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An Evaluation of the Psychometric Properties of the Womanist Identity Attitudes Scale[1]

Bonnie Moradi,[2,5] Janice D. Yoder,[3] and Lynne L. Berendsen[4]

Responses from 101 African American/Black and 100 White women were used to examine the psychometric properties of the Womanist Identity Attitudes Scale (WIAS; Ossana, 1986; Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992). First, internal consistency reliabilities suggested the need for further development of 3 of the 4 WIAS subscales. Second, links between WIAS scores and (a) sexist, (b) hostile sexist attitudes toward women, (c) benevolently sexist attitudes toward women, and (d) egalitarian attitudes toward women's rights and roles provided mixed support for the convergent validity of the WIAS. Third, consistent with theoretical conceptualization, the intercorrelations among WIAS subscales were similar for African American/Black and White women. These intercorrelations, however, were not entirely consistent with the theorized developmental process of the womanist identity model. Finally, the structural validity of the WIAS was examined using confirmatory and exploratory factor-analytic procedures. Both sets of analyses challenged the fit of the theorized womanist identity development model with data produced by the WIAS.

KEY WORDS: racial identity; gender identity; psychometrics.

Contemporary theory (e.g., West & Fenstermaker, 1995) and practice (e.g., Constantine, 2002) point to the importance of understanding the intersections of multiple cultural identities within an individual's self-concept. After reviewing this burgeoning literature, Frable (1997) concluded that too little empirical work has successfully captured the theoretical complexities of identity development. Some of this breakdown exists because of the challenges involved in moving to psychometric measurement from theory, which stresses the fluidity of identities, their multidimensionality, and their connection to social context and sociohistorical cohort (Stewart, 2003). One attempt to operationalize identity theory is the Womanist Identity Attitudes Scale (WIAS; Ossana, 1986; Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992).

The womanist identity development model draws on theoretical conceptualizations of racial identity development (e.g., Cross, 1971; Helms, 1984) and the work of Black feminist writers (e.g., Walker, 1983), and is meant to be a model of gender-related identity development that is applicable to women across racial and ethnic groups (Ossana et al., 1992). Womanist identity development consists of four stages, or sets of attitudes, which outline a progression toward "abandonment of external definitions and adaptation of internal standards of womanhood" (Ossana et al., 1992, p. 70). Women in the first stage, Preencounter, conform to rigid societal values that tend to belittle women and privilege men and deny prejudice and discrimination against women. Contact with new information or experiences may result in movement into the second stage, Encounter, where Preencounter values are challenged. During the Encounter stage, women become more aware of sexism and

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[2] University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.
[3] University of Akron, Akron, Ohio.
[4] University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
[5] To whom correspondence should be addressed at Department of Psychology, University of Florida, P.O. Box 112250, Gainesville, Florida 32611-2250; e-mail: moradib@ufl.edu.

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identify more with womanhood. They also explore alternative ways to conceptualize the roles of women and men. The third stage, Immersion–Emersion, is characterized by two phases. During the second phase, women tend to idealize women and reject patriarchal definitions of womanhood. During the second phase, women search for positive definitions of womanhood and seek affiliation with other women. Finally, during the fourth stage, Internalization, women integrate a personally defined positive view of womanhood into their identity "without undue dependence on either sexist societal norms or the antithetical positions of the women's movement" (Carter & Parks, 1996, p. 74).

According to the womanist identity development model, healthy development is marked by a positive view of womanhood along with personal and ideological flexibility regarding one's role and identity as a woman (Carter & Parks, 1996; Ossana et al., 1992). Ossana and colleagues argued that womanist identity development differs from feminist identity development (Downing & Roush, 1985) in that the former does not require the adoption of a feminist political orientation or emphasize changing the role of women in relation to men. They further argued that "if incorporation of some form of feminist ideology occurs, it probably begins in the Immersion–Emersion stage of womanist identity development" (p. 403). Regarding the womanist identity development process, Ossana et al. (1992) argued that "the *process* (e.g., stage-wise progression) of self-definition among women is similar regardless of race, social class, political orientation, and so forth" (italics in original, p. 70).

The WIAS was developed to assess attitudes associated with the four stages outlined by the womanist identity development model; it consists of four intercorrelated and expectedly unidimensional subscales (Ossana, 1986). The WIAS has been used in a number of studies to examine the relationship between womanist identity attitudes and mental health and well-being, gender-related perceptions, and racial identity development attitudes.

With regard to mental health, Preencounter, Encounter, and Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated negatively whereas Internalization scores were correlated positively with self-esteem (Ossana et al., 1992; Poindexter-Cameron & Robinson, 1997). Similarly, Preencounter and Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated negatively with self-efficacy but positively with external locus of control (Letlaka-Rennert, Luswazi, Helms, & Zea, 1997). On the other hand, Internalization scores were correlated positively with self-efficacy (Letlaka-Rennert et al., 1997). Furthermore, Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated negatively whereas Internalization scores were correlated positively with life satisfaction (Constantine & Watt, 2002). Finally, Carter and Parks' canonical correlation analyses (Carter & Park, 1996) suggested relationships between Preencounter, Encounter, and Immersion–Emersion womanist identity attitudes and psychological symptoms for White women but not for African American/Black women.[6]

Relatively less research has been conducted on the relationship of womanist identity attitudes with racial identity development attitudes and gender-related constructs. Extant data suggest some positive relationships between parallel womanist and racial identity development attitudes for African American/Black women (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996; Poindexter-Cameron & Robinson, 1997) but not for White women (Parks et al., 1996).

Limited extant data also exist on the relationship between WIAS scores and views of women and women's rights and roles. Boisnier (2003) found positive correlations between parallel womanist and feminist identity development attitudes. Ossana et al. (1992) found that Encounter and Immersion–Emersion attitudes were correlated positively with perceptions of gender bias in the campus environment. Internalization attitudes were correlated negatively with such perceptions. The gap in examination of theorized relationships between womanist identity and gender-related attitudes is particularly notable given that womanist identity attitudes are characterized according to theory by varying degrees of egalitarianism and flexibility toward women's rights and roles, sexism, and positive/negative affect toward women.

In light of the potential usefulness of a measure to accompany the womanist identity development model and the use of the WIAS in extant research, it is surprising that so little is understood about the psychometric properties of the WIAS. The purpose of the present research was to contribute to this understanding through an examination of the psychometric properties of the WIAS. More specifically, we (a) examined internal consistency reliability for the WIAS

[6]We chose to use the terminology "African American/Black" to be inclusive of how different people prefer to self-identify. In addition we chose to use "White" rather than European American to include women who are typically categorized as White but are not of European American descent (e.g., women from Arab and middle-eastern countries).

subscales for a sample of African American/Black and White women separately and conjointly, (b) explored the correlation of WIAS scores to sexism and attitudes toward women's rights and roles (given the gap in the literature that we noted previously), (c) evaluated whether patterns of intercorrelations among WIAS scores are similar for African American/Black and White women, and (d) used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the fit of WIAS data to the factor structure indicated by the womanist identity model.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 201 women participated in this study. Approximately half of the sample identified as African American/Black ($n = 101$) and the remainder identified as White ($n = 100$). Participants ranged in age from 19 to 65 years, with a median age of 22 ($SD = 8.15$). Approximately 8% of the sample was not in college (eight African American/Black and one White woman). Of those who were college students, 33% identified as first-year students, 23% as sophomores, 21% as juniors, and 23% as seniors; this pattern was consistent across African American/Black and White women, $\chi^2(3) = 0.18$, $p = .98$. The personal income of African American/Black women exceeded that of White women such that, on the low end, only 28% of African American/Black women as compared to 49% of White women earned under $6,000 annually and, on the high end, 21% of African American/Black as compared to 6% of White women earned over $20,000 annually, $\chi^2(6) = 31.65$, $p < .001$. The differences in income were consistent with group differences in age and student status.

Instruments

Womanist Identity Attitudes Scale (WIAS)

The WIAS was developed and evaluated psychometrically with two samples of college women (Ossana, 1986). Item–total correlations were examined, and one item was eliminated from the WIAS on the basis of its low item–total correlation, which resulted in a total of 43 items.[7] Further, the Immersion and Emersion subscales in the original WIAS were combined on the basis of high intercorrelations between these subscales. Ossana et al. (1992) described the resulting version of the WIAS as a 43-item Likert-type scale designed to measure attitudes reflective of the four stages of womanist identity development (i.e., Preencounter, Encounter, Immersion–Emersion, Internalization). Items are rated on a 5-point scale that ranges from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). For each subscale, item ratings are averaged to yield a subscale score. Higher scores indicate greater agreement with the attitudes reflected by that subscale. A sample Preencounter item is "In general, I believe that men are superior to women." A sample Encounter item is "Sometimes I am proud of belonging to the female sex and sometimes I am ashamed of it." A sample Immersion–Emersion item is "Most men are insensitive." A sample Internalization item is "Being a member of the female sex is a source of pride to me."

Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS).

The AWS is a 15-item Likert-type scale that was developed by Spence and Helmreich (1978) to measure beliefs about women's rights, roles, and responsibilities. The original items for the AWS were developed on the basis of their face validity, but the final set of items was selected on the basis of their psychometric properties (Spence & Hahn, 1997). Participants indicate their agreement with items on a 4-point scale that ranges from *agree strongly* (1) to *disagree strongly* (4). Several items are reverse scored, and item ratings are summed to obtain an overall scale score that can range from 15 to 60; higher scores indicate more flexible and egalitarian attitudes toward the rights, roles, and responsibilities of women.

The AWS is the most commonly used measure of attitudes toward women's rights and roles (Beere, 1990; McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Extensive evidence of reliability and validity has been reported in the literature for the AWS. factor-analytic studies have supported a unidimensional structure for the AWS, and internal consistency reliability estimates are generally in the .80s (Spence & Hahn, 1997). High scores on the

[7]We obtained a 55-item version of the WIAS that subsumed the 43-item version and had several additional items. We found no published study that used the full 55-item version of the scale that we obtained. Thus, we scored the WIAS according to the scoring criteria for the 43-item version of the instrument. Given the fact that we wanted to provide a psychometric evaluation of the WIAS, it seemed most sensible to evaluate the version that has been used in prior research.

AWS have been linked with a range of constructs, including identity achievement (Stein & Weston, 1982), low levels of victim blaming and high levels of perpetrator blaming in reaction to sexual harassment scenarios (Malovich & Stake, 1990), and egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles (King & King, 1997). A sample AWS item is "A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage." In the current study, the AWS had internal consistency reliability scores of .77, .75, and .78 for the total sample, African American/Black participants, and White participants, respectively.

Modern Sexism (MS)

The MS scale (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995) was modeled after the Modern Racism scale (McConahay, 1986) to measure subtle and covert sexist attitudes. It is an 8-item Likert-type scale that measures denial of the existence of discrimination against women, resentment of complaints about discrimination against women, and resentment of special "favors" for women (Swim & Cohen, 1997). Items are rated on a 5-point scale that ranges from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). Several items are reverse scored, and item ratings are averaged to yield an overall scale score; higher scores indicate more sexist attitudes.

Swim and Cohen (1997) summarized some of the psychometric data available for the MS. They reported that (a) CFAs suggested that the MS measures a construct distinct from that measured by the AWS and "old-fashioned" sexism, (b) internal consistency reliability estimates are generally in the .80s, and (c) MS scores provides unique prediction of perceptions of sexual harassment. A sample MS item is "Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination." In this study, the MS had internal consistency reliabilities of .73, .57, and .83 for the total sample, African American/Black participants, and White participants, respectively.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)

The ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1997) is a 22-item Likert-type self-report measure that assesses hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes. The Hostile subscale measures dominative paternalism and hostility toward women. It includes attitudes that justify men's power, as well as the exploitation, objectification, and derogation of women. The Benevolent subscale measures protective paternalism and sexist idealization of women. It includes items that view men as dependent on women and romanticize men's sexual relationships with women. Glick and Fiske (1997) pointed out that although both hostile and benevolent attitudes presume a patriarchal notion of power structures, gender differentiation, and sexuality, benevolent attitudes may be experienced as subjectively positive and reflect "a kinder and gentler justification of male domination" (p. 121). ASI items are rated on a 5-point scale that ranges from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). Of the 22 items of the 1997 version, several are reverse scored; half the items are averaged to yield a Hostile subscale score and the remaining half are averaged to yield a Benevolent subscale score. Higher scores indicate greater levels of hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes toward women.

Glick and Fiske (1997) reported that factor analysis results supported a two-factor structure for the ASI that corresponds to the Hostile and Benevolent subscales. Further, they reported that internal consistency reliability estimates are generally in the .80s and .90s for the two subscales. They also reported data on the link between the ASI scales and other measures of attitudes toward women. For example, Hostility scores correlated positively with rape myth acceptance when Benevolent scores were controlled (the reverse was not found). Also, Hostility scores correlated positively with old-fashioned sexism when Benevolent scores were controlled, and Benevolent scores correlated positively with old-fashioned sexism when Hostile scores were controlled. Further, cross-cultural data indicated that across 18 countries, on average, an index of women's (relative to men's) economic and political participation was correlated positively with Hostile and Benevolent sexist attitudes (Glick et al., 2000). A sample Hostile item is "There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances" (this item is reverse scored). A sample Benevolent item is "No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman." In the current study, internal consistency reliabilities for Hostile and Benevolent subscales both were .80 for the total sample. For African American/Black participants these estimates were .73 for Hostile and .64 for Benevolent subscales. For White participants internal consistency reliability estimates for both subscales were .85.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through psychology courses at two large midwestern universities, an African American/Black sorority, acquaintances of the researchers, and the general university communities. Data were collected by two White women doctoral students and three African American/Black undergraduate psychology students (two women and one man). All experimenters recruited participants of their own race. Respondents enrolled in psychology courses received extra course credit, and other respondents received $5 for their participation. Participants completed the surveys individually or in small groups, and the order of instruments in the survey packets was counterbalanced. All participants completed the WIAS and the AWS, but only a subset of 68 African American/Black and 58 White women completed the MS Scale and the ASI. These two instruments were added in order to assess more subtle sexist attitudes than those assessed by the AWS.

RESULTS

Internal Consistency Reliability of WIAS Subscales

Table I summarizes coefficient alpha and item–total correlations for the WIAS subscales. For the total sample, as well as for African American/Black and White women separately, internal consistency reliability estimates were above .70 for Immersion–Emersion (which also has approximately twice as many items as the other subscales). However, the internal consistency reliability estimates for the remaining three subscales were below this generally recommended cutoff. For the total sample, as well as for African American/Black and White women separately, item–total correlations were quite low, and ranged from −.06 to .53 for the total sample, −.16 to .50 for African American/Black women, and .04 to .58 for White women. In each case, the lowest item–total correlation was found in the Encounter subscale and the highest was found in the Immersion–Emersion subscale. Perhaps most problematic were several negative item–total correlations. For the total sample and for African American/Black women, the item "Maybe I can learn something from women" had a negative item–total correlation with other Encounter items. Further, for African American/Black women, the item "Men are difficult to understand" had a negative item–total correlation with other Encounter items, and the item "I do not think I should feel positively about people just because they belong to the same sexual group as I do" had a negative item–total correlation with other Internalization items. These data suggest that, with the exception of the Immersion–Emersion subscale, WIAS subscales do not consist of homogenous sets of items. Further, these item level analyses indicated that removal of especially problematic items would not improve the internal consistency reliability of any of the subscales in the present sample.

Convergent Validity: Correlations With Attitudes Toward Women

As indicated in Table II, all of the correlations between Preencounter and attitudes toward women scores were as expected. Overall and within racial/ethnic groups, Preencounter scores were correlated negatively with flexible attitudes toward the rights and roles of women (AWS scores) and positively with sexist (MS scores) and hostile and benevolently sexist (ASI scores) attitudes toward women. For the most part, Encounter attitudes were not correlated with any of the measures of attitudes toward women. Contrary to the theory's expectation that incorporation of feminist ideology occurs during Immersion–Emersion, for the total sample and both racial/ethnic groups, Immersion–Emersion

Table I. Internal Consistency Reliability of WIAS Subscales for African American/Black and White Women

	Total sample		African American/Black		White	
WIAS subscale	α	Corrected item–total correlation range (*Mdn*)	α	Corrected item–total correlation range (*Mdn*)	α	Corrected item–total correlation range (*Mdn*)
Preencounter	.44	.07 to .37 (.21)	.38	.07 to .28 (.16)	.51	.06 to .51 (.24)
Encounter	.31	−.06 to .27 (.11)	.29	−.16 to .29 (.14)	.34	.04 to .35 (.11)
Immersion–Emersion	.76	.19 to .53 (.37)	.73	.17 to .50 (.32)	.80	.11 to .58 (.40)
Internalization	.54	.02 to .35 (.25)	.48	−.05 to .36 (.23)	.60	.10 to .52 (.25)

Notes. $N = 101$ for African American/Black women. $N = 100$ for White women.

Table II. Summary Statistics and Pearson Correlations Among Womanist Identity Attitudes and Attitudes Toward Women

Instrument	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	α	Range	Mean	*SD*
Womanist identity attitudes											
1. Preencounter									1–5	2.16	0.43
										2.21	**0.44**
										2.12	*0.42*
2. Encounter	.24***								1–5	2.91	0.43
	.31**									**2.91**	**0.44**
	.17									*2.91*	*0.42*
3. Immersion–Emersion	.30***	.52***							1–5	2.34	0.47
	.32**	**.52*****								**2.39**	**0.46**
	*.27***	*.53****								*2.30*	*0.48*
4. Internalization	−.20**	−.03	−.22**						1–5	4.19	0.36
	−.11	**.03**	**−.09**							**4.14**	**0.36**
	*−.29***	*−.11*	*−.34****							*4.23*	*0.35*
Attitudes toward women											
5. Attitudes Toward Women	−.42***	−.07	−.13	.27***				.77	15–60	50.36	5.95
Scale *(higher scores =*	**−.33*****	**−.11**	**−.15**	**.20***				**.75**		**49.35**	**6.21**
greater egalitarianism)	*−.51****	*−.03*	*−.08*	*.32***				*.78*		*51.37*	*5.52*
6. Modern Sexism	.30***	−.06	−.09	−.07	−.26**			.73	1–5	1.66	0.60
(higher scores =	**.25***	**.04**	**−.01**	**−.05**	**−.07**			**.57**		**1.52**	**0.51**
greater sexism)	*.43***	*−.18*	*−.12*	*−.19*	*−.57****			*.83*		*1.82*	*0.67*
7. Ambivalent Sexism Inventory	.37***	.05	−.03	.04	−.37***	.37***		.80	1–5	1.88	0.64
–Hostile *(higher scores =*	**.34****	**.17**	**.15**	**.14**	**−.27***	**.14**		**.73**		**1.88**	**0.59**
greater hostility)	*.41***	*−.10*	*−.20*	*−.06*	*−.50****	*.58****		*.85*		*1.87*	*.70*
8. Ambivalent Sexism Inventory	.38***	.18*	.25**	−.14	−.26**	.02	.29**	.80	1–5	2.37	0.70
–Benevolent *(higher scores =*	**.33****	**.21**	**.20**	**−.04**	**−.16**	**−.08**	**.08**	**.64**		**2.61**	**0.56**
greater benevolence)	*.37***	*.24*	*.26**	*−.12*	*−.24*	*.24*	*.48****	*.85*		*2.10*	*0.75*

Notes. *N*s range from 117 to 201 for the total sample, 62 to 101 for African American/Black women, and from 55 to 100 for White women. The top value reflects the correlation coefficient for the total sample. The second number in bold is the correlation coefficient for African American/Black women. The third number in italic is the correlation coefficient for White women.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

scores were not significantly correlated with egalitarian attitudes toward the rights and roles of women. Further, also inconsistent with theory, for the total sample and for White women, Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated positively with benevolently sexist attitudes toward women. Finally, consistent with theory, both overall and within racial/ethnic groups, Internalization scores were correlated positively with egalitarian and flexible attitudes toward women's rights and roles but were not correlated with sexist, hostile, or benevolent attitudes toward women.

Equality of Interrelations Among WIAS Scores for African American/Black and White Women

To examine whether the interrelations among WIAS scores are similar across racial/ethnic groups, we followed Green's procedure for conducting a multivariate test of equality of covariance matrices (Green, 1992). This procedure provides an omnibus test of the equality of interrelations among a set of variables across samples. In this procedure, the fit of a model of equal interrelations between two covariance (or correlation) matrices is examined and a good fit indicates that the underlying links among the variables of interest are similar across groups (i.e., WIAS subscale scores are correlated similarly to one another for African American/Black and White women). We used LISREL 8.50 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996) to conduct the analysis, with the covariance matrix of WIAS subscale scores (created by PRELIS 2.50, which is part of the LISREL 8.50 package) as input. The χ^2 statistic can be distorted by sample size; thus numerous scholars have recommended use of additional fit indices (Kelloway, 1998; Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988; Ullman, 1996). As suggested by Green, in addition to the χ^2 goodness-of-fit test, we used the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) to examine the equality of WIAS subscale score interrelations across African American/Black and White women in our sample. Values for the GFI will generally fall between 0 and 1 but may be negative; values for the TLI have a lower bound of 0 but may be greater than 1; and values for the CFI are constrained to fall between 0 and 1

(Green, 1992; Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Kelloway, 1998; Marsh et al., 1988). For the χ^2 test, a nonsignificant χ^2 value, and for the remaining fit indices, values roughly in the .90s suggest that a model of equal interrelations provides a good fit to the data (Green, 1992). Whether African American/Black or White participants' covariance matrices were entered first, the χ^2 value was not significant, $\chi^2(10) = 7.13$, $p = .71$, and the values for the GFI, TLI, and CFI were .98, 1.03, and 1.00, respectively, which indicated a similar pattern of interrelations among WIAS scores between the two groups.

We also explored whether there was any difference in the strength of attitudes reflected in any of the WIAS subscales between African American/Black and White women. To do so, we conducted 4 one-way ANOVAs that compared African American/Black and White women's mean scores for each of the four WIAS subscales. We found no significant differences in means on any of the WIAS subscales between African American/Black and White women.

Intercorrelations Among WIAS Subscale Scores

Visual inspection of the WIAS intercorrelations for African American/Black and White women reported in Table II reveals a few differences (e.g., the link between Encounter and Preencounter was significant and positive for African American/Black women but not significant for White women). The omnibus test of the equality of interrelations described above, however, indicated that, overall, the interrelations among the WIAS subscales for African American/Black and White women were not significantly different from one another.

Some of the links among WIAS scores (see Table II) were consistent with the theorized womanist identity development process. For the total sample and for White women, Preencounter scores were correlated negatively with Internalization scores. Also, consistent with the theorized womanist identity development process, for the total sample and both subsamples, Encounter scores were correlated positively with developmentally adjacent Immersion–Emersion scores but were not correlated with Internalization scores. The positive link between Preencounter and Immersion–Emersion in the total sample and both subsample analyses, however, was surprising given that the theorized emergence of "feminist" attitudes in Immersion–Emersion would be expected to be in direct conflict with the acceptance of traditional gender hierarchies that is characteristic of the Preencounter stage. Also, inconsistent with the theorized womanist identity development process, Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated negatively with Internalization scores for the total sample and for White women. Thus, the positive correlation between Immersion–Emersion and Preencounter scores (for the total sample and for African American/Black women) and the negative correlation between Immersion–Emersion and Internalization scores (for the total sample and for White women) are inconsistent with the notion that the WIAS captures the developmental process proposed by the womanist identity development model.

Structural Validity

Several researchers have found that the value of GFIs tends to decrease as the number of indicators per factor (i.e., *p/f* ratio) in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) increases (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984; Ding, Velicer, & Harlow, 1995; Marsh, Hau, Balla, & Grayson, 1998; Williams & Holahan, 1994). Researchers use various parceling strategies (i.e., grouping several items into one indicator) to reduce *p/f* ratios when conducting CFAs (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999). Among these strategies are (a) random parceling, which involves grouping items together at random; (b) rational parceling, which involves grouping together items that are most similar in content; and (c) combining items with the highest and the lowest item–total correlations to balance the influence of the underlying factor across parcels. We conducted three separate CFAs using each of these parceling strategies. We matched the *p/f* ratios across the three analyses to eliminate the possibility that differences in fit would result from differences in *p/f* ratios across the three analyses. For each analysis, we created three parcels for Preencounter, Encounter, and Internalization and four parcels for Immersion–Emersion (this subscale had substantially more items than the other subscales). Results across the three analyses were very similar; thus, to avoid redundancy, we only report results of the high–low parceling strategy, which yielded a slightly better fit than the other parceling strategies.

Before conducting this analysis, we wanted to examine whether data from African American/Black and White women should be combined for analysis. Given that parcels were to be used as the indicators for the factors, we followed Green's procedure for conducting a multivariate test of the equality of parcel

covariance matrices for African American/Black and White participants (Green, 1992). As described previously, fit of a model of equal covariance (or correlation) matrices suggests that the underlying links among the variables of interest are similar across groups (i.e., parcels are correlated similarly to one another for African American/Black and White women) and that combining two covariance matrices is appropriate. We used LISREL 8.50 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996) to conduct the analysis, with the covariance matrix of parcel scores (created by PRELIS 2.50, which is part of the LISREL 8.50 package) as input. Whether African American/Black or White participants' covariance matrix was entered first, GFIs suggested a similar pattern of interrelations among parcel scores between the two groups. Because of the distortion of the χ^2 statistic by sample size we examined additional fit indices recommended by Green (1992). When African American/Black participants' covariance matrix was entered first, the χ^2 value was significant, $\chi^2(91) = 113.98$, $p = .05$, but the values for the GFI, TLI, and CFI were .94, .92, and .95, respectively. When White participants' covariance matrix was entered first, the χ^2 value again was significant, $\chi^2(91) = 113.98$, $p = .05$, but the values for the GFI, TLI, and CFI were .90, .92, and .95, respectively. These fit indices indicated that a model of equal covariances provided a good fit to the data. Thus, we combined data from African American/Black and White women for the CFA.

We used LISREL 8.50 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996) to conduct the CFA and PRELIS 2.50 to compute the parcel covariance matrix used as input. Bentler (1993) recommended that a sufficient sample size for conducting a CFA consisted of five cases per estimated parameter (Bentler, 1993). We estimated a total of 32 parameters (6 covariances among latent variables/subscales, 13 parcel loadings, and 13 error terms), which resulted in a minimum required sample size of 160. Thus, our total sample size of 201 was sufficient to conduct the CFA.

We set the variances of the latent variables to 1.0 and freely estimated paths from the latent variables to corresponding item parcels and intercorrelations among the latent variables. As noted previously, the χ^2 statistic can be distorted by sample size; thus numerous scholars have recommended use of additional fit indices (Kelloway, 1998; Marsh et al., 1988; Ullman, 1996). Following these recommendations, we examined values for the χ^2 to *df* ratio, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; also known as the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Rough guidelines for fit index values indicative of a well-fitting model are a χ^2 to *df* ratio $\leq$2, GFI, AGFI, CFI, and NNFI values $\geq$.90, RMSEA values $\leq$.08, and SRMR values $\leq$.05 (Ullman, 1996). For the model using high–low parceling strategy, only the GFI suggested a good fit (GFI = .90); the remaining fit index values approached, but did not reach, acceptable cutoffs for a good fit, $\chi^2/df = 2.49$, AGFI = .84, NNFI = .73, CFI = .80, RMSEA = .086, SRMR = .090.

Given the mixed support for the fit of the WIAS data to the proposed womanist identity development model, we followed the CFA with a series of exploratory factor analyses to illuminate further the underlying structure of the WIAS. Following Tabachnick and Fidell's recommendation (1996), we conducted a principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation to identify the number of factors to be extracted and followed this with a principal axis factor analysis (PAF) to extract and rotate the identified number of factors. We used the following criteria to determine the number of factors to be extracted and rotated: (a) eigenvalues greater than 1.0; (b) Cattell's scree test; (c) percentage of variance accounted for by each factor; and (d) interpretability of the solution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996; Tinsley & Tinsely, 1987). The PCA yielded 14 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The scree test indicated a substantial eigenvalue discontinuity between three and four factors. Further, factors beyond the third factor each accounted for less than 5% of the variance. On the basis of these findings we extracted three factors. We examined an oblique and an orthogonal rotation but decided to interpret the orthogonal rotation because the two solutions were very similar and factor intercorrelations were minimal (i.e., 0–.23). The three-factor orthogonal solution accounted for 22% of the variance in the data. Factor loadings for this solution are presented in Table III.

The first factor accounted for approximately 9% of variance in the data and reflected ambivalence toward and degradation of women combined with viewing men as superior. Items that loaded on this factor included "I limit myself to male activities," "Sometimes I am proud of belonging to the female sex and sometimes I am ashamed of it," and "In general, women have not contributed much to American society." All Preencounter items with substantial loadings loaded on this factor. Items from each of the other three WIAS subscales also loaded on this

Table III. Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis of WIAS Items

Items	Intended subscale	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
I limit myself to male activities	Pre	.50		
Sometimes I am embarrassed to be the sex I am	Pre	.50		
I feel like I am betraying my sex when I take advantage of the opportunities available to me in the male world	Im-Em	.50		
Sometimes I am proud of belonging to the female sex and sometimes I am ashamed of it	Enc	.50		
Both sexual groups have some good people and some bad people	Int	−.50		
In general, women have not contributed much to American society	Pre	.48		
I feel unable to involve myself in men's activities, and I am increasing my involvement in activities involving women	Enc	.47	.42	
Being a member of the female sex is a source of pride to me	Int	−.46		.37
I limit myself to activities involving women	Im-Em	.45		
I'm not sure how I feel about myself	Im-Em	.42	.40	
I feel anxious about some of the things I feel about women	Im-Em	.41		
Women should learn to think and act like men	Pre	.37		
Women and men have much to learn from each other	Int	−.37		
People, regardless of their sex, have strengths and limitations	Int	−.37		
I enjoy being around people regardless of their sex	Int	−.34		
In general, I believe that men are superior to women	Pre	.34		
Maybe I can learn something from women	Enc	−.33		
The burden of living up to society's expectations of women is sometimes more than I can bear	Im-Em	.31		
Sometimes I wonder how much of myself I should give up for the sake of helping minorities	Im-Em	.30		
I don't know whether being a woman is an asset or a deficit	Enc			
I would have accomplished more in this life if I had been born a man	Im-Em			
Sometimes I think men are superior and sometimes I think they're inferior to women	Enc			
I do not think I should feel positively about people just because they belong to the same sexual group as I do	Int			
Men are more attractive than women	Pre			
I am comfortable wherever I am	Int			
I feel more comfortable being around men than I do being around women	Pre			
I want to know more about the female culture	Enc		.67	
I am determined to find out more about the female sex	Enc		.65	
My most important goal in life is to fight the oppression of women	Im-Em		.47	
I wonder if I should feel a kinship with all minority group people	Im-Em		.46	
I find myself replacing old friends with new ones who share my beliefs about women	Im-Em		.40	
I believe that being a woman has caused me to have many strengths	Int		.35	
I find that I function better when I am able to view men as individuals	Int		.31	
Thinking about my values and beliefs takes up a lot of my time	Im-Em			
Most men are untrustworthy	Im-Em			.73
American society would be better off if it were based on the cultural values of women	Im-Em		.36	.60
I reject all male values	Im-Em			.59
Most men are insensitive	Im-Em			.50
Men have some customs I enjoy	Int			−.33
I think women and men differ from each other in some ways, but neither group is superior	Int			−.33
Men are difficult to understand	Enc			.30
When I think about how men have treated women, I feel an overwhelming anger	Im-Em			
Women should not blame men for all their social problems	Pre			

Note. Factor loadings ≤|.30| have been omitted from this table. Pre, Preencounter; Enc, Encounter; Im-Em, Immersion–Emersion; Int, Internalization.

factor; Internalization items loaded negatively. The second factor accounted for an additional 6% of variance in the data and included Encounter, Immersion–Emersion, and Internalization items that reflected positive regard toward women and women's culture and a commitment to fighting oppression against women. Items that loaded on this factor included "I want to know more about the female culture," "My most important goal in life is to fight the oppression of women," and "I believe that being a woman has caused me to have many strengths." Finally, the third factor accounted for 6% of variance in the data and included Immersion–Emersion, Encounter, and negatively loaded Internalization items that reflected devaluing men. Items that loaded on this factor included "Most men are untrustworthy," "I reject all male values," and "Most men are insensitive."

In addition, we explored a four-factor solution given the theorized structure of the WIAS and found that two factors closely resembled the second and third factors of the three-factor solution (i.e., positive regard toward women, devaluation of men). The other two factors in this solution reflected a split of the first factor from the three-factor solution. These factors reflected (a) degradation of women and endorsement of gender role separation and (b) confusion and ambivalence about being a woman.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study identify strengths as well as weaknesses in the psychometric properties of the WIAS, which raise some questions about the use of the WIAS as it currently exists in future research and practice. Our findings question the internal consistency reliability of the WIAS subscales, support the theorized parallels in the interrelations among African American/Black and White women's WIAS scores, raise concerns about the scale's capacity to capture the proposed developmental process of the womanist identity development model, offer mixed evidence about the scale's convergent validity with established measures of egalitarianism and sexism, and challenge the scale's adherence to the structure of the model it was designed to operationalize.

Internal Consistency Reliability

For White women, the WIAS internal consistency reliability estimates found in this study were similar to, but slightly lower than, those reported by Ossana et al. (1992) and Carter and Parks (1996). Internal consistency reliability estimates for all subscales except Immersion–Emersion were below .70 for the total sample and the two subsamples. An interesting trend was that WIAS internal consistency reliabilities were slightly lower for African American/Black women than for White women. The fact that Ossana et al. as well as Carter and Parks' samples included mostly White women may explain in part why the current internal consistency reliability estimates for the total sample and for African American/Black women were slightly lower than those reported in the aforementioned studies. Consistent with previous findings, in our sample the Encounter subscale yielded the lowest internal consistency reliability.

Item–total correlations and the factor analysis results raise serious questions regarding the homogeneity of Encounter items. The CFA results indicate that across the three parceling strategies, most Encounter parcel loadings were not significant and/or low. This is consistent with the exploratory factor analysis results that showed that Encounter items loaded on each of the three different factors. The heterogeneity of the Encounter items may accurately reflect the transitional and questioning nature of Encounter attitudes. Indeed, a review of Encounter items indicates that several of these items attempt to measure the presence of uncertain or conflicting feelings about being a woman (e.g., "*Maybe* I can learn something from women" [emphasis added]; "Sometimes I am proud of belonging to the female sex and sometimes I am ashamed of it"). Although confusion and flux may be cornerstones of Encounter, the measurement of such confusion in an internally consistent manner with one subscale may not be optimal. The development of Encounter subscales that measure separately various aspects of the Encounter stage may be one approach to improving measurement of Encounter attitudes.

The development of new items also may be appropriate for improving the other WIAS subscales. Our item-level analyses indicate that removal of items would not improve the internal consistency of any of the WIAS subscales. Further, the complexity of the womanist identity development stages suggests that attitudes reflective of each stage may be better conceptualized as multidimensional rather than unidimensional. Such an approach would require revisiting womanist identity development theory to identify various dimensions of each womanist identity stage and then develop sets of internally consistent items

that capture each dimension of each stage. Taken together, internal consistency reliability data from this study and those reported in previous studies (Carter & Parks, 1996; Constantine & Watt, 2002; Letlaka-Rennert et al., 1997; Ossana et al., 1992) suggest that the WIAS subscales, as they currently exist, may provide underpredictions or unstable predictions of correlations between womanist identity attitudes and other variables of interest. This may be particularly problematic for studies with African American/Black women, given the slightly lower WIAS internal consistency reliability estimates for this group.

Convergent Validity

We examined the theorized correlations between WIAS scores and attitudes toward women and women's rights and roles. These analyses, however, yielded mixed support for the convergent validity of the WIAS. For the total sample and both subsamples, evidence to support the convergent validity of the Preencounter subscale was found. Preencounter scores were correlated negatively with egalitarian attitudes toward the rights and roles of women and positively to sexist, hostile, and benevolently sexist attitudes toward women. Further, the finding that egalitarian and flexible attitudes toward the rights and roles of women were correlated with Internalization scores for the total sample and both subsamples supports the convergent validity of the Internalization subscale. However, several nonsignificant correlations and some significant but unexpected correlations raise concern regarding the convergent validity of some of the WIAS subscales.

The lack of negative correlations between Internalization attitudes and sexist, hostile, and benevolently sexist attitudes toward women seems inconsistent with the notion that internalization is characterized by a positive definition of womanhood. It is difficult, however, to interpret this lack of significant findings strictly as a challenge to convergent validity. The low internal consistency reliability of the Internalization subscale and its lack of cohesion as demonstrated in the exploratory factor analysis attenuate potential links between this subscale and the criterion variables examined in this study. For African American/Black participants, the low internal consistency reliabilities for the MS and Benevolent scales may have further attenuated links between these scales and WIAS scores. In most cases, however, nonsignificant findings involving MS and Benevolent scales for African American/Black participants corresponded with nonsignificant findings for White women (for whom these scales had acceptable internal consistency reliabilities).

Perhaps the most surprising finding was that Immersion–Emersion scores were not correlated with egalitarian attitudes toward the rights and roles of women for the total sample and both subsamples, and correlated positively with benevolent sexist attitudes toward women for the total sample and for White women (the nonsignificant Pearson correlation for African American/Black women was of comparable magnitude). These findings, and the finding that Preencounter and Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated positively, are in direct conflict with the conceptualization of Immersion–Emersion as characterized by a rejection of patriarchal definitions of womanhood. The positive correlation between Immersion–Emersion and benevolent sexist attitudes toward women, along with the exploratory factor analysis results that indicate that some Immersion–Emersion items loaded positively on a factor that reflects devaluation of men, suggests that this scale measures idealization of women and hostility toward men. Further, the type of idealization of women measured by Immersion–Emersion may actually be consistent with patriarchal definitions of womanhood (i.e., what Glick and Fiske, 1997, defined as benevolent sexist attitudes). For example, the exploratory factor analysis results indicated that some of the Immersion–Emersion items loaded on a factor that reflects endorsement of traditional gender role hierarchies. It seems that women who endorsed the item "I limit myself to activities involving women" may have been advocating the notion of separate gender roles rather than the woman-centeredness that this item was intended to assess. Items are needed to capture better the essence of the Immersion–Emersion stage, which Ossana et al. (1992) described as "rejection of male-supremacist definitions of womanhood" (p. 403) rather than rejection of men and which involves the "search for positive, self-affirming definitions of womanhood" (p. 403) rather than uncritical idealization of women.

Process of Womanist Identity

In terms of the WIAS's ability to capture the theorized process of womanist identity development, the good news found is that interrelations among WIAS scores were similar for African American/Black and

White women. This is consistent with (although not a direct test of) the notion that the process of womanist identity development is similar across racial/ethnic groups. The bad news, however, is that the intercorrelations among the WIAS scores were not always consistent with the theorized underlying developmental process. In other words, correlations between subscales that measure attitudes reflective of adjacent stages of womanist identity development were not always as theorized. For example, the notion that Internalization follows Immersion–Emersion suggests that Immersion–Emersion scores should be correlated more strongly and positively with Internalization scores than to Preencounter scores, which reflect a conceptually opposite and developmentally nonadjacent stage. The current data, however, indicated that Immersion–Emersion scores were correlated positively with Preencounter scores (for the total sample and both subsamples) and were correlated negatively (for the total sample and White women) or not significantly correlated (for African American/Black women) with Internalization scores. The positive correlation between Preencounter and Immersion–Emersion scores also seems inconsistent with the notion that a qualitative shift in worldview and personal identity occurs during Encounter. Such a shift suggests that Preencounter should be correlated negatively with Immersion–Emersion scores. Although the current correlational data raise some questions about the WIAS's ability to capture a developmental process, we did not specifically examine the developmental nature of the womanist identity model. Thus, longitudinal and cross-sectional studies that examine the process of womanist identity development are needed to address questions regarding the developmental nature of the womanist identity model.

Structural Validity

The current results raise some questions about the structural validity of the WIAS as a measure of the womanist identity development model. Across the three different parceling strategies used in this study, the CFAs suggested that the intended model did not provide a good fit with the data. Further, the exploratory factor analysis results suggested three underlying factors that were somewhat different from the set of womanist identity development attitudes that the WIAS is intended to measure. Each factor was composed of a mix of items from the WIAS subscales, and a number of items did not load substantially on any factor. Rather than reflecting the four intended WIAS attitudes, WIAS items seemed to measure three sets of attitudes that can be described most simply as traditional gender-role ideology, pro-woman attitudes, and anti-man attitudes. This alternative underlying structure may explain the low internal consistency reliabilities and item–total correlations for the WIAS subscales as they are currently organized. However, this structure does not capture the complexity of attitudes reflected in the womanist identity development model and points to the need for developing new items that better capture the full range of womanist identity development attitudes.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research and Practice

One important limitation of this study was its lack of examination of racial/ethnic groups beyond African American/Black and White women. The womanist identity model is supposed to be applicable to all women. Therefore, an examination of the psychometric properties of the WIAS for women of other racial/ethnic groups is needed. A related question not addressed in this study is whether the womanist identity development model is applicable to women of various socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and religious affiliation/orientation. Each of these dimensions of identity may alter a woman's sense of self and identity. Thus, studies are needed to examine conjointly the range of identities that reflect the reality of women's lives (Bowman et al., 2001; Moradi, Subich, & Phillips, 2002a, 2002b; Reynolds & Pope, 1991). Further, theory and measurement of identity development ought to attend to the fact that many people exist at the intersections of various identities (Collins, 1991). Clearly, many more steps are needed to build the foundation for an identity development paradigm that addresses the multidimensionality of the people it attempts to describe.

The current data point to the need to improve the WIAS as a measure of womanist identity development. To this end, further clarification and description of the womanist identity development model may be very useful. Existing descriptions of the model (e.g., Carter & Parks, 1996; Ossana et al., 1992) are somewhat brief and cursory. More extensive descriptions of the development of the model and its proposed stages may facilitate instrument refinement and further illuminate the potential utility of the model for

research and practice. Such work is especially important given that the womanist identity development model may be a useful tool for describing the process of gender identity development, especially for Women of Color who may embrace the notion of womanism more readily than the notion of feminism (Bowman et al., 2001; Garth, 1994). An examination of the comparative utility and fit of the womanist identity development model and other models of gender-related identity development for women of various backgrounds seems to be an important area for future research.

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