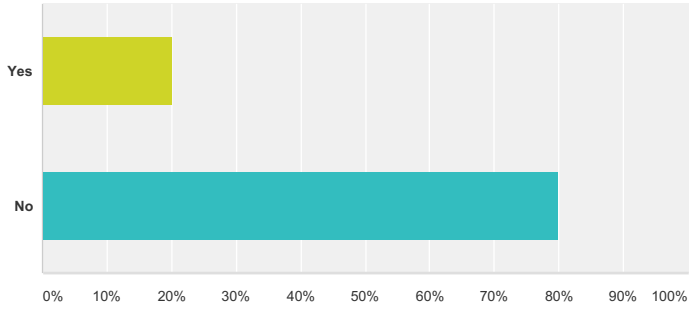
Q4 Which directions are unclear to you?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	The directions were very clear. I had a hard time with one question: " I use race to my advantage at work" - I interpreted that to mean in connecting with other Black colleagues, not to play the "race" card when feeling slighted for promotions, or other "injustices". Also, I had a little bit of a hard time with the Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither, Agree, Strongly Agree selections. Only because for some of those items, I was a "sometimes". I'm not sure if that muddles the waters, but if forced me to lean more towards one side or the other.	8/3/2015 10:18 AM
2	Directors are clear but the use of the term "parent organization" may be confusing for some. I'd suggest just using "firm" or "organization".	8/3/2015 9:36 AM

Q5 Are there any questions or items you could not answer?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**20.00%**	1
No	**80.00%**	4
Total		**5**

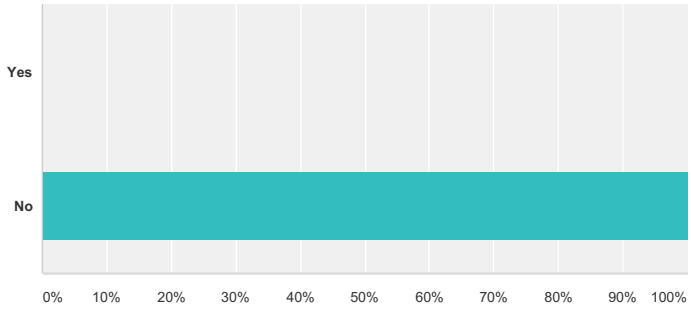
Q6 Which questions or items could you not answer?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 4

#	Responses	Date
1	The questions regarding the client environment were much harder for me to answer. Personally, I only navigate one client at a time (and for the past 2 years, my client has been Black). I tried to draw from past experiences, but just wanted to provide some context there.	8/3/2015 10:20 AM

Q7 Are there any questions or items you did not want to answer?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**0.00%**	0
No	**100.00%**	5
Total		**5**

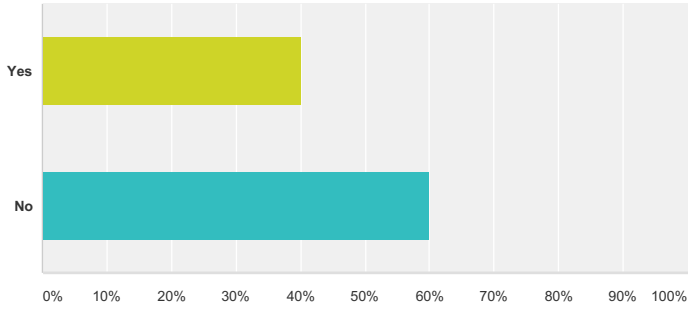
Q8 Which questions or items did you not want to answer?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 5

#	Responses	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q9 Are any questions or items ambiguous?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**40.00%**	2
No	**60.00%**	3
Total		**5**

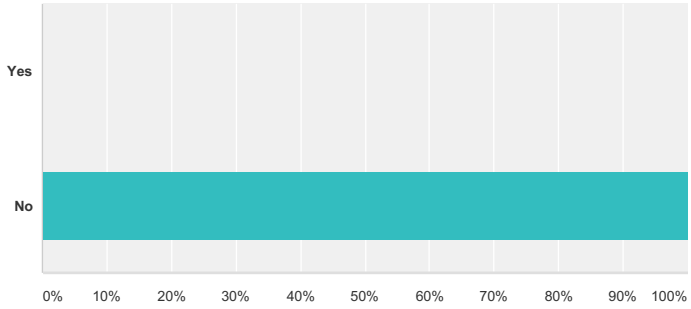
Q10 Which questions or items are ambiguous?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	The question about my current organization - I spent a few years at Deloitte Consulting and my responses were based on the experiences with that firm. I recently changed jobs (4 months ago). There was a question asking how long I had been in my current organization. I wanted to be able to say that my responses were based on my time with Deloitte, while my current organization is different.	8/8/2015 1:29 PM
2	The one I mentioned earlier "I use my race to my advantage at work"	8/3/2015 10:20 AM

Q11 Was any question or item leading?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**0.00%**	0
No	**100.00%**	5
Total		**5**

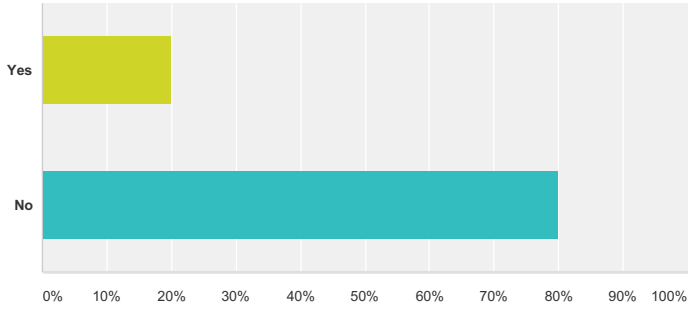
Q12 Which questions or items are leading?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 5

#	Responses	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q13 Did any question or item seem hostile or intimidating?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**20.00%**	1
No	**80.00%**	4
Total		**5**

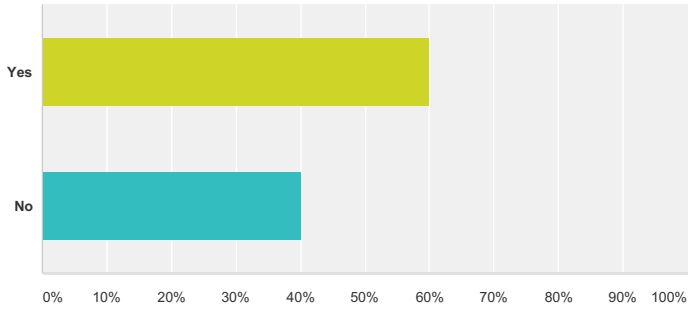
Q14 Which questions or items seem to be hostile or intimidating?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 4

#	Responses	Date
1	Being an advocate for my people.	8/10/2015 11:30 AM

Q15 Are there questions or items that should be included but are not?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**60.00%**	3
No	**40.00%**	2
Total		**5**

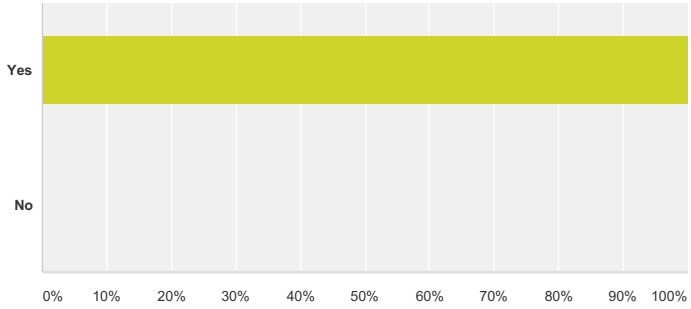
Q16 What questions or items do you believe should be included on the questionnaire?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 2

#	Responses	Date
1	Management approaches.	8/10/2015 11:30 AM
2	Related to lack of the presence of Black management and navigating non-black colleagues at extracurricular work events (such as Happy Hours, volunteer activities, social events, etc).	8/3/2015 10:26 AM
3	I would include the statement; "I feel like a minority at work"..or something to that effect.	8/3/2015 9:38 AM

Q17 Do you believe respondents can accurately respond to each item with the information they possess?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**100.00%**	5
No	**0.00%**	0
Total		**5**

Q18 Which questions or items do you believe respondents may not be able to respond to accurately?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 4

#	Responses	Date
1	I think respondents will be able to answer all questions accurately. They may experience the same difficulty I experienced related to feeling that a "sometimes" option may be easier to answer than "agree" or "disagree".	8/3/2015 1:15 PM

Q19 Please feel free to provide suggestions on ways to improve the questionnaire. You may also include the comments in a separate email to me. Thank you.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 4

#	Responses	Date
1	No other suggestions than the minor inclusions/ expansions I provided earlier. Thanks for the opportunity!	8/3/2015 1:15 PM

APPENDIX F:

EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA CORRESPONDENCE

Email Message Sent to Potential Participants

Good morning/afternoon/evening friends and colleagues!

Are you a Black management consultant? Do you have friends or colleagues who are? If so, I need your help!

I am conducting a study designed to explore the techniques Black management consultants employ in negotiating cross-cultural interactions with their colleagues and clients. I am looking for volunteers interested in completing a brief 7- to 10-minute survey. The link to complete this survey and additional details regarding the survey and study can be found below.

Description of the study: The goal of this study is to identify the techniques Black management consultants employ in negotiating cross-cultural interactions with their colleagues and clients. The information collected will increase our understanding of how Black management consultants establish rapport with their counterparts and clients. By highlighting the experiences of Black management consultants, we can demonstrate how a an increased understanding of the interpersonal process of negotiating cross-cultural interactions translates into the successful recruitment and retention of minority talent.

Who can participate? This study seeks to examine the experiences of Black management consultants in large management consulting firms. Participants must meet the following criteria:

- Currently or previously employed as a management consultant at a large consulting firm (including, but not limited to, Deloitte, Bain, IBM, Accenture, Booz Allen, or PWC)
- Identify as Black or African-American

All information provided in the survey will be confidential.

Who is the researcher? The researcher for this study is a doctoral candidate at George Washington University in Washington, DC. This research is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of her doctoral degree. She hopes the results of the study will be useful in giving a voice to Black management consultants and will help consulting firms understand the unique and often inaudible challenges faced by minority management consultants.

How do I participate? If you would like to participate in this study, please complete the questionnaire using the link below. If you know someone who might meet the criteria for participation, please forward this email to them as well!

Questions? If you would like additional information about my research, or would like to provide potential participants with additional information on this study, please feel free to

share the attached Research Briefing and/or contact the researcher, Brook Dennard, at brook.dennard@gmail.com.

Click Here to Begin the Survey

Thank you so much for your support!

LinkedIn Message Sent to Potential Participants

Hi XXX,
I am a doctoral candidate conducting research on the techniques employed by Black management consultants in negotiating cross-cultural interactions with their colleagues and clients. I am looking for volunteers to participate in a 7-minute survey and would love your help! I've included the link to my survey below, and if you'd like additional information on the study, please let me know and I'd be happy to send over my research briefing.

Thanks SO much in advance and, if you have friends and colleagues that might also be interested in completing the survey, PLEASE forward it along!

SURVEY LINK: **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T5235J5**

Brook Dennard, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
The George Washington University

APPENDIX G:

ANALYSIS MODELS AND FIGURES

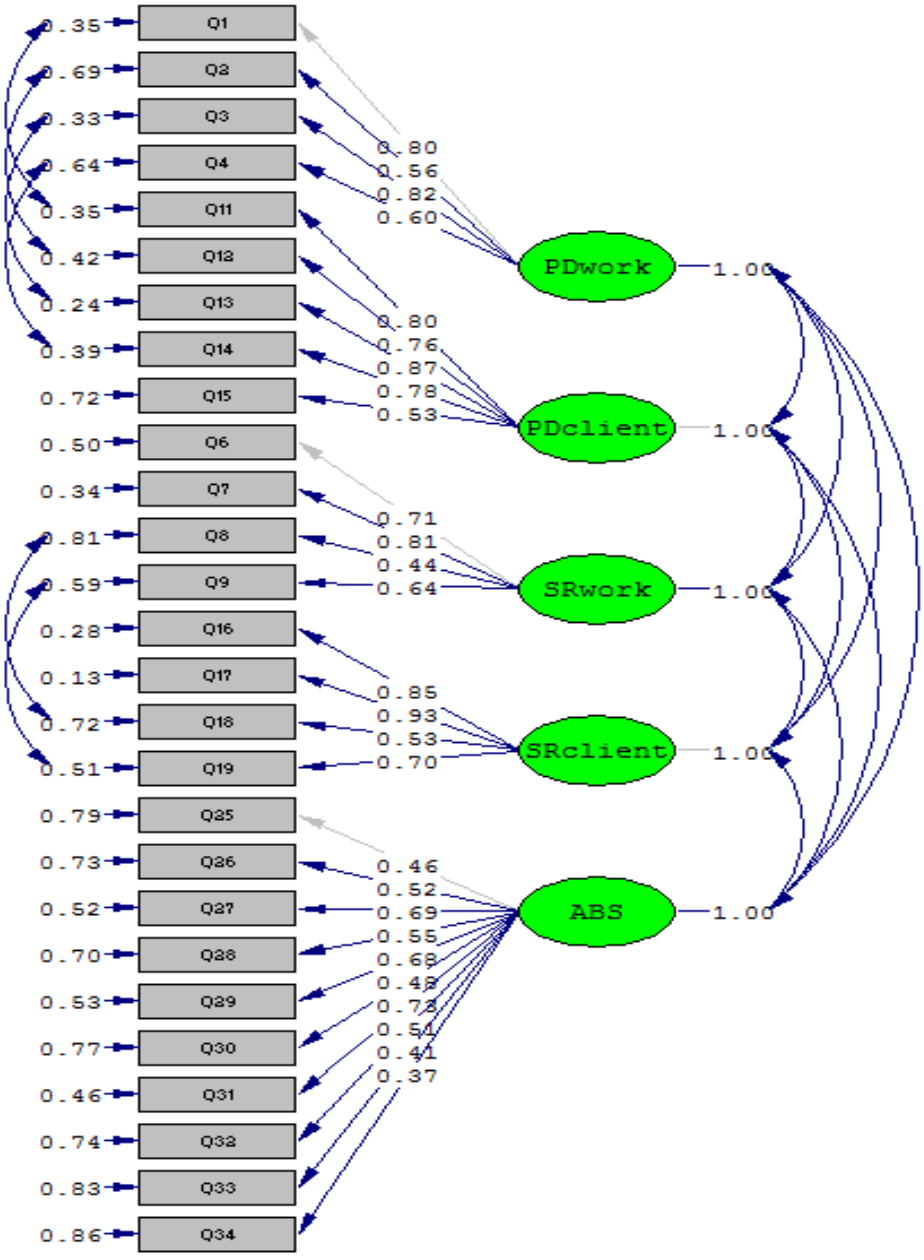


Figure A.1. The complete measurement model.

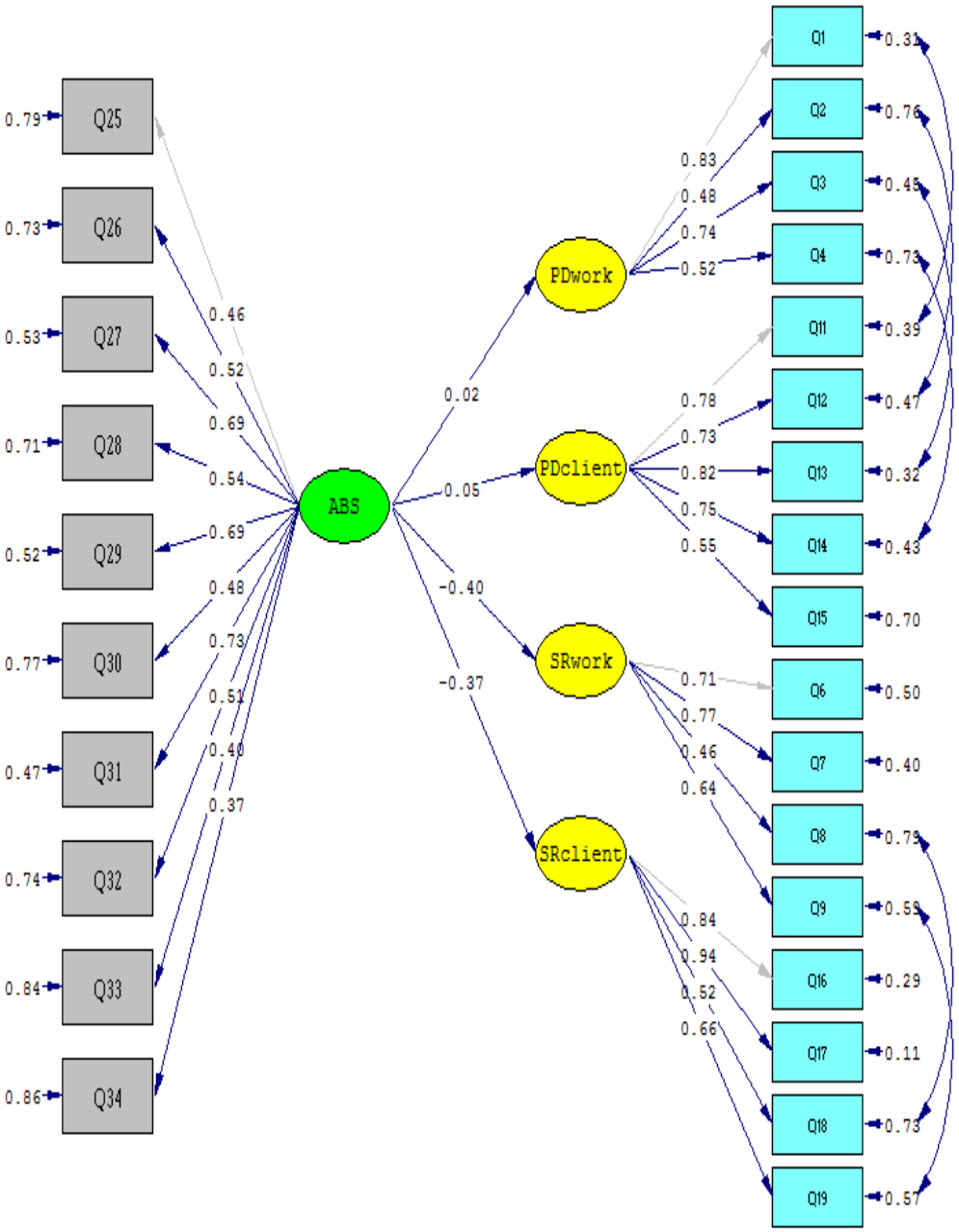


Figure A.2. Structural equation model for authenticity and positive distinctiveness at home firm (PDwork), positive distinctiveness at client firm (PDclient), social recategorization at home firm (SRwork), and social recategorization at client firm (SRclient).

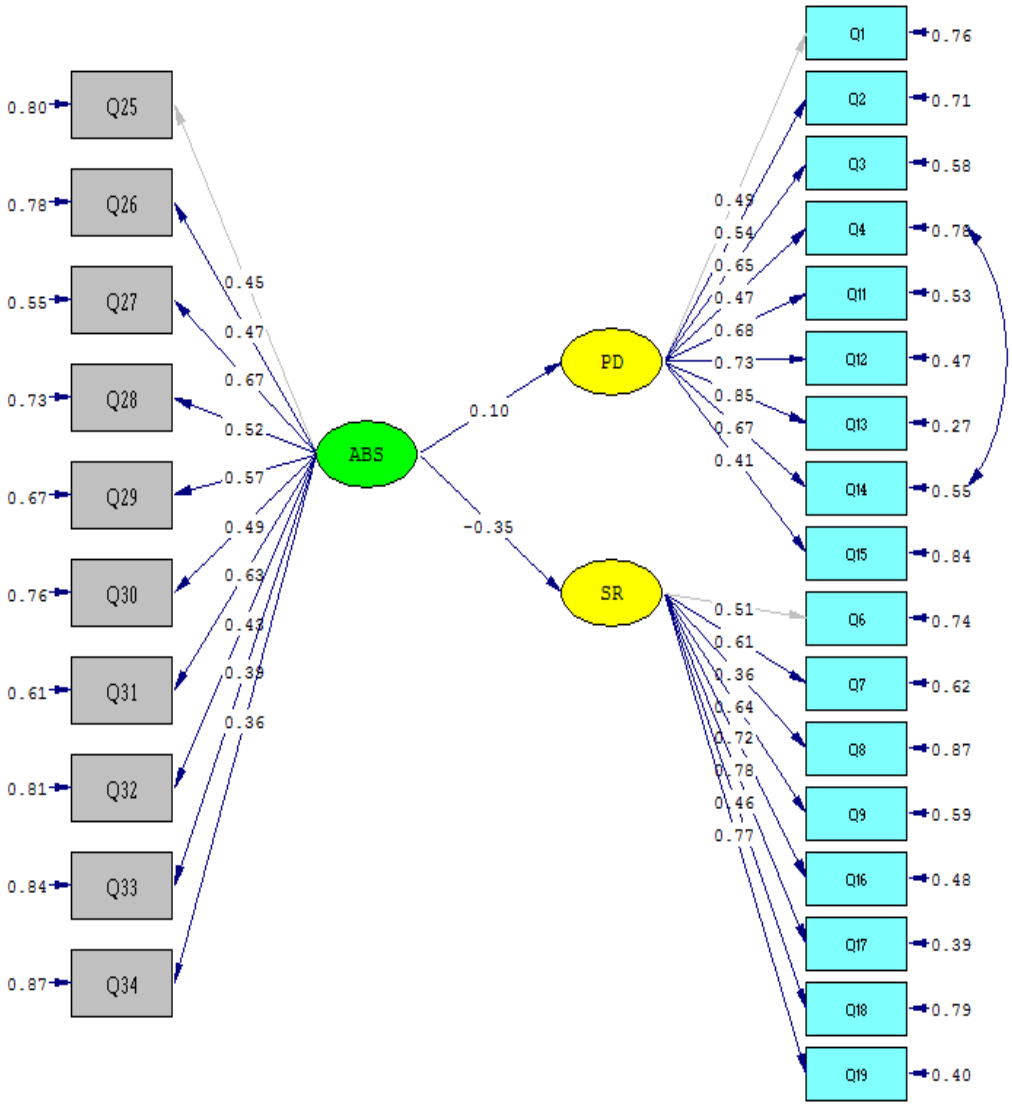


Figure A.3. Structural equation model for race-based impression management strategy (PD and SR) and ability to be authentic at work (ABS).

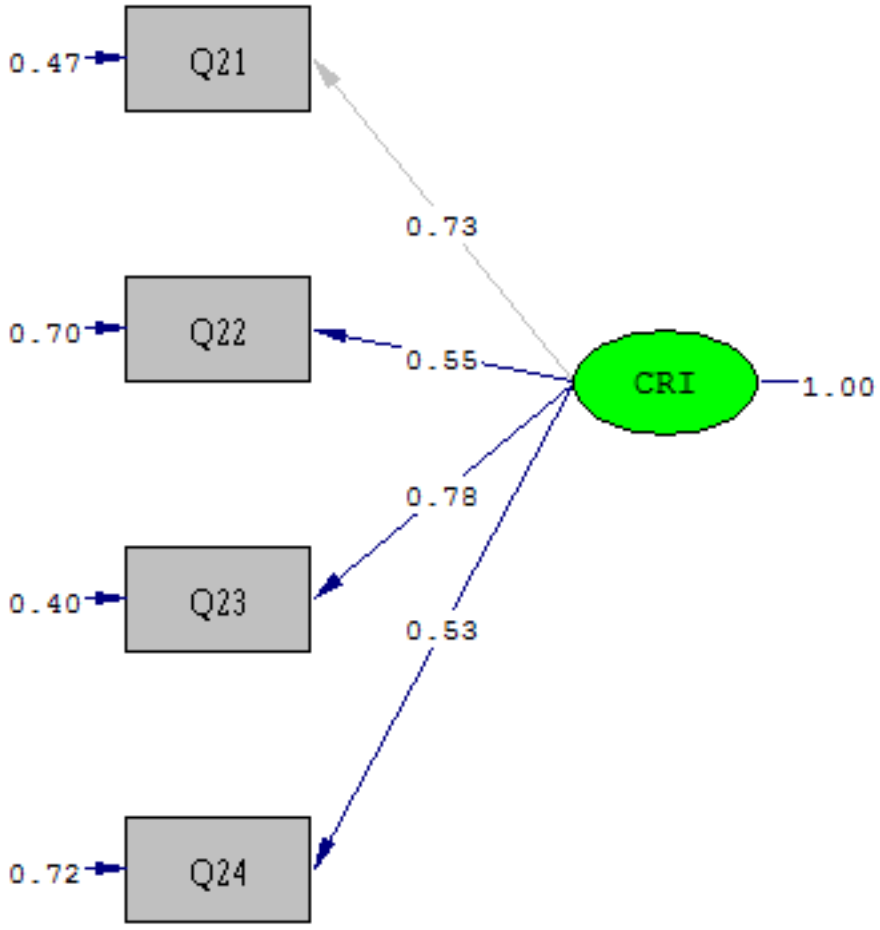


Figure A.4. Measurement model for centrality of racial identity (CRI).

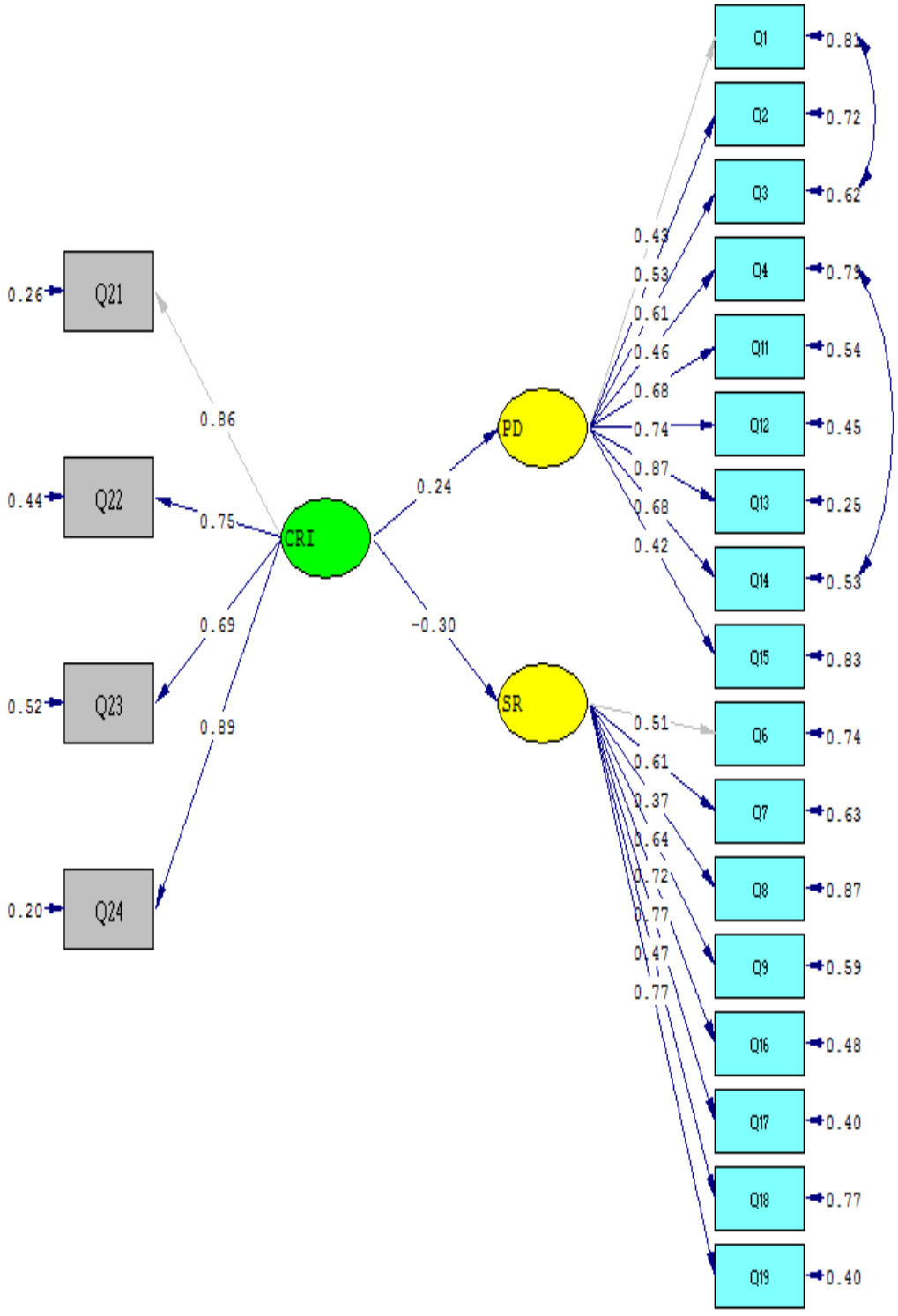


Figure A.5. Structural equation model for the choice of race-based impression management strategy.

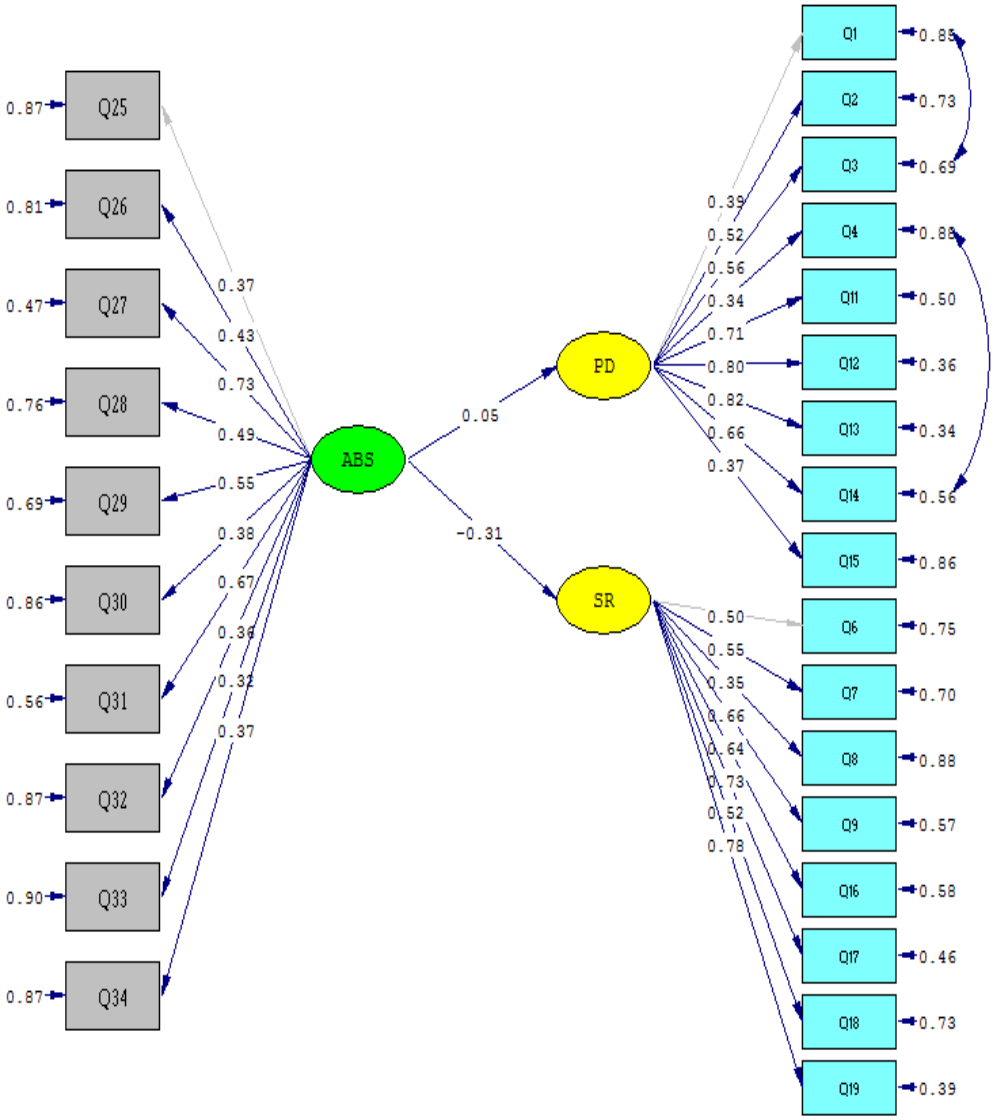


Figure A.6. Structural equation model for race-based impression management strategy (PD and SR) and ability to be authentic at work (ABS) for individuals with high-level racial identity centrality (n = 113).

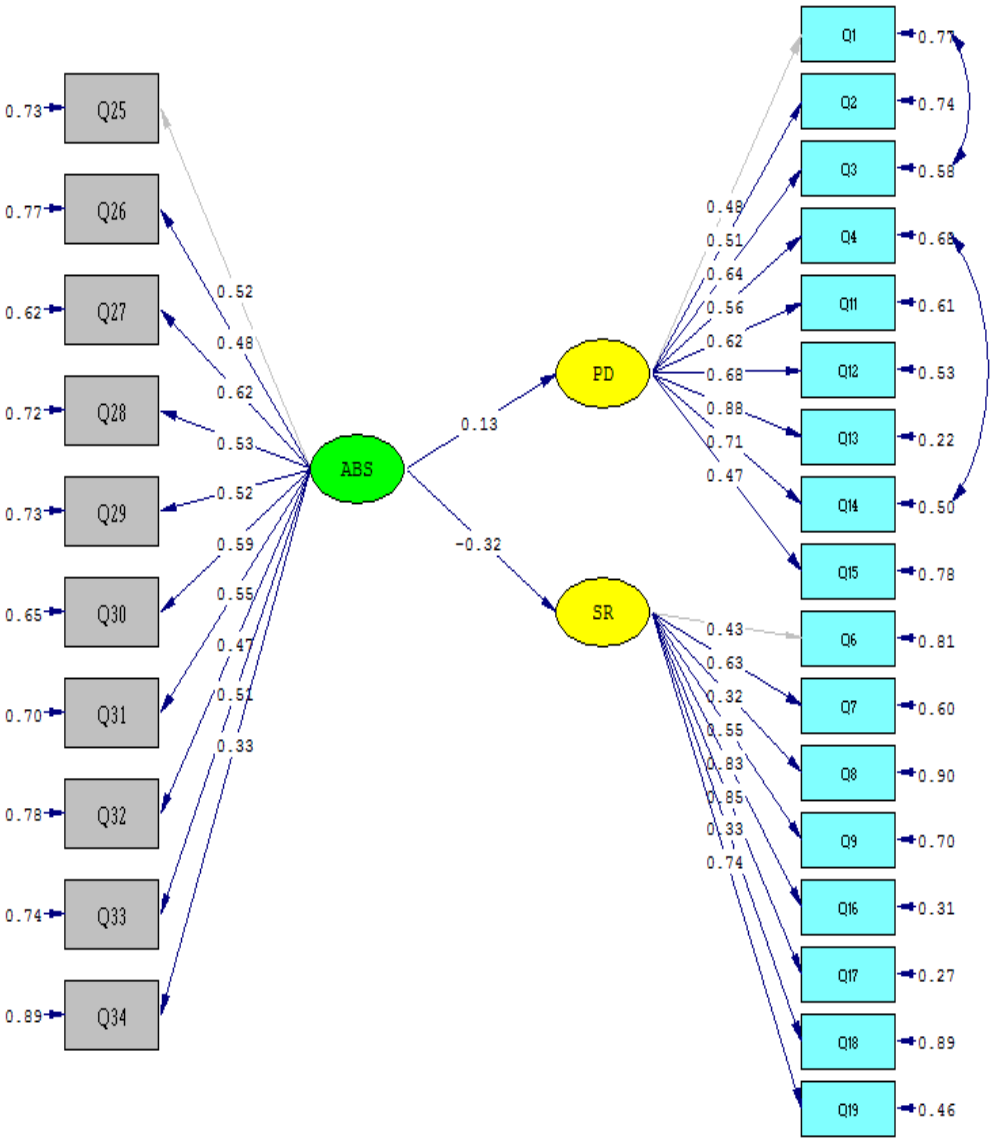


Figure A.7. Structural equation model for race-based impression management strategy (PD and SR) and ability to be authentic at work (ABS) for individuals with low-level racial identity centrality (n = 88).