The Impact of Racial Identity on Community Connectedness and Anxiety Among Young Adults of African Descent

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Introduction

Abstract

According to the CDC (2020), anxiety symptoms among people of African descent have tripled since 2019. Ingroup connectedness among people of African descent could be a potential solution to addressing the increase in anxiety symptoms. This study aims to investigate the potential relationship between racial identity, community connectedness, and anxiety symptoms among people of African descent. The potential implications of this study could help in the development of culturally relevant and racially affirmative interventions to address race-related anxiety that young people feel in predominately white spaces when socializing with their peers.

Literature

Black racial identity development model
(Cross, 1971; 1991)

- Stage 1 (Pre-encounter): Person identifies with White people and culture and rejects or devalues Black people and culture *(may be diffused or foreclosed)*

- Stage 2 (Encounter): Characterized by an emotional personal experience, which fosters need to change *(most likely moratorium)*

- Stage 3 (Immersion-Emersion): Person completely identifies with Blacks, idealizes Black culture, and abhors all things White *(may be moratorium or achieved)*

- Stage 4 (Internalization): Person overcomes defensiveness, idealization, and psychological effects of racism and develops a positive and secure Black identity *(most likely achieved)*

- Stage 5 (Commitment): Person maintains Black identity while resisting the various forms of social oppression *(most likely achieved)*

Research Questions

Research Question: How does racial identity impact racial ingroup and outgroup interactions and anxiety levels among young people of African Descent?

Hypothesis
Cross's Racial Identity stages will have a significant positive correlation with:
1. Higher social distance from their ingroup
2. Higher cultural misorientation scores
3. Higher reported anxiety

Research Design

Procedures:
- FAMU psychology students completed a 35–40-minute survey through Qualtrics.

Measures:
- Demographics Survey
- Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS)
- Short Form Cultural Misorientation Scale
- Bogardus Social Distance Scale
- State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults (Forms Y-1 & Y-2)

Participants

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	6	16.2%
Female	31	83.8%
Age		
18-20	6	16.2%
21-23	27	73.0%
24-26	2	5.4%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	23	62.2%
Black American	11	29.7%
Afro-Caribbean	1	2.7%
Classification		
Senior	35	94.6%

Survey Materials and Tables
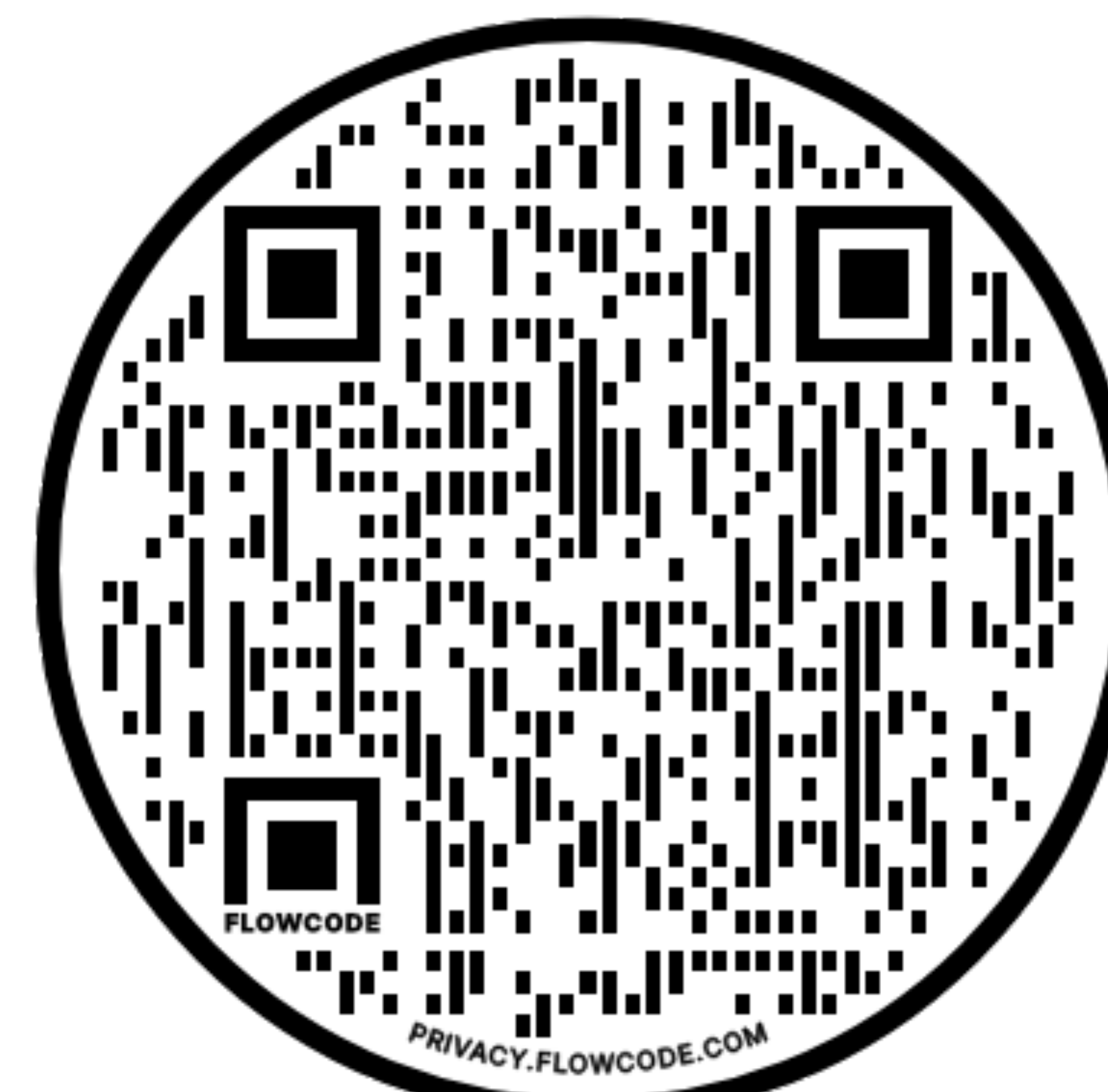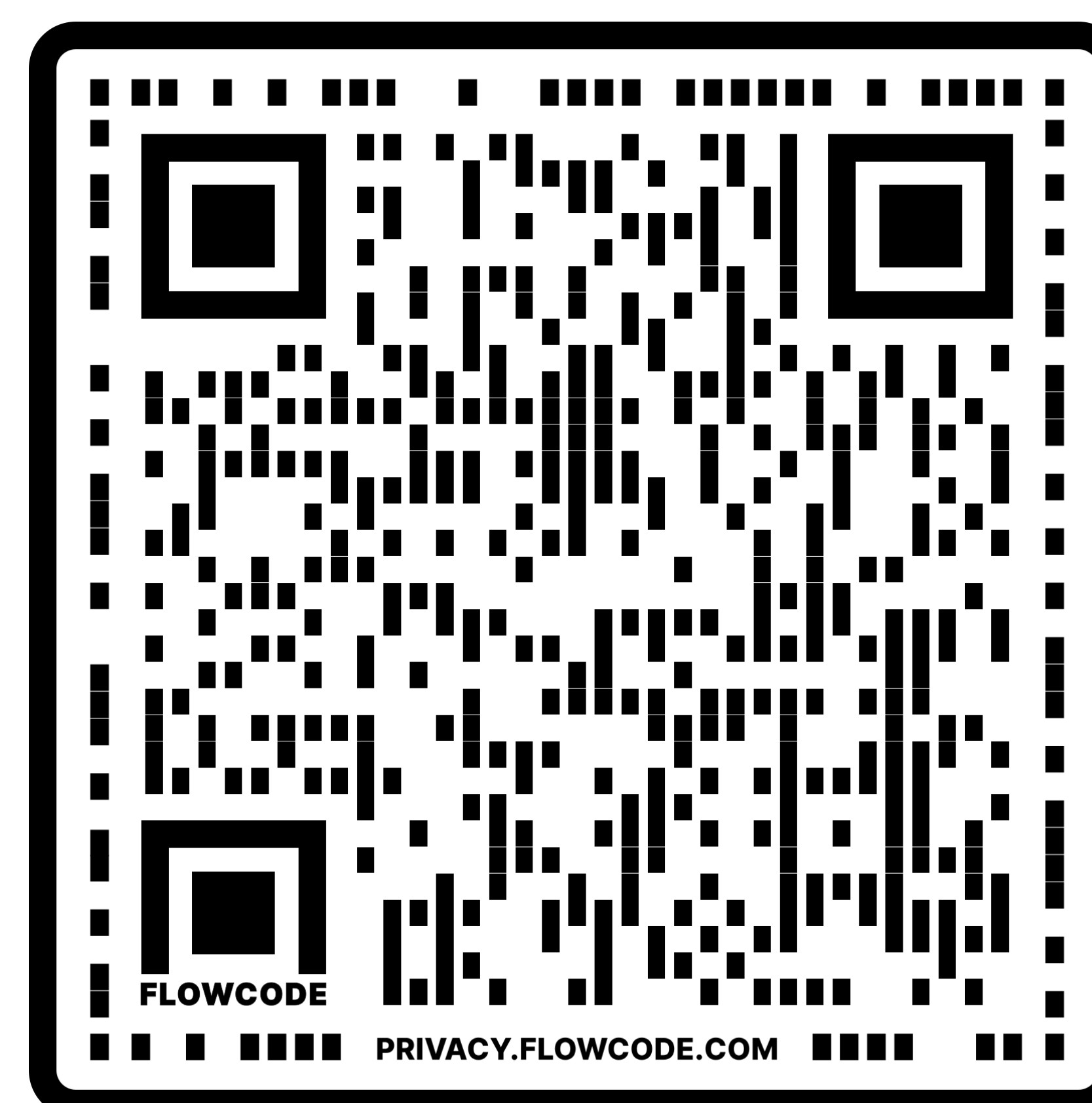
Data Collection and Analysis

- The mode of analysis was through basic frequency tests, Pearson's correlations, and a regression test.

Results

- There was a significant relationship between reported anxiety levels and scoring within the Materialism subcategory of cultural misorientation.
- Anxiety does have a negative relationship with the individualism subcategory of cultural misorientation.
- Those who have higher individualism and Internalization scores report lower anxiety levels.

Discussion

- Prior research has shown that having lower identity levels correlates to feeling more vulnerable to anxiety due to not having that sense of connection.
- Those who have higher individualism and Internalization scores report lower anxiety levels. This finding provides sufficient evidence to support the first hypothesis.
- Interestingly, those who reported higher materialism scores fell within had lower levels of Pre-Encounter Materialism scores.
- These findings did not support the hypothesis, but it did provide a new relationship between Eurocentric ideologies and connectedness to one's black community and identity

Key References

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PURPOSE
PARTNERS UNITED FOR RESEARCH PATHWAYS
ORIENTED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION