BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NAME: Fatima A. Varner
eRA COMMONS USER NAME: FV3225

POSITION TITLE: Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Sciences

EDUCATION/TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION AND LOCATION</th>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>FIELD OF STUDY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>05/2004</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwestern University, Evanston, IL</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>12/2010</td>
<td>Human Development and Social Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>Postdoc</td>
<td>2010-2012</td>
<td>Education and Psychology</td>
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A. Personal Statement

I am a developmental scientist who examines the roles of familial and social contextual factors in African American adolescents’ academic and mental health outcomes. In addition, I am interested in how family resources, structure, and parental and child environments interact to influence parental mental health. I have published work related to the intersection of parenting, child characteristics, and contextual factors on African American adolescent outcomes, as well as the influence of financial resources on African American mothers’ mental health. My research has increased understanding of the mechanisms by which familial factors such as socioeconomic status and parenting can influence gender and ethnic disparities. In addition, my work identifies racial discrimination as an influence on parenting in African American families. My research, therefore, fits at the intersection of two of PRC’s primary research areas: 1) Demography: Family Demography and Intergenerational Relationships and 2) Demography: Education, Work and Inequality.

In the next five years I plan to expand my line of research in these areas by focusing on how parents’ and adolescents’ perceptions of racial discrimination experiences and anticipation of discrimination are related to parents’ practices and mental health, as well as adolescent outcomes including academic achievement, mental health, and risk behaviors. This research aligns with PDB’s Family Demography and Intergenerational Research Program. My expertise in secondary data analysis and analytical methods such as structural equation modeling and hierarchical linear modeling makes me well-qualified to conduct research related to families and adolescent development.

I have received support from PRC’s Development Core through their grant proposal Boot Camp in developing a grant proposal to submit to NIH focused on the relationship between physical development and the mental health and risk behaviors of African American youth. In addition, I have received support with computer and software purchasing and set-up through PRC’s Science & Technical core and assistance with grant proposal preparation from PRC’s Administration Core. I also plan to become involved in the PRC working group on family research.

B. Positions and Honors

Positions and Employment
2013-2015 Assistant Professor, Applied Developmental Psychology Program, Department of Psychology, Fordham University
2015-present Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, The University of Texas at Austin
2016-present Faculty Research Associate, Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Other Experience and Professional Memberships
2014-2015 Mentor, Bronx Science Mentor Program
Present Member, Diversity Committee, Society for Research on Adolescence
Present Member: Society for Research on Adolescence, Society for Research in Child Development, American Psychological Association
Editorial Board Reviewer, Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology
C. Contributions to Science

1. Gender-Differentiated Parenting and African American Adolescents’ Academic Achievement

Large gender differences exist in academic achievement and educational attainment among African Americans. These gender disparities have significant implications for employment, economic opportunities, and African American family life. One hypothesized contributor to these gender differences in achievement is gender-differentiated parenting. My work has found that African American mothers in both married and single-mother headed households engage in different parenting practices based on their children’s gender and birth order and that these parenting differences partially account for gender differences in African American adolescents’ academic achievement. In addition, this research suggests that one factor that contributes to gender-differentiation is mothers’ differing concerns about the role of racial discrimination in the lives of their sons and daughters. These findings suggest that the history of discrimination toward African Americans has significant implications for parenting and academic achievement.


2. Contextual Factors, Mothers’ Mental Health, and Parenting

Many studies have found mothers’ mental health to be related to their parenting and child outcomes. My research using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 has found that financial resources act as a buffer against lower self-esteem for single African American mothers and depressive symptoms for divorced mothers. These findings provide more knowledge about risk and protective factors associated with the mental health of the understudied population of African American mothers.


3. Racial Discrimination in Black Families

This current line of research focuses on how perceptions of racial discrimination shape parenting cognitions, practices, and mental health, as well as adolescents’ and emerging adults’ academic achievement, mental health, and risk behaviors. Family systems theory suggests that external factors such as racial discrimination experiences not only influence the target of discrimination but also the relationships of interdependent family members. In research projects currently in progress I examine 1) how parents’ and adolescents’ racial
discrimination experiences together influence parenting practices; 2) parent and child characteristics such as gender, parental self-efficacy, and parental mental health that modify the associations among racial discrimination experiences, parenting practices, and subsequent adolescent development; 3) whether culturally-specific and universal parenting practices promote or protect adolescents’ academic achievement and mental health in the face of race-related stressors; 4) if parents’ anticipation of discrimination influences parenting and mental health even after accounting for previous perceptions of racial discrimination experiences; and 5) the relationship between racial discrimination experiences and Black adolescents’ and emerging adults’ educational, psychological, and behavioral trajectories.


d) Varner, F., Hodzic, T., & Rowley, S. (2013, August). Racial socialization and parental involvement as contributors to positive development among Black youth. Poster presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Honolulu, HI.

Complete List of Published Work in MyBibliography:
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/myncbi/1z9O8j5ZQkklX/bibliography/49753517/public/?sort=date&direction=descending

D. Research Support

**Ongoing Research Support**
None

**Completed Research Support**
Faculty Research Grant at Fordham University 2013-2014

*Racial Discrimination Concerns and African American Mothers’ Parenting Practices*

The goals of this project were to examine whether African American mothers’ concerns about the impact of racial discrimination on their children differed by the age of their children and identify links between mothers’ discrimination concerns and parenting practices.

Role: Principal Investigator

Responsibilities: To design a survey, recruit African American mother participants, analyze data, and draft manuscripts.