10th Annual Advancing Mississippi Conference

The Impact of Perceived Racism on Academic Persistence for African American Male College Students: The Role of Racial Identity and Coping Strategies

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Analysis of Social Problem

- **Racism's Impact**
  - Rural AA males face social isolation, lack of access to resources, and harmful stereotypes
  - They are portrayed negatively as dysfunctional,
  - Perceived racism and subjective experiences
  - Many peer-reviewed articles show there is a relationship between racism and low GPA scores (Del Toro et al., 2022; Banks & Dohy, 2019).

- **Academic Achievement**
  - The difficulties that African-American males face in higher education and K-12 schools are multifaceted (Del Toro et al., 2022, p. 10).

- **Academic Achievement among other races**
  - Only 35.8% of AA males who began college in 2015 at a four-year institution graduated in 150%. Graduation rates differ significantly among AA counterparts.

- **Academic Achievement in Rural Areas**
  - Implicit and explicit educator bias, feelings of loneliness, overt racism, and feelings of not belonging lead to higher dropout rates (Banks & Dohy, 2019).

- **Academic Achievement's future among African American (AA)**
  - Failure to correct these issues will influence the dynamics of universities,

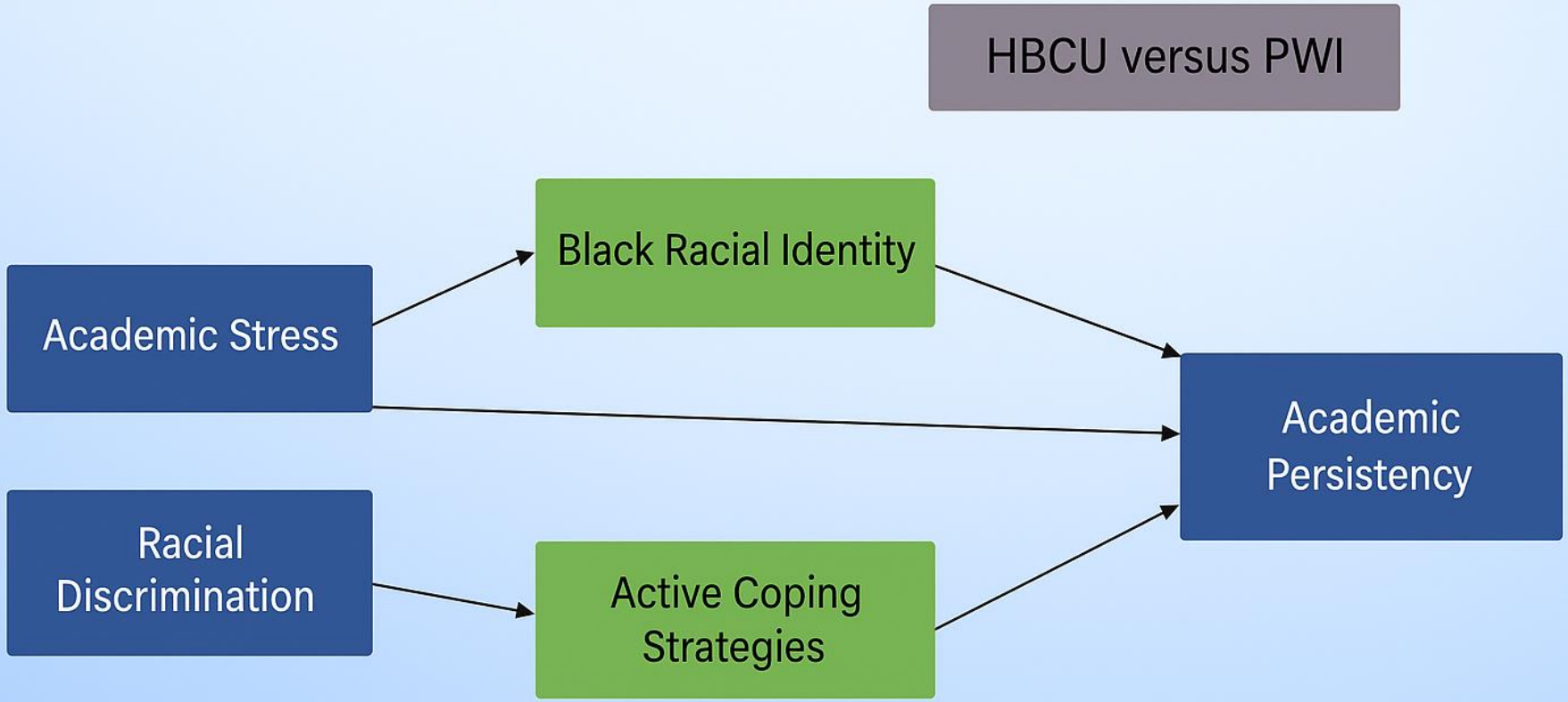
Purpose of the Study

1. The research will explore how perceived racism and discrimination affect collegiate academic persistence among African American males in the Delta.
2. The study will highlight the importance of examining coping strategies and ethnic identity for mediating the relationship between discrimination and academic outcomes.
3. The study will also highlight how the type of institution (i.e., HBCU and PWI) affects perceived racism and academic persistence.

Theoretical Framework

- **Critical Race Theory (Bell)**
  - Used to explore how race and racism intersect with the laws, policies, and social structures
- **Afrocentric Paradigm (Asante)**
  - Applicable to African American males understanding their cultural identity and heritage
  - Used to explain the link between a person's well-being considering spiritual and emotional components while providing a lens through which one can study coping
- **Stress Coping Model (Lazarus)**
  - It is characterized by stress being a transaction between the person and the aspect of their situation.
  - Stress and anxiety affect an AA's ability to perform by questioning their drive and causing a distraction to them

FW Proposed Stress-Coping-Outcome Model



Research Questions and Hypotheses

Q1: What is the impact of academic stress and racial discrimination on the academic achievement of male African American college students?

- **H1: Racial discrimination negatively affects academic achievement.**
- **H2:Academic stress negatively impacts academic achievement.**
- **H3:Academic stress is positively related to racial discrimination.**

Q2: How do racial identity and coping strategies influence the relationship between racial discrimination and academic outcomes?

- **H4: Racial identity mediates the relationship between discrimination and academic outcomes.**
- **H5: Active coping strategies mediate the impact of discrimination on academic outcomes.**

Q3: How do these variables differ between students at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)?

- **H6: Students at PWIs face more racial discrimination than those at HBCUs.**
- **H7: PWI students have more persistent degree completion plans than HBCU students.**
- **H8:HBCU students possess a stronger racial identity than those at PWIs.**
- **H9: HBCU students use more active coping strategies against discrimination than PWI students.**

Research Design
A Quantitative Cross-Sectional Correlational Survey

- ***Strengths:***
  - Efficiency
  - Exploratory
  - Useful for large samples
  - Non-invasive
  - Broad applicability
- ***Weaknesses***
  - Causality
  - Confounding variables
  - Limited temporal information
  - Measurement errors
  - Sampling/Selection bias

Population & Sampling

- Must be 18-24 years old, African American male, and attend college at one of these two HBCU and PWIs (UAPB, UALR, A-State, JSU).
- The target sample size is estimated at 370
- Power analysis (95% Margin of Error)
- Reside in the Delta at one of the four schools listed.
- Non-Probability Purposeful and Available Sampling Method

Data Instrumentation

- Participants Background Information Form
- Academic Stress Measurement (ASM)
- Discrimination Scale (PRD)
- Racial Identity Scale
- Coping Strategies Inventory-Short Form (CSI-SF)
- The College Persistent Questionnaire (CPQ)

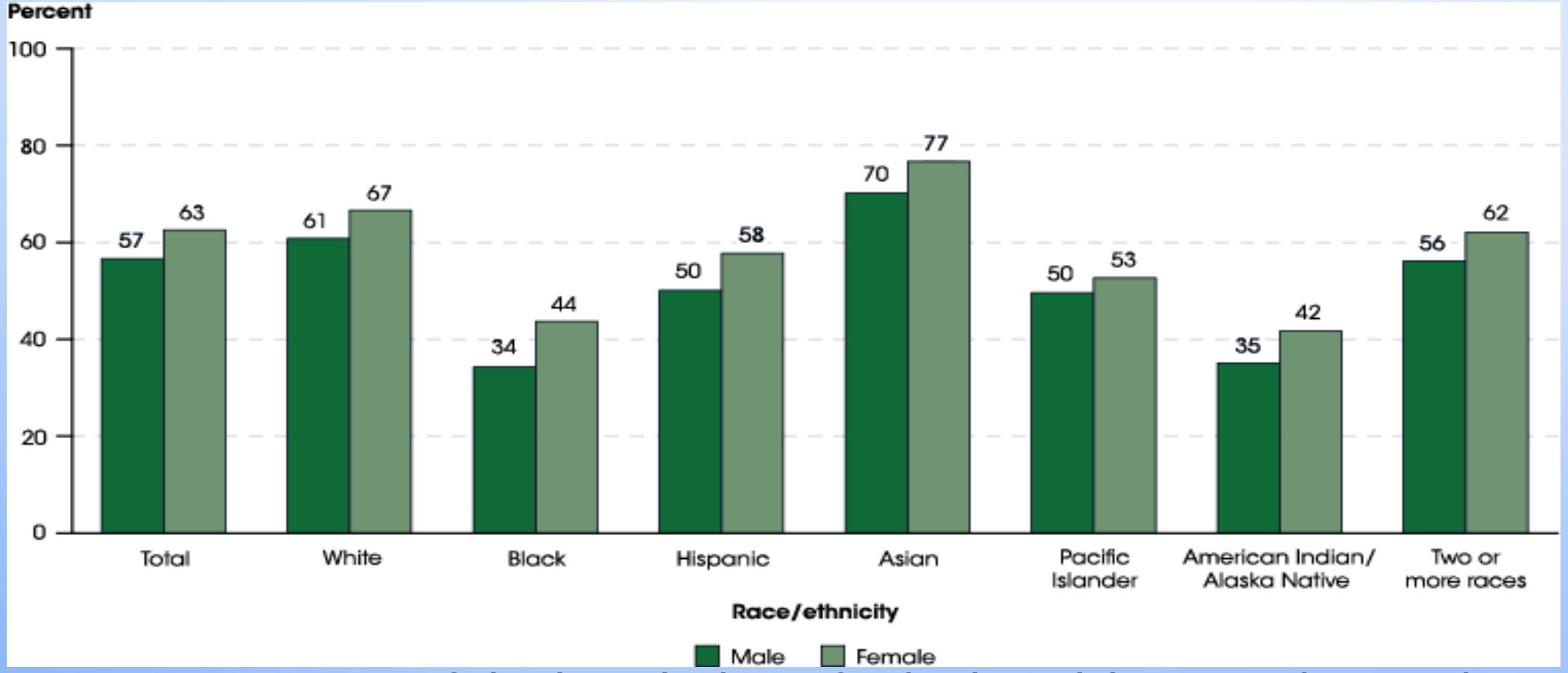
Data Collection Procedure

- Written approval from the administrators of four universities
- JSU IRB approval & Informed Consent Form
- Self-Administered Surveys (Electronic or Paper)

Data Analysis Plan

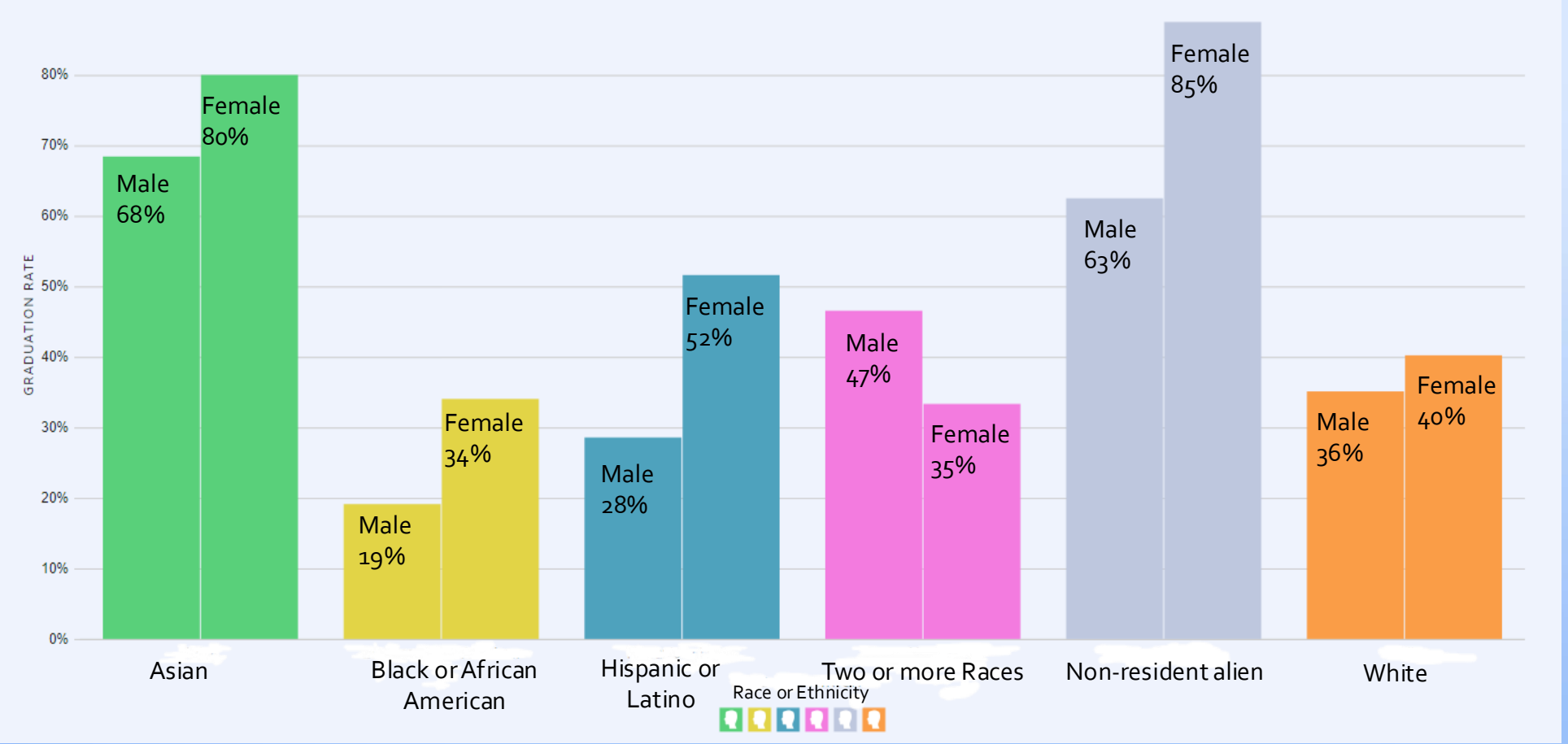
- **Screening Data:** Missing, outliers, and normality will be screened, and then data will be deleted or transformed if necessary
- **Descriptive Statistics** will describe sample characteristics using the frequency and measures of central tendency and the variability of major variables.
- **The Psychometric Properties of each scale/instrument** will be assessed using a reliability test (e.g., Cronbach alpha) and item-total correlation statistics.
- **Pearson Correlation/linear regression** assesses the relationships between five variables. Multiple linear regression is used separately to identify the significant factors that predict academic outcomes (CPQ and GPA).
- **Multiple independent sample t-tests** will test Group Comparisons.
- **The Sobel Test for Mediation or Path Analyses** will be considered.

Figure: 1
Graduation rate within six years

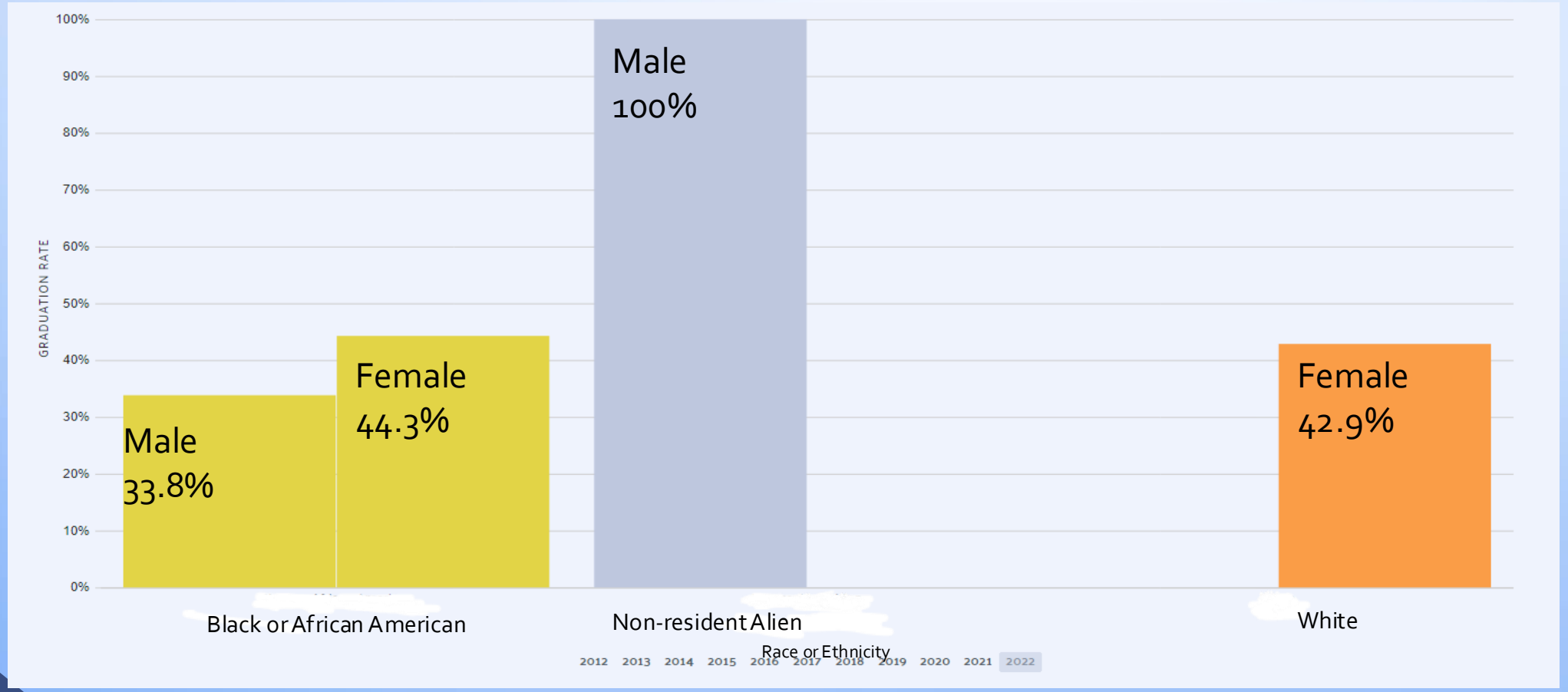


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2015–17, Graduation Rates component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 326.10.

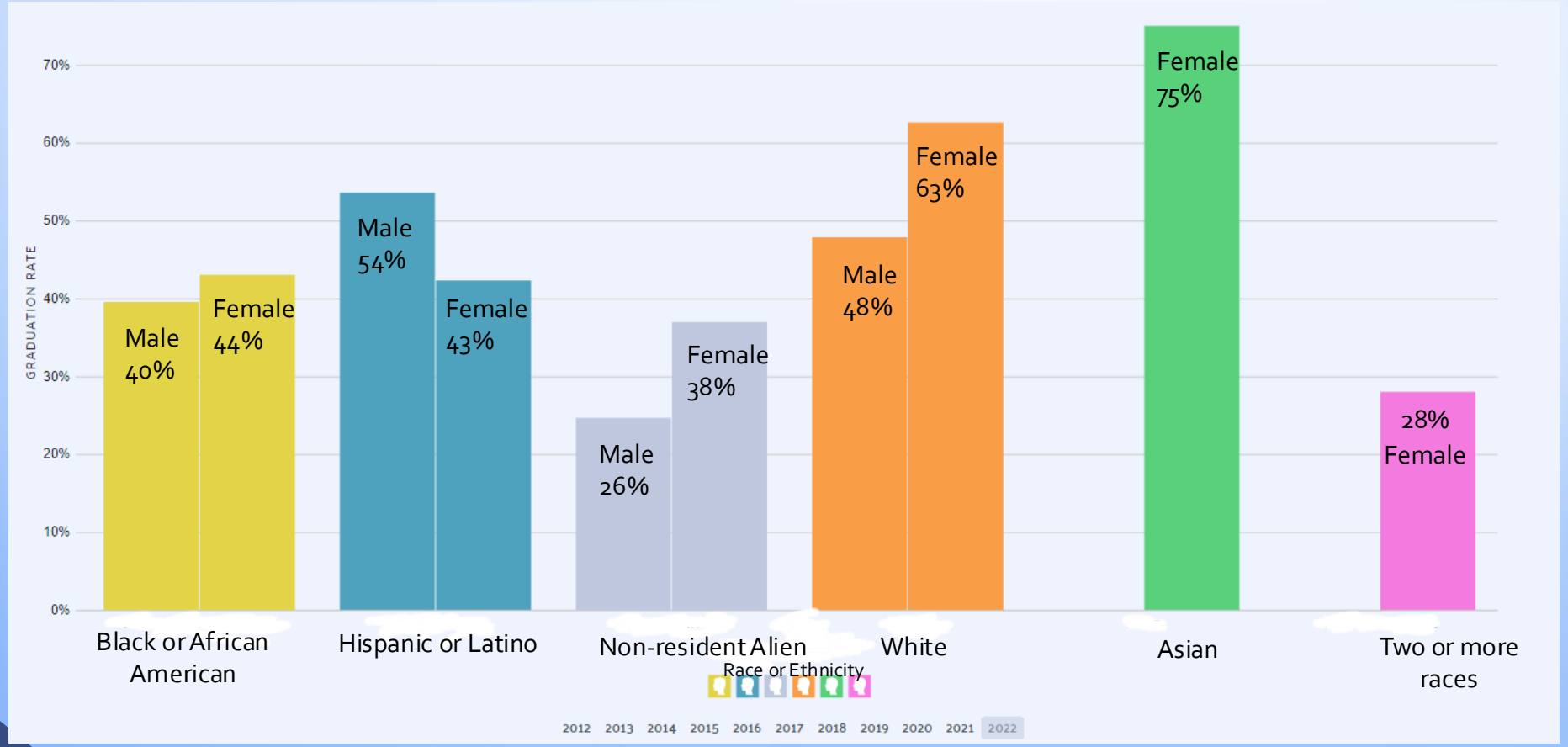
Graduation Rate by Race and Sex University of Arkansas Little Rock 2022



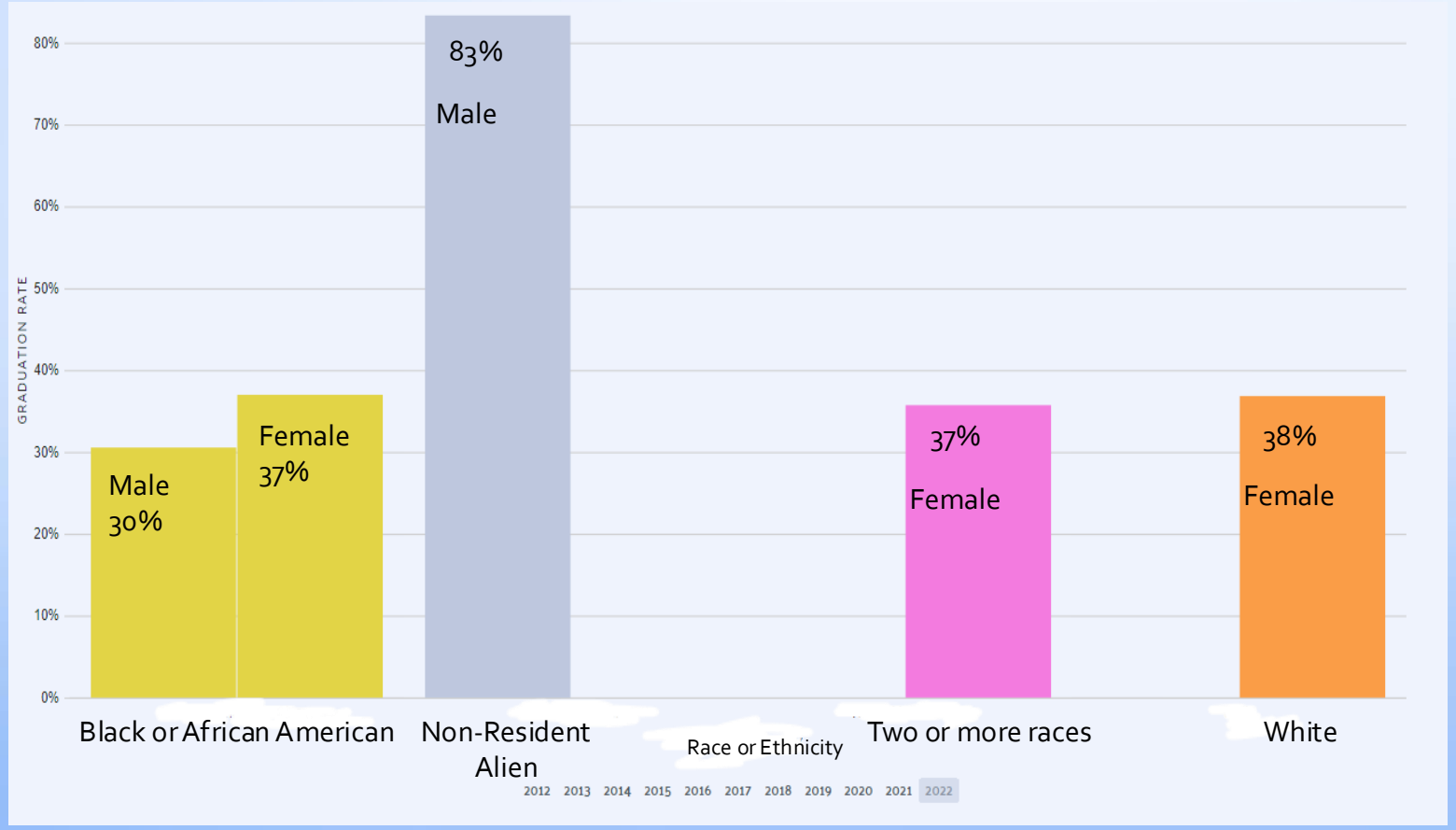
Graduation Rate by Race and Sex University of Arkansas Pine Bluff 2022



Graduation Rate by Race and Sex Arkansas State University 2022



Graduation Rate by Race and Sex Jackson State University 2022



Significance and Implications

- **Practice**
  Social workers may enhance their practice by being aware of the of perceived racism among AA college students

- **Education**
  Training programs/Courses on the effect of perceived racism on education outcomes in the social work curriculum

- **Research**
  Verifiable observation will add to the literature, fill gaps regarding this population, and help us understand their experiences

  Create academic interventions to address specific practices for AA men in rural areas.

- **Social Policy**
  Policymakers' decisions to develop policies to improve service delivery in rural communities

Completion Plan

- IRB approval Protocol# 0097-25 (4-14-25)
- Data Collection (Sum/Fall 25)
- Be ready for the final defense in Fall 2025/Spring 2026)

Questions and Answers

- Thank you for your support and constructive feedback
- Contact Information:

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