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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A QUALITATIVE STUDY MEASURING THE SUCCESS RATES OF AFRICAN
AMERICAN MALES AT PASSAGES: AN ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT SERVICES
PROGRAM AT LOS ANGELES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Nyree Berry

August, 2018

Natasha Thapar-Olmos, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Nyree Berry

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my son Handsome Charles and Rule Lael. I am so grateful God chose me to be your Mother.

My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. (Proverbs 6:20-22)

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to every African American male student, you are not alone, stay the course.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles: they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)

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I would like to first thank my Lord Jesus Christ my light and the Commander of my steps. Thank you for assigning this journey and this topic to me. I was able to with the spirit of discernment and intercessory prayer. (Daniel 9:1-19)

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To Dr. Thema Bryant Davis it was not by chance that God delivered the message to Rev Dr. Celia Bryant to send me on that missionary voyage in Montego Bay, Jamaica and years later, I would call on you for guidance and assistance on this journey. God is always intently and purposeful.

To Alex Johnson, JD a man of character, service, and a passion for quality public education .I thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to assist a very persistent student that you knew very little about. That says a lot about your commitment to service. May God continue to bless you? Again, I thank you.

Dr. Joan Mills-Buffehr thank you so much for the Starbucks meetings, you are a true inspiration Thank so much!

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ABSTRACT

According to national statistics, the number of Black women college graduates is 44.8% while for Black men, the national college graduate rate stand on 33.1%. The overall graduation rate of the Black population remains 57.3%. Further as the per statistics, out of 7.9% of the total Black male population in America in the age group of 18 to 24 years, only 2.8% of Black men were undergraduates at public flagship colleges and universities (NCES, 2012). It is argued that while this troubling trend is most prevalent in all groups among Black men, young Black men are generally the most vulnerable to underrepresentation in colleges and universities (Harper, 2010).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine a federally funded academic and support services program titled PASSAGES, which aims to increase success rates for African American males using what this author refers to as a traditional deficit model for recruiting African Americans. This study examined the PASSAGES through an alternative framework, the Anti Deficit Achieving Framework (ADAF), which is specifically designed for African American males (Harper, 2012).

This study examined current PASSAGES participant's perceptions of the program, both within the traditional deficit model and within the ADAF. Specifically, this study examined factors such as microaggressions that undermine African American males' achievements by evaluating their perceptions of the institutional, traditional practices within a student support services program: PASSAGES at Los Angeles Southwest Community College which prohibits them from being successful. The intent of this study was to provide the educational community serving the African American

male population with some insight into contemporary techniques to improve their success rates through a positive framework.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

African American males are underrepresented at all levels of higher education, and are enrolling at rates significantly lower than their White male counterparts are. It is stated that ratio of African American males, who successfully complete the bachelor's degree program within period of six years, is less than one-third across the country (Harper, 2006). Compared to the nationwide average of college completion rate in U.S. higher education, this is the lowest college completion rate compared to other ethnic groups as well as across both genders. In 2002, the proportion of African American males enrolled at higher education institutions comprised of only 4.3% of total students enrolled at higher education institutions. This percentage is precisely same as was in year 1976 and Harper (2006) suggested that during this period, the most successful degree attainment by African American males were largely at community colleges.

According to a national study conducted by Harper (2006), it was revealed that ratio of increase in enrollment of African American male to White male students in undergraduate programs remained 1 to 5 during the period between 1994 to 2008. This suggests that with an increase of enrollment of five White male students in undergraduate programs, only one African American male was joining the undergraduate programs during this period of time. Furthermore, the author revealed that most of the African American men were not enrolled in the mainstream higher education institutions but rather at History Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and less selective regional state institutions, technical colleges, and community schools. The author linked manifold socio-economic problems as one of the significant factors of

lower enrollment of African American males in mainstream and top tier colleges and universities. Arguments of Massey and Denton (1993), Massey et al. (2010) that unlike further support this their White counterparts, only a small number of Black families can actually afford to live in well-resourced neighborhood schools and afford the associated higher property values of such neighborhoods.

Today, the ratio of African American males attending college is smaller than other ethnic groups National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2012). While the overall number of degrees granted to females across all ethnicities exceeds that of males, the discrepancy between Black males and women college graduates is the largest (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The number of Black females who possess a bachelor's degree is 35% higher than for Black males.

Research regarding the African American male has identified a range of factors contributing to these disparities in education. Some of these factors include taking fewer notes in class, spending a smaller amount of time on writing papers, class assignments. Some other activities include reporting lower academic grades, holding few leadership positions, and participating irregularly in campus and extra-curricular activities than learning activities in contrast to their female counterparts (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004).

Researchers such as Strayhorn (2008), Harper (2006), and Flowers (2003) indicated that the academic performance and success of African American male students are also influenced the availability of meaningful friendships and interactions with diverse groups of other students, deep conversations, and supportive relationships

with teachers and university management. Furthermore, academic success is also said to be dependent on day-to-day educationally purposeful engagement and participation in different campus activities and student organizations. Astin (1984) and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) asserted that both behavioral attributes (i.e., what students do) and cognitive attitudes (i.e., what students think) affect any academic outcome (i.e., grades, retention, and completion). The authors further indicated that the available literature on student academic success implies that what students do matters a lot. This line of thinking and theory is also supported in recent available literature on area of developmental psychology (e.g. Vaughn et al., 2008). However, these authors also admitted that this theory is yet to be generalized and is under-developed, so there is a call for assessing more about the traits which can directly motivate student's success in college. Also, it is still not widely established whether certain psychological characteristics of students are linked with academic success of certain population groups such as in this case Black male students.

In spite of the fact that African American males' education has been studied for nearly three decades, very little scholarly research has been conducted to transform the institution and the academic and support services programs as a way to connect with the African American male holistically and organically. Existing programs are designed and implemented to address the low success rates by focusing on the traditional deficit recruitment model. Almost always, academic and support services place an emphasis on the lack of rigorous courses taken in high school, unpreparedness, lack of engagement, crime, and low income and poverty. However, the remedies to the problem of low success rates do not rely on the African American male alone. The

structure of the institution and the academic and support services programs must also re-assess their program design when recruiting African American male students. One reason for re-assessing the structure of the institution and the program design when recruiting African American males in academic and student support services programs is that the research on them is extremely dearth; specifically in community colleges. For example, Wood and Hilton (2012) argued that peer reviewed articles published on the research of African American males in community colleges during the period 1971-2009 was less than eight. This points out the significant gap regarding the theory and framework-laden assessment of experiences of Black males in community colleges, which mostly consider the unique characteristics, dispositions, processes, staff qualifications, structures, and mission and objectives of the institutions. Although there is a large void for understanding the Black male experience, institutions continue to design programs under traditional deficit models (Wood, 2012).

For several years now, institutions have designed programs to include initiatives and incentives to improve African American male student success rates (Wood, 2012). These programs concentrate on better support programs, engagement, and inviting local powerful Black professionals from the Black culture to the academic success center or the multicultural affairs division. Federal programs such as block grants, federal work-study, staff development, and diversity programs all also include revenue to increase success rates. Although these programs have been allocated a generous amount of funding and with modestly average enrollment, completion rates have remained roughly the same (Villar, 2014). Therefore, African American men's degree

attainment across the community college level continues to be alarmingly low, and a change must be implemented.

Further looking into the African American male literature suggests various dimensions to work on this area. Hence, the collaborative and sustained efforts are required to empower the African American males to succeed in their pursuit and completion of higher education programs. These efforts should be looked at for understanding problems and having empathy and no longer putting blame on the African American males for the problems in their academic lives. This is because unlike their White counterparts, the African American community faces various challenges and plights in their daily life, which directly or indirectly affects their attainment of education. Hence, with many African American men not enrolling or finishing their traditional college degrees, this leads to less chances that these men will have the tools to transform their life as adults. It is argued that lower African American enrollment and completion of college education are linked to consequences of decreased social, cultural, political, and economic capacity of this community to further improve the lives of people around them and rest of the citizens of the world.

Statement of the Problem

The U.S. Department of Education has recently revealed that national college graduation rate of the Black population in American. The statistics showed that national college graduate rate for Black women stands at 44.8% while for Black men the same figure is comparatively lower at 33.1%. The overall graduation rate of Black population remains 57.3%. Further as per statistics, out of 7.9% of total Black men population in America in age group of 18 to 24 years, only 2.8% Black men were undergraduates at

public flagship colleges and universities (NCES, 2012). It is argued that while this troubling trend is most prevalent in all groups of Black men, young Black men are generally most vulnerable to underrepresentation in colleges and universities. In contrast to statistics of the college graduation rate of Black men, the college graduate rate of White males stands at 54.5% followed by Hispanic men that stand (41.1%) and Alaskan and Native American men (33.8%). On the other hand, the highest graduate completion rate in U.S is for Asia/Pacific Islanders that stand at 60.6%. This significant gap in the completion rate of college education signifies that men of color, particularly of Black men, are most vulnerable to have low-paid jobs and less earning power compared to White population (<http://www.education.gov/>).

Numerous African-American educators and policymakers, have identified this decline in the enrollment of African Americans in higher education and they have continued work towards enhancing the college enrollment and completion rates of African American men through engagement and success programs designed for this specific purpose. State college systems became involved, too. Despite such efforts, the problem unfortunately still remains complicated and persistent to date by circumstances that influence the young population of African American men long before they enroll in college. For instance, Davis (2003) indicated that Black males from their early childhood education are subject to various subtle stereotypical messages from their peers as well as the media regarding their lifestyle, behaviors, cognitive abilities, and life expectations. These messages greatly affect the motivation of African American male by conveying to them that they do not fit in their environment and thus are not able of achieving success in higher education. Baggerly and Parker (2005) argued that

because of such stereotypical tagging on African American males from their early education by their peers and media, they develop low-self esteem, low self-confidence, and a lack of sense of belonging in school and environment. In addition to these influences by media and peers, this environment is affected by prejudice and discrimination by the lack of diversity among pre-K12 teachers in schools. The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) revealed that more than 90% of teachers in schools are comprised of White population and that this population is mostly comprised of female teachers. Given these circumstances, African American young males often do not feel comfortable and are reluctant to engage and meet with faculty and administrators that look different from them. Palmer, Wood, Dancy, and Strayhorn (2014) argued that this present environment can also be a direct or indirect factor in further aggravating the assessment of African American males towards their interest and utility of their sense of belongings in schools.

In an effort to resolve this problem, the City University of New York (CUNY), with its public university system, has been continually trying to highlight this issue since 2004 with the establishment of the University Task Force on the Black Male Initiative. By hosting an annual Black Male Initiative Conference, CUNY engages in thoughtful conversations on this issue with input from the recurring speaker' series on Black men and higher education. Similar to this program, the university system of Georgia has also launched a comparable program which is equally thoughtful and comprehensive (Valburn, 2012). Further, Valburn (2012) highlighted that there are also some other programs nationwide which comprise of civic minded community-based efforts, ambitious institutional ones, and modest student-run projects.

At the community college level, efforts such as increasing support services and equity funding have been implemented to address the problem of low success rates among minority males. For example, in the largest community college district in California - Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) - several federal and state programs have been created namely; Achieving the Dream, TRIO programs Upward Bound, Talent Search and other federal student support services. Other programs include state funded programs, CALWORKS/GAIN, EOPS/CARE, and the Puente Program (<https://www.laccd.edu>). The effectiveness of these programs in improving African American male success rates is unknown because there is a lack of data. Furthermore, the above-mentioned programs were not developed specifically for African American males, and they have all been conceptualized within a traditional deficit model. The traditional deficit model focuses on low SES and lack of rigorous courses in high school and for college, and neglects existing strengths and contextual factors that may impact male students' success rates. This deficit model also fails to take a holistic and relational approach to understanding individual behavior, and therefore is insufficient and as the data suggests, ineffective. In this study, an alternative framework, Harper's (2010) anti deficit achieving framework (ADAF) was used to examine a support program titled PASSAGES at Los Angeles Southwest Community College.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this research was to assess the significance of a federally funded academic and support services program titled PASSAGES, which aims to increase success rates for African American males. PASSAGES is conceptualized within a

traditional deficit model, which is based on standardized test performance and focuses on limitations as opposed to strengths. This study evaluated PASSAGES through an alternative framework, the ADAF, which is specifically designed for African American males (Harper, 2012). This study examined current PASSAGES participant's perceptions of the program, both within the traditional deficit model and within the ADAF. Specifically, this study examined factors such as microaggressions that undermine African American male's achievement by examining their perceptions of the institution's traditional practices within the student support services program PASSAGES at Los Angeles Southwest Community College. The intent of this study is to provide the educational community serving the African American male population with some insight into contemporary techniques that may improve their success rates through a strengths-based framework.

Research Questions

In line with the aforementioned purpose of the research, the current study sought to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How are aspirations for higher education cultivated among Black students who are currently enrolled in the PASSAGES program?

RQ2: What compels Black undergraduate men enrolled in the PASSAGES program to pursue leadership and engagement opportunities on their campuses?

RQ3: How do Black male collegians manage to persist and earn their degrees despite transition issues, racist stereotypes, academic under preparedness, and other negative forces?

RQ4: What resources are most effective in helping Black males achievers earn GPA above 3.0 in a variety of majors including STEM fields?

RQ5: How do Black men go about cultivating meaningful, value-added relationships with key institutional agents?

Significance of the Study

Over the past 4 decades much of the research about African American males' success rates has been conducted through the lens of a traditional deficit model. This study contributes to the literature by presenting a different insight to the available literature regarding higher education of African American males, specifically one that includes analysis of contextual factors such as familial factors and school-related factors. Little research has been conducted with a formula designed specifically for African American males. Although the PASSAGES program was not conceptualized within the ADAF, based on the researcher's experience and knowledge of the program, it circuitously implements many of the components of the framework. The results of this study may help us identify, examine, and measure if an ADAF designed specifically for Black males will increase their success rates.

This qualitative study investigated and explored if academic and support services programs using traditional deficit indicators were sufficient to increase success rates of completion of education of African American men at community colleges. By applying the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT; Delgado, 2002), and the anti-deficit achievement framework (ADAF; Harper, 2012), this study may reveal the importance of creating academic and support services programs tailored for African Americans males to increase their success rates.

This study seeks to inform community college administrators, staff, and faculty that this student population has the potential to persist and succeed when academic and support service programs incorporate an ADAF. In particular, this research can provide institutional agents, such as administrators, faculty, counselors, and other educators with a more in-depth analysis of African American males' success rates when academic support services programs are crafted with an ADAF as an alternative to the more pervasive tradition deficit model.

Definition of Terms

Academic and support services programs: The term refers to different education services, instruction methods, and resources offered to pupils in schools and colleges that can assist them in improving their education, speeding their learning process, meet learning standards, catch up with their peers, and in general perform better in schools (www.edglossary.org).

Academic under-preparedness: Students that are considered unprepared for college entrance if they do not test into college level English and Math.

African American or Black: The term refers to the population of aborigines of Black racial group of Africa (Kewal & Ramani et al., 2007). African American or Black are terms which are used interchangeably in the literature and media, and so in this research it will also been used interchangeably. This ethnic or racial identification is identified and written by students during their enrollment at admissions and records at schools.

Anti- Deficit Achieving Framework or ADAF: It refers to the model which entails the anti-deficit questions in the National Black Male College Achievement Study. The

model mainly provides insights on three key elements (pre-college readiness and socialization, achievement during college days, and after college success). Also, it includes eight more insightful dimensions on student achievement. The study, which was conducted by Harper (2012), investigates different dimensions of college achievement that include experiences in the classroom, enriching education experiences, and after class engagement and socialization. From Harper's study, the current study will investigate 1-2 questions from each dimension of regarding the achievement of students in college.

Community College or 2-year Institution: It refers to the institution which is regionally accredited for higher learning that does not offer the higher degrees or bachelors, but instead offer the 2-year program by providing an associate degree or certificate or 2-year program which meets the credit hours requirements for bachelor's degree or higher degrees at 4-year institutions (Aud et al., 2012).

Engagement. This term is generally used to refer two concepts related to student engagement. These are: (a) willingness or psychological of investment of students to invest their time in educational activities and behaviors (Chapman, 2003), and, (b) general interest and involvement of students towards educational activities and behaviors (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2010).

Lived Experience: This term refers to life experiences of African American men towards other people, structural systems and environment, and the culture shaping their perspective on education.

Male: The term refers to identify the masculine option of gender of students as they identify and write during their admissions and school records.

Microaggressions: The term refers to day-to-day and brief environmental, behavioral, or verbal low self-esteem encounters faced by African American male students, whether they are intentional or unintentional, that communicate insulting, hostile, degrading, and negative racial slights towards these students (Sue, 2010).

PASSAGES: Refers to student and academic service aimed towards increasing the performance and success of male students at Los Angeles Southwest College. These academic and student service further entails the workshops for students, field trips, counseling, mentoring, and study halls. The aim of this service is to equip and empower male students with confidence, self-esteem, and positive outlook that lead to their academic success (Los Angeles Southwest College).

Spirituality: It refers to the one's practices towards connecting with God. It is the believing and behaving as if non-material and non-observable life forces have ultimate powers in one's day-to-day affairs. While it is mostly associated with praying to God, this term is not necessarily used for formal church participation or practicing doctrine (Jagers & Mock, 1993).

Traditional deficit model: This term is being used by the author to refer to the prevailing frameworks used to address the problem of academic underachievement and underrepresentation among Black males in higher education. This model assumes that the individual-level factors account for these negative outcomes and it minimizes the contribution of institutional and system level factors.

Assumptions

The research investigator noted the following assumptions that may have influenced the research outcomes:

1. Provided the ADAF academic and support services programs African American males success rates can improve
2. The quality of traditional academic and support services programs are not sufficient for African American males.
3. The African American males who participate in the study are going to receive adequate assistance from the programs prior to the ADAF.
4. This community college is a representative of California Community colleges and support this study without reservation.
5. All assumptions and generalizations regarding African American males were only used to assist with the participates in this study.

Limitations

The limitations that affect the applicability of the results of this study to settings beyond that are studied:

1. This study is restricted to one California Community College
2. The study is restricted to African American males from one community college; who are in the process of gradating with an associate's degree and/or transferring to a 4 year college or university.
3. Some study participants are selected using a network sampling, thus some individuals were conveniently chosen to participate in the study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The review of literature is organized in two main sections. The first section begins with a brief history of higher education in the US and the struggles of Black males in persisting through the educational system with a Black White achievement gap. This section also includes discussion of the most recently published studies about African American males in community colleges and the impact of family, community, spirituality and persistence, student engagement, faculty and student perspectives, and effective mentoring strategies. The second section presents theories related to the study, including Delgados' CRT, Tinto's student departure theory, Bandura's self efficacy theory, and the ADAF.

History of Higher Education in the U.S.

Prior to the mid-1800s, access to higher education was limited to elite, White males. It was not until the enactment of the first Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1862 that the first generation White college students (both male and female) was provided the opportunity to acquire postsecondary training in the fields of agriculture, industrial and mechanical arts at state funded institutions. The second Morrill Land Grant in 1890 granted Blacks access to state funded segregated Black colleges and universities. In 1944, the GI Bill was responsible for transforming America's higher education system. It paid for the cost of college (tuition, books, and fees) for millions of veterans. The G.I .Bill is not only credited for boosting Americas economy, but it also opened the gateways for individuals from all backgrounds, particularly minorities, the access to a college education (Evans, Forney,& Guido-Dorto, 1998:Trow, 2001).

History of Community Colleges

During the early 20th century, the United States faced great challenges, including global economic competition. According to the Little Hoover Commission (2012), local and national leaders and policy makers understood that a skilled workforce was essential for the continued success and sustained economic growth of the country. This directly pointed to a demand to increase more college enrollment and attendance.

Additionally, in during the 20th century about three-fourths of high school did not wish to attend college largely owing to the fact that they are reluctant to travel and leave their home for a distant college. In an effort to offer wide-spread education services to different communities, the rapidly growing public high schools of country during the same period were looking for new methods to serve their communities. Hence, it became common for some public schools to develop manual learning divisions (vocational education programs), teacher institutes, or citizenship schools that offered at least diploma and certificate programs. For example, Central High School in Joliet, Illinois was the first college that introduced the high-school based community college model, which during those periods was considered to be the most successful type of addition in the public school for wide-spread education (Edmund, 1968).

With the advent of these new additions, the earliest concept community colleges came forth. These community colleges were partially balanced between public and private control though connected and united in their commitment to meet the educational needs of local populations. After looking at the benefit of education beyond higher school for the society while concurrently realizing that existing colleges cannot carry the load of demands of more population, the California State Legislature in 1907

authorized the high schools of every state to establish new junior colleges which specifically focus on offering what were described as the postgraduate courses of the study that were similar to the courses offered during first 2-year of university education. In fall of 1910, Fresno High School's collegiate department was established, which later established the Fresno City College which, offered the public community education in California. It is considered to be one of California's oldest existing public community college and United States' the second most oldest existing public community college (Little Hoover Commission, 2012).

With the progression of time, the legislature during the early 1920s authorized the establishment of separate colleges apart from the programs taught in high schools. In 1921, California issued legislation which allowed for the establishment of more community college districts across the state. As a result of this, Modesto Junior College, which is also considered to be the 16th oldest community college was introduced in September 1921 as the first ever community college district. This ultimately introduced the current model of community colleges in U.S that has remained to provide business and trade studies such as industrial and mechanical arts, and recently has offered general education as well. With the progression of batches, the first ever transfer student was recorded to be from Modesto Junior College to Stanford in year 1922. Eventually, there were around 38 junior colleges established across the state by year 1932. The college enrollments saw dramatic growth with the passing of GI Bill in year 1944 and the number of junior colleges increased up to 50 by 1950. The junior college courses by year 1960 were offered in around 56 districts in California. Out of these 56

districts, 28 districts were established solely by the government as junior college districts rather than high schools districts (<http://www.cccco.edu/>).

A turning point in higher education in California was witnessed after 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education and the following *Donahue Act*. The California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems were introduced to limit the admissions in these colleges considering the space, however, the main goal of community college education remained to provide an effective and appropriate place for every student seeking public higher education in California to receive the advantages of enrollment. This suggests that junior colleges remain the main pillar for fulfilling this role for proceeding higher education. With passage of time, the Governor and Legislature by the year 1967 established the Board of Governors for Community District Colleges to look after the progress of community colleges and continue to establish the community college district system. As a result of this, almost all areas of the state were considered for establishment of community colleges. However, the lack of control of colleges in this system remains the major drawback within many colleges of high school districts. This can be evidenced by the fact that out of 72 districts, only 52 districts (i.e., 72%) were able to govern only a single college. Similarly, only a few districts were able to control more than 4 colleges in major metropolitan areas (<http://www.cccco.edu/>).

With consistent improvement in the education system, the Master Plan for Higher Education eventually banned the concept of tuition owing to the direction that public higher education system should be freely accessible and available to all students (as in the case of K-12 primary and secondary courses). After being officially implemented, the plan continued to require that public higher education should be free for all citizens

of California regardless of ethnicity or any other classification. Legally therefore California was made a tuition free state for education. However, this legal implementation suffered a major setback of reversal after the state of California suffered from severe budget deficits especially owing to the implementation of the Proposition 13 in year 1978, which reduced property taxes on homes by 57%. Hence, this situation led to the imposition of per-unit admission fees for students living in California, all community colleges, as well as all UC and CSU campuses (Little Hoover Commission, 2012).

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is one of the community college systems that was established in California for the same purpose of offering widespread education services to citizens of the state. LACCD is not only considered to be the largest college district in the United States but also holds the ranks among one of the largest education districts in the world. Since its establishment 77 years ago, LACCD is committed to be educator of more than 3 million students in the state. Aiming to provide accessible education regardless of ethnicity, LACCD educates almost nearly four times as many African-American students and almost three-times as many Latino students as all of the UC campuses combined. Also, LACCD also holds the largest population of around 80% unreserved students in their campus (<http://www.laccd.edu>).

History of Black Men in Higher Education

Over the last 15 years, the challenging situation of African American men in higher education is increasingly gaining wide spread coverage in the media and national conferences. With each new study supporting the existence and complexity of such challenges, educators, policy makers, and administrators show consensus over the

question of what should be done to improve the success of African American males in higher education (Harper & Kuykendall, 2012). In some instances, these attempts have been successful but for the most part, they have accomplished only marginalized gains strategically arranged by a system that is incapable of addressing the low completion rate of Black males without challenging institutional climate and culture.

The earliest record of Blacks' enrollment in higher education was in 1774 when Ezra Stiles, prior to his serving as president at Yale, arranged for two Black men to be enrolled at the (then) College of New Jersey, Princeton (Westmeyer, 1997). It was not until 1826 that the first Black college graduates were documented. Amherst College and Bowdoin College, both White institutions, graduated one Black male each within weeks of one another (Feagin et al., 1996; Lucas, 1994; Pifer, 1973). Even still, the number of African American graduates in White-majority universities was recorded to be below expectations and also show the sign that this might remain the same for years ahead. It is stated that there only 28 recorded African American college graduates during the time of the Civil War (Pifer, 1973; Westmeyer, 1997). With their own resilience towards reducing ignorance and a committed to educating themselves even before the Civil War mainly owing to the abolishment of the slavery, African American men began to increasingly attend the African American Colleges like Cheyney University, Lincoln University, and Wilberforce University founded in years 1842, 1854, and 1856 respectively (Brown, 1999; Fleming, 1984; Lucas, 1994). These institutions were private colleges intended for the sole purpose of educating Blacks and were funded by Quakers, Presbyterians, Black churches, local communities, the Freedman's Bureau, private philanthropists, and northern missionaries (Brown, 1999; Westmeyer, 1997).

Despite the existence of such institutions, persistent sentiments of the majority culture during that time held that African American were inherently inferior than their White counterparts and therefore no good purpose could be served by thinking or believing otherwise. Sentiments of these types resonated across America, particularly in the south, and delayed the widespread educational attainment of Blacks for nearly a full decade (Fleming, 1981; Lucas, 1994).

In 1877, one Virginian offered this commentary in *The Southern Planter and Farmer*:

I oppose [education for Blacks] because its policy is cruelty to the Negro himself. It instills in his mind that he is competent to share in the higher walks of life, prompts him to despise those menial pursuits to which his race has been doomed, and invites him to enter into competition with the white man for those tempting prizes that can be won only by a quicker and profounder sagacity, by a greater energy and self-denial, and a higher order of administrative talent than the negro has ever developed. (Lucas, 1994, p. 159)

This type of thinking did not die easily, especially in the South. Thus there would be great delays in the education of Blacks (Fleming, 1984; Lucas, 1994). Today, the ratio of Black males attending college is smaller than other ethnic groups (NCES, 2010). While the overall number of degrees granted to females across all ethnicities exceeds that of males, the discrepancy between Black males and women college graduates is the largest (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The number of Black females who possess a Bachelor's degree is 35% higher than that of Black males. Some explanations for these disparities are that statistics regarding completion rates, college

enrollment, and higher education graduation rates of African American females were more consistently documented in a timely manner compared to their male counterparts. Sadly, the statistics of African American males were more consistent in jail enrollment than in college enrollment. Apart from that, African American males tend to delay their admissions into college, which ultimately negatively impacts their college completion years and achievement rates.

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), a college education has the potential to significantly increase the earning potential and quality of life for everyone in society. However, the possession of a college degree is particularly important to the Black population, given the fact that a disproportionate number of them are living in poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 2009; Fass & Cauthen, 2006; James, 2010). Furthermore, college graduates are less likely to be unemployed and affiliated with the criminal justice system compared with those individuals who have a high school diploma or less (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Lin & Vogt, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Black males who possess a college degree are more likely to earn a higher income than their colleagues who only have a high school diploma or less (Levin, Belfield, Muenning & Rouse, 2007). According to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2009), the median full time weekly earnings of Black college graduates 23 years of age and older, was approximately \$400 to \$500 more than their Black counterparts who only have a high school education or lower.

African American Males in K-12

Black males in grades K-12 are faced with several obstacles that interfere with their long-term academic success. Many of them attend schools that are not equipped to adequately prepare them for the rigors of college (Martin, Martin, Gibson, Semivan & Wilkins, 2007). They are disproportionately represented in urban school settings where academic achievement and graduation completions are at minimum, educational resources and facilities are outdated and sparse, funding is limited, and teacher expectations are low (Clark, 1991; Martin et al., 2007; Noguera, 2003; Phinney & Haas, 2003).

Poverty has been highly correlated with the poor academic performance of Black males (Children's Defense Fund, 2009). Compared with other racial and ethnic groups, the poverty rates among Blacks is much higher (Fass & Cauthen, 2006). For example, in 2005, the poverty rate for Black was 35% in contrast to 10% of White children. Compared with Whites and African American females, Black males are disproportionately represented in remedial and special education classes, tend to score poorly or near the bottom on reading and math scores, and are seldom engaged in gifted and college prep programs (Entwistle, Alexander & Olson, 1997; Hall & Rowan, 2000; McMillan, 2004; Orfied, 2001). Furthermore, despite the fact that Black males only constitute 8.6% of the total student population in the nation's public primary and secondary schools, they account for 23% of suspensions and 22% of school expulsions (Bailey & Paisley, 2004).

Sadly, there are more Black males in their twenties who are affiliated with the court system than those that are attending college (Hall & Rowan, 2000). Kunjufu

(2001) and Livingston and Nahimana (2006) argued that Black male youth who serve time in the penal system during the most malleable period of their development are prone to experience difficulty with re-acclimating into the community and adhering to societal norms. This phenomenon has largely contributed to the high rates of recidivism of criminal behavior and incarceration rates in the Black community (Kunjufu, 2001).

Black-White Achievement Gap

For many years there have been heated debates among scholars and educators about the primary causes of the Black-White achievement gap in primary and secondary schools. Several scholars (Asante, 1987; Baldwin, 1981; Kunjufu, 2001; Osborne, 1999; Smith, 2005) assert that racism and other forms of injustices and inequalities have affected and dictated Black males' perception about what they believe they can accomplish. As a result of these experiences, many of them feel compelled to adopt a counter culture (i.e., hip-hop rap music, and gang affiliations) of masculinity to cope with their damaged pride and self-confidence (Kunjufu, 2001). These experiences contribute to the lack of engagement and success of Black males on college campuses. A number of scholars argue that the racism and discrimination often experienced by Black youth in this country's school system has caused many of them to abandon the educational process (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; McWhorter, 2000; Steele, 1992).

African American Males Readiness and Adjusting in Higher Education

Historically, Black males were allowed to enter college before Black females, and these first generation male college students encountered many obstacles to success. Levine (2001) and Love (1993) argued that Black males attending college often experience difficulty with integrating into an establishment that was originally designed

for White Christian men, and in which policies, practices, and procedures were specifically developed to exclude minorities. In support of this notion, Johnson (2005) and Strayhorn (2008b) contend that Black males are often treated with less deference and consideration than that of their White counterparts, resulting in many of them feeling unwelcomed.

By keeping in mind the findings of Fleming's (1984) ground-breaking study, numerous researchers have argued that African American males tend to struggle academically especially in those campus environments that tend to be more unfriendly, racially hostile, and unwelcoming to students of color, or lacking social support systems upon which African American can rely for advice and support. Social factors are also found to be main contributing factors that inspire or suppress the intentions of African American males to succeed academically in college. The findings argued that success or lack of success in African American males is dependent on the elements such as engagement in frequently and educationally purposeful activities in student organizations and in campus activities, supportive relationship with teachers and university faculty, and meaningful interactions with diverse peers (Flowers, 2003; Harper, 2006; Strayhorn 2008).

Other significant factors, somewhat less contributing, were linked to psychological elements to success of students in colleges. Researchers such as Strayhorn (2008), Harper (2012), and Flowers (2003) indicated that the academic performance and success of African American male students are also influenced by meaningful friendships and interactions with diverse groups of other students, deep conversations, and supportive relationships with teachers and university management.

Further, academic success is also said to be dependent on day-to-day educationally purposeful engagement and participation in different campus activities and student organizations. Astin (1984) and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) asserted that both behavioral attributes (i.e., what students do) and cognitive attitudes (i.e., what students think) affect any academic outcome (i.e., grades, retention, completion). The authors further indicated that the available literature on student academic success implies that what students do matters a lot. This line of thinking and theory is also supported in recent available literature on area of developmental psychology (e.g., Nock et al., 2010; Vaughn et al., 2008). However, these authors also admitted that this theory is under-developed, so there is a call for assessing more about the credible and influencing traits which may directly motivate student success in college. Also, it is still not widely established whether certain psychological characteristics of students are linked to academic success of certain population groups such as in this case Black male students.

Research in the area of college adjustment is quite comprehensive, but seldom takes into account the experiences of high- risk populations such as Black males enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and first generation college students (Baker & Siryk, 1989; Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). Academic adjustment includes grade point average, enrollment status, and adhering to the academic standards of an institution, while social adjustment is broader in scope and includes attachment to the institution, social adaptation, extracurricular involvements, overall well being, and faculty interaction. There is a growing body of research about both Black students and first generation students enrolled in PWIs and first generation

students in postsecondary education. Researchers seem to recognize that both populations are at risk of performing poorly academically, feeling isolated and disconnected, and dropping out of postsecondary education prior to degree completion. Much of the research is geared towards adjustment concerns as well as the available programs and services (Fleming, 1984; Thayer, 2000; Watson, 2006). In the study of Black college students, only recently has research begun to investigate the plight of Black males in higher education specifically-community college (Wood & Harris, 2013). A majority of the research available looks at Blacks as one homogeneous group considering collectively both males and females, though research findings consistently indicate that Black males and Black females have very distinct collegiate experiences (Cuyjet, 2006).

On average, Black women are academically performing better than Black men. Women enroll in higher numbers, persist at higher rates, and graduate at substantially higher percentages than do their Black male counterparts. Some research has found that difficulty adjusting to campus decreases Black males' ability to succeed both academically and socially (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Fleming, 1984). Research suggests that Black males encounter cultural barriers that affect their level of adjustment considerably more frequently than Black females. The impact of these encounters can include the deeply embedded societal racial stereotypes that precede them and to which many feel they must acquiesce, and the pull or lack of encouragement from family and friends who may question their choice to pursue higher education (Dancy, 2009; Steele, 1992, 1997). Similarly, first generation students, particularly those enrolled in 4-year institutions, encounter some of the same challenges

and outcomes as Black males enrolled in PWIs. First generation students are less likely than non-first generation students to enroll, persist, and graduate from college (McKinney, 2005; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). These students often feel isolated and unwelcome in college, as do Black males enrolled in PWIs, and many first generation students lack the college knowledge needed to successfully navigate postsecondary education both academically and socially (Vargas, 2004).

Social Capital

Despite the social, economic, and academic challenges faced by African American male youth, many of them aspire to obtain a college degree. Social capital plays a key role in how Black males adjust to the college system. Often times Black males from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds lack exposure and confidence to interact with other ethnic groups as well as other Black subgroups. Social capital can be described as those resources both tangible and intangible that are acquired from social connections or networks (Bourdieu, 1986, 1997; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Social capital is based upon both social and economic factors, which are associated with class inequality. Social capital exists and is produced by and for the upper class (Field, 2003). As such, some of the inequalities that are faced by Black males in educational institutions result from their lack of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1997). Bourdieu (1986) defined *cultural capital* as learned or inherited cultural characteristics that students possess before they enter college. Cultural capital embodies a set of attributes, which include communication skills, value systems, cultural awareness, and economic advantages that are associated with one's class status (Dika & Singh, 2002; Horvat, Winger, & Lareau, 2003; Portes, 1998). Cultural capital is also

composed of non-economic resources that entail social class, family background, educational commitment, educational investments, and resources (Reay, 2004). Thus, according to Bourdieu (1986), a student's academic performance; including success is directly affected by his or her cultural background and levels of cultural capital.

Throughout the history of the United States, Black males perhaps more than their female counterparts, have been plagued with greater levels of social injustices (i.e., racism, discrimination, poverty, and other oppressions) that have interfered with their ability to thrive (Clark, 1983; Kunjufu, 2001; Livingston & Nahimana, 2006; Noguera, 2003). Overall, Black males as a cultural group are disproportionately represented in the judicial system. Startlingly, the number of Black males in their 20s who are affiliated with the court system exceeds that of who are attending college (Hall & Rowan, 2000; McMillan, 2004; Orfield, 2001). Black males have been historically plagued with multiple issues that stem from societal racism and oppression (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006). Compared with other populations, they are more likely to come from single parent homes, to be demonized by the media, and experience high rates of imprisonment, unemployment, suicide, and homicide (Bailey & Paisley, 2004; Hall & Rowan, 2001; Henry Kaiser Foundation, 2009; Hooks, 2004). Many Black males, especially in urban settings, live in extreme poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 2009; James, 2010). Instead of focusing on academics, they are often confronted with challenges such as the lack of proper nutrition, inadequate access to health care, and living in crime infested neighborhoods (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006; Noguera, 2003). Black males exist in a culture that silences, abuses, and devalues their existence (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006). These experiences serve as painful reminders that they are superfluous and

immobilized in mainstream society (Pierre, Mahalik, & Woodland, 2001). According to Forston (1977) and Franklin (1999), Black males who perceive that their ideas, feelings, and values have been marginalized as a result of racism, prejudice, and other injustices often view themselves as invisible, especially in educational systems. As such, many of them opt never to pursue a college education for fear of facing the same negative experiences as their predecessors (Campbell & Fleming, 2000).

How far behind African American males continue to fall is evidenced by several alarming statistics. Based on the last population census, 64% of the African Americans enrolled in college were female, while only 36% were male (U.S Census Bureau, 2010). Males' college enrollment decline is further compounded by lower degree completion rates in comparison to African American females. In 2009, it was reported that African American females earned 68% of all associate's degrees and 66% of all bachelor's degrees (NCES, 2010). In sharp contrast, African American men earned 32% of all the associate's degrees and 34% of all bachelor's degrees (Harper, 2012; NCES, 2010). Even more alarming are the national statistics that reveal that, of the 164,844 degrees awarded to African-American students (10% of all awarded degrees), approximately 66% of those degrees were conferred to females. African-American males continue to graduate from college at a significantly lower rate when compared to other cohorts of graduating students (Orech & Harrington, 2002; Strayhorn, 2008; Taylor & Palmer, 2013).

Campus Climate and Culture

Hurtado (1992) presented a study about campus climate, with the goal of identifying contexts for racial conflict. The study collected data from a cohort of students

who have attended PWIs within the timeframe of 1985 to 1989. Hurtado asserts that racial conflicts took place on many college campuses during the timeframe of 1985 to 1989. The fundamental argument of her study is that such racial conflicts are part of a greater spectrum of campus climate problems that need to be attended to. Furthermore, she asserts that a good deal can be learned about campus climates by investigating Black, Chicano and White student perceptions in institutional environments related to racial tensions experienced on campus.

Social psychology principles serve as the theoretical framework for Hurtado's (1992) study. Pulling the theory from Jessor's (1981) work on perception within an individual's environment, Hurtado operationally defined distal and proximal measures to present her hypothesis. According to social psychology principles, the environment and its properties become part and parcel to shaping social interactions as well as one's behavioral and attitudinal responses which are elicited in that environment. These properties are characterized as the following in social psychology: contextual variables or distal characteristics. The distal measures used in this study were: size, selectivity, ethnic enrollments, and campus expenditures. The proximal measures were: student perceptions of the campus' priorities that revealed the campus' commitment to cultural diversity, resource allocation, and student-centered orientation. In short, the proximal measures represent student perception of their college campus environment. Based on social psychology theory, Hurtado's study hypothesized that the proximal measures (student perceptions of the campus) have a greater influence than the distal measures, on student perception of racial tension on their college campuses. This concept reflects

the social psychology theory that proximal measures have been shown to mediate the effects of distal measures on other results.

The principal data for the study was collected using a 4-year longitudinal survey of student responses to both the 1985 Freshman Survey and the 1989 Follow-up Survey (FUS). These surveys were administered as part of a project of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) and the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles. The Freshman Survey was administered using a stratified random sample of full-time freshman survey participants. Four years later, the FUS was mailed to these same participants. Hurtado (1992) noted that the minority student population in the study was rather small. Thus, a second process was performed in which several 4-year institutions were also selected to take part in the study, in order to increase the number of randomly selected minority participants. Twenty-one independent variables were analyzed. Student views of the racial campus climate were studied using bivariate analyses of national normative data.

According to the data, 88% of the participants disagreed with the statement, "Racial discrimination is no longer a problem in America" (Hurtado, 1992, p. 551). Hurtado (1992) affirms that disagreeing with this statement on race shows that the majority of the study participants undergraduate students acknowledged the presence of racial discrimination in America. On the other hand, there was a broader range of participant responses when it came to measuring perceived campus racial relations between the 4-year college campuses. Hurtado suggests that there was a dichotomy between the student participants. Though the participants were aware of the presence of racial discrimination in America, their responses to perceptions of race relations on

campus varied. This variation was attributed to their diverse personal experiences in their varying campus settings; 59% of private, and 61% of public university participants agreed with the statement that, “Students of different ethnic origins communicate well with one another” (p. 551).

Furthermore, data showed that 36% of students who attended public universities and 39% of those who attended private universities in comparison to other 4-year institutions were more prone to report distrust between minority students and campus administrators. The data reflects and supports the point that racial issues impacted student experiences at public and private universities between 1985 and 1989. Private 4-year colleges were less likely to report racial climate issues, with Catholic institution students reporting even less racial conflict. Approximately 82% of students attending Catholic institutions reported that minorities communicated well with one another. Additionally, over 66 % of this same group of students reported faculty sensitivity towards minorities: more than any other participant group (Hurtado, 1992)

The most dichotomous data reported between the institutions was in regards to campus priorities to diversify the student, faculty and administrator population. Forty-seven percent of public 4-year colleges, and 40% of public 4-year universities were more prone to report that their campus had a high or highest priority to recruit minorities. Perceptions that the campus setting fostered a culturally diverse environment, was reported as a high priority amongst the institutions by less than half of the participants. Each of the racial groups showed significant differences in regards to their backgrounds, and perceptions of their surroundings. The average family income reported by Chicanos in this study was approximately \$27,850. Chicanos reported lower

social self-confidence than Black or White participants. Furthermore, Chicanos also reported lower levels of education, and political liberalism. Black participants reported significantly higher social self-confidence than Chicanos. Blacks were also more apt to take part in campus rallies and protests, indicating high political liberalism. Additionally, Blacks highly respected the need to encourage racial acceptance. White participants reported much higher family incomes than either of the groups, with an average of approximately \$42,100. Unlike the Black participants, Whites were less likely to report any interest in taking part in endorsing racial understanding (Hurtado, 1992).

Returning to collect data 4 years later, Hurtado (1992) found a shift in the perception of Black participants. Reports of experiences and perceptions of the campus climate became even more racially critical for Blacks.

Moreover, Black students reported greater racial tension 4 year later. Furthermore, Black students also had a decline in reporting that their campus's focus was on enhancing diversity within that environment. Student-centered focus from the campuses was least likely to be perceived by Chicano students. However, across the groups, there was not much variation in the perception that their campus placed priorities on building their respective institution's reputation and capital. Individuals that were likely to perceive racial tension on their campus were those who reported political liberalism. Furthermore, political liberalism was mostly reported by the following: White women, Blacks, as well as Chicanos and White students who intended to become involved with political issues on campus such as protests. Hurtado (1992) discusses that it may be that these particular groups are likely to perceive racial tension on campus because of their prior experiences, which have exposed them to the issues of

societal and racial unfairness. Hurtado points out that perceived racial tensions stem from situations that are experienced at any particular campus, thus overriding the concept that racial tension is only perceived by a certain race. Hurtado's hypothesis is supported by the data, showing that there can be many distal characteristics that can mediate proximal measures of the student perception of racial tension on a college campus. In other words, there are certain factors and criteria within the campus environment that can mediate a student's perception of racial climate.

Persistence and Engagement

African American male students' perception of campus climate and culture directly correlates with their engagement and success, but the research on success and engagement is limited to the African American male experience in 4-year colleges. The literature indicates that, nationally, African American males have the lowest rate of engagement on college campuses (Cuyjet, 2006; Foster, 2008). Yet, most of the literature on African American males at community college campuses is primarily quantitative research that used surveys or analysis of data sets. The literature provides the data about the males' lack of engagement, but the reasons for it remain unaddressed. The literature on African American males at community colleges is beginning to increase, but these voices need to be included in the literature base. The rich context of the individual interviews in the present study may provide some reasons for the ongoing lack of campus engagement.

Engagement has a direct link to desired educational processes and emphasizes actions that institutions can take to encourage student interactions on campus in and out of the classroom (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). African American students' level of

campus engagement can be influenced by institutional support and family encouragement, according to the studies conducted by Herndon and Hirt (2004) and Palmer et al. (2011). The key is the creation of a friendly, welcoming environment for students.

This is supported in additional research (Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Museus & Harris, 2010) regarding membership in subcultures such as ethnic and racial student clubs and organizations. These memberships allow for student development growth, peer mentoring, and guidance for accessing assistance within the dominant campus culture. The role models from organization advisors and peer members become even more important for African American males attending PWIs. This is due to the scarcity in numbers of African American males in higher education who could serve as role models. The students also need family and community support to help them build campus networks to support their success (Museus & Harris, 2010). The students' families and community supporters can assist the students in developing a trust in the campus community and its resources. Another factor that can enhance students' persistence and levels of success is their ability to cope as a minority in a PWI. Coping mechanisms and approaches are part of the racial socialization that families provide their children to aid them in dealing with the stressors of racism in the United States.

Other engagement and encouragement research focuses on family and mentors. Museus and Harris (2010) concurred with Herndon and Hirt (2004) that parental and peer support increased African American students' sense of belonging and ability to persist. Sledge (2012) provided a review of the literature on family support for African American students and discussed several studies that indicated that family support,

whether immediate or extended support, can be critical to African American students' college success. The research also indicates that fictive kin, who are not family, such as church family, neighbors, or friends, are also part of this support network and also have a positive impact on a student's college persistence and his or her psychological wellbeing.

Two of the studies that Sledge (2012) reviewed as reporting these outcomes were from Herndon and Hirt (2004), who conducted research on African American students and their families at two North Atlantic area (PWIs), and Palmer et al. (2011), who conducted a similar study at a HBCU. The findings indicated implications for African American college students, their families, and college personnel. The study by Herndon and Hirt (2004) indicated that precollege stages were influenced by family (immediate, extended, or fictive), views on higher education, perceptions of race and resiliency, and motivation to succeed. In their findings, Herndon and Hirt also noted that family and friends could influence their students during the early college years to develop a network of friends, religious support, and campus connections.

Finally, Herndon and Hirt (2004) described mentoring from recent grads or upper classmen as a proactive means for developing a sense of community and campus engagement among African American students. The mentoring allowed the upper classmen and recent grads a sense of fulfillment by giving back to their college community, and it provided guidance and community for the new students. They described the encouragement given by the mentoring from the older students as significant in enhancing the campus engagement of the younger students. The authors described the limitations of this study being inherent to the nature of it being a

qualitative study. They described the study using qualitative research methods that do not enable broad generalizations about the results, since only a small sample was represented. The study participants were 20 African American university seniors and their families from a large rural and an urban PWI in the North Atlantic area. The researchers also noted that the questions used in their interviews could have been misinterpreted and that this could have been another limitation to the study.

Hausmann et al. (2007) posited that a student's sense of belonging could have an effect on retention. They suggested that many studies based on Tinto (1988, 1993) and Astin (1984) consider *belonging* as a part of the overall construct that examines institutional fit, while their 2007 study sought to examine it as a separate construct.

Hausmann et al. (2007) examined sense of belonging among African American and White students using experimental paradigm in which students were randomly assigned to either an intervention or one of the two groups. The authors found two differences among the African American and White students regarding their first year and sense of belonging. They determined that the relationship between the effect of parental support and sense of belonging at the beginning of the year was strong for all students, but it was especially strong for African American students. The students show gains in their academic and social integration when given the opportunity to strengthen their ethnic pride and self-esteem through inclusive diversity in their classroom curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Other scholars have found that African American students seek advice, and find required emotional support more from their family and friends than through their campus, especially during their first year (Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Palmer et al., 2011).

African American college students, whether they are attending a PWI or an HBCU, are very likely to turn to their family support system for advice and encouragement (Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Palmer et al., 2011; Sledge, 2012). The African American students are comfortable asking those whom they trust, their family and friends, for advice about a variety of their college issues. These issues can vary from academic topics to assimilation issues and social problems with friends or roommates. Students described their parents as friends and people they trust to help them solve their problems (Sledge, 2012). Students described their family-and-friends supports as being friendly and at times stern. Students stated that their family and friends offered words of encouragement, prayers, and straight talk when it was most needed (Herndon & Moore, 2002; Palmer et al., 2011).

In a recent review of the literature on African American family support of their students, Sledge (2012) discussed recent research by Guiffrida (2006) that supports Tierney (1992) in stating that minority students need their family support before and throughout their college experience. Guiffrida calls for a shift in Tinto's theory, which previously called for new students disengaging from family in order to bond with their college. The research is further supported by Herndon and Hirt's (2006) study at two PWIs and by Palmer et al. (2011) at an HBCU, which indicated the significance of family support, whether immediate or extended family, being critical to African American students' college success. The research also indicated that this support and encouragement has a positive impact on students' college persistence and psychological well-being. They suggested involving families in the orientation process and providing information and updates on college expectations. This type of assistance

provided first- generation families with a knowledge base to encourage and support their students with appropriate information.

Educators are coming to realize that African American males are not a homogenous monolithic group, and nor are their families. The level of education and SES among the Black family, whether an intact two-person couple or a single mother, varies from having high school diplomas to advanced degrees. This also means the families' SES varies from low-income to upper middle-class. Additionally, recent research (Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Palmer et al., 2011) has noted that African American students come from a broad range of family structures. These families can consist of a core family who lives with extended family to two-parent families that live in lower or upper middle-class city neighborhoods or a suburban area. Additionally, many students reported being raised by supportive grandparents who may or may not have a college education, but who offer them encouragement to *do their best* and *make the family proud*. Sledge (2012) has noted that the major influence of the fathers was the amount of time the father devoted to spending time and interacting with his children, whether or not he lived at home. She also noted that multiple studies commented on the need for more role models for African American males when they come from single-parent homes. However, in both Herndon and Hirt (2004) and Palmer et al.'s (2011) studies, students directed the researchers to the female family members even in two parent homes. The current literature on African American family support of their students (Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Palmer et al., 2011; Sledge, 2012) agrees with other scholars (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Phinney, 1999; Wong et al., 2003) that the family influences a student's values about learning and college. A

student's socialization about race and experiences with discrimination are influenced by the family's views. The scholars agree that family involvement and support before and during college are critical factors for students to have successful college outcomes. Research also indicates that ethnic identity development is related to feeling encouraged about having a sense of pride and a sense of one's place in the world (Dagley et al., 2001). Some African American male students do not have the strong racial socialization that enhances their ethnic identity development due to challenges in their backgrounds. It has been shown that lack of parental support or a history of parental criminality inhibits racial socialization and ethnic identity development in dysfunctional families.

Many of the issues that affect African American male students' resiliency and persistence can be traced to social, cultural, and educational challenges in their backgrounds. Over the last 4 decades, researchers have examined and documented the sociological and economic barriers affecting the academic achievements of students of color and first-generation college students. In a longitudinal study, Stewart (2006) analyzed national data to look at family and individual predictors of educational success. Stewart noted that a number of studies had suggested that parents of higher SES were more involved in their children's education than parents in lower SES and this culminated in their children having higher achievement and more positive attitudes about school. Past research, such as the Coleman Report, stated that the single biggest factor that affected children's academic achievement was the educational and social background of the children's family (Coleman et al., 1996).

Negative involvement pertains to over-involved-parents pushing their students towards certain college majors or career goals, based on their own desires, with little regard for the student's interests or goals. On the other extreme are parents who don't help their student overcome homesickness but instead encourage them to visit home often or every weekend. This causes the student separation anxiety and creates resistance to assimilating to the campus. Other examples of negative involvement are when parents take advantage of students who live at home to take care of siblings or other family members and demand that their students give up study time to engage in family events. These negative involvements may require the student to stay away from the parents in order to successfully assimilate and engage in their new culture on campus (Herndon & Moore, 2002).

Possible Causes of Disengagement

Over the past 20 years, research focusing on the plight of at-risk and first-generation students, and students of color, has documented the sociological barriers and academic challenges of these students as an aggregate group without using gender as a variable (Cooley, Cornell, & Lee, 1991; Furr & Elling-Theodore, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzi, 2005). Earlier research (Cokley, 2002; Cross & Slater, 2000; Davis, 1994) focused on concerns regarding the social barriers to college success for African American students. These studies provided insight into the plight of minority, at-risk, and first-generation students and documented the sociological barriers and academic challenges of these students, including racism within the education setting, as noted by Chavous et al. (2008), and underdeveloped academic preparation.

Other scholars sought to examine the impact of barriers on African American males in relationship to cultural identity, disengagement from campus life, and dissatisfaction with college experiences (Braxton, 2000; Bush, 2004; Chavous et al., 2003). The last decade of research (Bonner, Bailey, & Cuyjet, 2006; Flowers, 2006; Harper et al., 2004) provides evidence to support earlier research that African American males are capable of overcoming environmental barriers to successfully matriculate through higher education when given well-developed and formalized support systems (Cooley et al., 1991; LaVant et al., 1997). What types of societal barriers have many African American males encountered that causes them to need more academic and social support to successfully matriculate in higher education?

One of the societal barriers challenging many minority and/or low-income students is being a first-generation college student. A discussion of first-generation college students is really a discussion about their families and their level of education. The U.S Department of Education (2010) reported that as of 2009, 50% of the national college population, consisting of both 4-year and 4-year students, were first-generation students based on the federal TRIO Program's and PELL Institute Report's definitions. These students' parents are those whose education ended after completing high school or some college. The federal government's operating definition of first-generation student is based on parents' education ending after high school. However, in the higher education community, there is no one definition that is used for this demographic, thereby creating confusion. The National Center for Education Statistics often supports scholarly research, and in some of their supported studies, the definition varies from parents having never attended college, to some college, to a bachelor's degree or

higher (Davis, 2010). Davis (2010) also points out that at many 4-year universities a student can claim first-generation status if neither parent has completed a bachelor's degree or higher, so this includes parents with an associate's degree.

In 2010, NCES's Office of Education Research and Improvement published a report on the condition of access, persistence, and attainment specific to students whose parents did not go to college, which also was the title of the report. Choy (2001) states that the data indicates that "the likelihood of enrolling in postsecondary education is strongly related to the parents' education" (p.28), even when other factors are taken into consideration, indicating that the level of the parents' education has a direct correlation to the likelihood of their children enrolling in postsecondary education. Choy also reported that between 1992 and 1994, the proportion of high school graduates who went to college increased according to the parents' level of education. For example, in 1992, 59% high school graduates whose parents did not go to college enrolled in secondary education. By 1994, the enrollment rate of those whose parents had some college education was 75% and the enrollment rate among those whose parents had at least a bachelor's degree was 93%.

Students' decisions to enroll in postsecondary education are influenced by a variety of factors, including family income, educational expectations, parental involvement, and influences from their peers (Choy, 2001). The demographics makeup of first-generation students described in a 2010 NCES report used the *high school diploma* definition for parents' education and broke out the educational levels of the first-generation students based on race and ethnicity. Minority groups made up the largest demographic group of students with parents having high school diplomas or less,

including 48.5% of Hispanic and Latino students and 45% of African American students. Among Asian population, reported 32% reported their parents as having only a high school diploma or less, while Native Americans were slightly higher at 35%. Meanwhile, only 28% of Caucasian reported that their parents had high school diplomas or less. The numbers continue to be higher for minorities, especially Latino and African American students, but the overall statistics indicate the trend toward more first-generation students in general attending colleges.

In contrast to his high-achieving Black male peers, the average African American male often arrives at the PWI college/university with stereotyped labels preceding his arrival. He may lack the self-awareness of the high-achieving African American male leaders at HBCUs and PWIs and is facing the reality of being underprepared and registered for developmental courses. Many of his behaviors have been described as a defense mechanism for being relegated to second-class citizenship or oppositional behavior so as not to be perceived as acting White (Harper, 2006; Harris & Edwards, 2010; Major & Billson, 1992; Ogbu, 1988). The description of the word *cool* by Majors and Billson (1992) relates to Black men using a hardened and detached demeanor to cope with discrimination and racism without losing their sanity. Reese (2004) agrees with this definition and notes that coolness is a symbol of defiance. Harris and Edwards (2010) talked about the men feeling societal pressures to perform *like a man*. They described young college men often felt the need to wear a mask of hyper-masculine behaviors which they realized were damaging to themselves and others. They would focus on partying and not preparing for classes. The young men would, at some point in

their development, seek guidance from older role models who challenged these societal norms and expressed masculinity in a broader fashion.

Four Elements of Successful Faculty – Student Engagement

Woods (2010) identified four key faculty-initiated elements that serve to create and maintain positive faculty- student relationships: “(a) being friendly and caring from the onset; (b) monitoring and proactively addressing students’ academic progress; (c) listening to students’ concerns; and (d) encouraging students to succeed” (p. 16). The author posits that peer involvement and social engagement are important but should be focused towards academic learning and student leadership instead of purely social in nature. They report students found socially centered interactions to be more distracting and this hampered academic focus and success.

Spirituality

Spirituality has been a force that has carried African people through the oppression of slavery. West African people emphasized balance between the natural and spiritual worlds. When enslaved and transported to America, the African people continued their spiritual practices through stories and song. Slave owners introduced Christianity to many of the slaves in the hope that it would make the slaves more docile. However, some slaves had been introduced to Christianity pre-slavery via missionaries that visited Africa.

The spirituality and spiritual practices of African Americans can be traced back to the period before African enslavement. That same spiritual core has remained with African Americans of today. Spirituality is not limited to religious practices; rather, it forms a person’s epistemological foundation. Many African Americans who are spiritual

do not limit their spirituality to something that only occurs within a physical building or place of worship; rather, their spirituality exists because of a personal relationship that they have established with God.

Researchers have investigated the effect of the internal spirituality that many African American college students possess. For example, Jett (2010) investigated the experiences of four African American male graduate students in mathematics to understand the influence of spirituality on their educational outcomes. The study revealed that (a) spirituality helped them carry on their mission to fulfill the academic goals, (b) a connection with a higher power guided their general and academic plans, and (c) the participants possessed a spirituality that was internal.

A similar study was conducted regarding the faith of African American male college students. Dancy (2010) conducted a study among 24 African American male college students in which participants were asked questions regarding their spirituality. The study revealed that (a) most participants credited their mothers for their own spiritual growth, (b) church was seen as a supportive community, and (c) the participants' spirituality was internal and not bound to a place of worship. Themes that emerged from study data included that (a) spirituality and religious participation served as sources of support and dependency, (b) participants indicated that spirituality was at the core of their understanding of their own identities, and (c) spirituality caused some tension / dissonance when it came to the participants' identities. Students turned to spirituality to help them combat stereotypes, academic disengagement, limited mentorship opportunities, and limited opportunities to connect with off-campus communities that mattered to them.

Stroud (2014) conducted a qualitative study around the spirituality of African American male college students at PWIs. The study was based on the idea that participants relied on spirituality to help them cope with stereotypes and stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Regarding stereotype threat, the study revealed that (a) participants were stereotyped by Whites as being academically inferior, (b) participants hid their intelligence in order to avoid scrutiny from African American peers, and (c) participants were mindful of how their actions could be viewed as confirming negative stereotypes. The study also revealed that (a) family and friends provided support for participants, (b) participants took it upon themselves to find other minority students, (c) participants were already used to being minorities in high school, and (d) attending a PWI placed the participants in a racially realistic environment that represented the racial climate and demographics of the U.S. workplace and society that they would operate in after college (i.e., participants felt that they should get used to the racial climate and demographics before leaving college; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Participants were able to resist practices that contradicted their spiritual beliefs through prayer, reading the Bible, and listening to gospel music. Participants relied on spirituality for decision-making, and they recognized that spirituality helped them keep life situations in their proper perspective.

Researchers have also identified sources of support and motivation other than spirituality that impact the experience of the African American male college student. For example, Baber (2014) conducted a series of interviews among African American males in college. Results of the study revealed that Black males benefited from insider advice from older peers. The study also revealed that there was pressure on males to work in

lieu of obtaining a college education and that college education is sometimes perceived as not being masculine. According to a questionnaire on college student experiences, Black males who attend liberal arts colleges are less likely to engage in peer cooperation than those at master's colleges. Additionally, Black male contact with faculty is independent of institution type (e.g., liberal arts, masters, research; Strayhorn & Devita, 2010).

It is important to note that literature gathered for this study serves as the groundwork for African American males enrolled in academic and support services programs in community colleges. Spirituality, in most instances within African American culture, offers a psychological sacramental that restores hope and motivation holistically. Several theories endorse this reasoning and shed light to the effects when not allowed to prevail.

Bandura's Self Efficacy Theory

Bandura's (1977) self efficacy theory defined self-efficacy as a conviction of a person regarding his ability to do particular set of tasks and get specific results. The concept originated from his famous social learning theory. The main assumption of social learning theory is that the learning process is linked to the observation meaning that without observation, the purpose of the learning process cannot be fulfilled. According to Lopez, Lent, Brown, Gore (1997), efficacy beliefs influence one's behavior as well as their ability to persevere regardless of the challenges in which they encounter. As such, those individuals with a heightened sense of self-efficacy tend to embrace adversities and tasks instead of choosing to avoid and or be intimidated by

them. They are less prone to perceive failure as an inadequacy but are able to view it as an educational opportunity to acquire better skills (Bandura, 1977).

Individuals with a heightened sense of self- efficacy are likely to have high aspirations. They are also able to exhibit control when confronted with threatening situations (Bandura, 1977, 1994). Conversely, those individuals with low self-efficacy are less prone to set goals and view hardships and complex tasks as personal threats. As such, when their confidence levels are affected by failures and setbacks, they become vulnerable to anxiety and at worst may experience depression (Bandura, 1994). Bandura (1994) further indicated that there are four sources of influence that are substantiated by the self-efficacy. These are: social persuasion, vicarious experiences, emotional states, and mastery experiences. Mastery experiences are integral to the development of one's self-efficacy. It involves the process of becoming proficient in achieving tasks and goals, and the capacity to withstand obstacles. Individuals who possess this ability are able to rebound from setbacks and understand that success requires hard work and effort (Bandura, 1994; Parajes & Schunk, 2002).

Vicarious experiences can be defined as the process by which a person observes the success of someone who is similar to them. Often times, people become motivated to attain a goal when they are able to witness someone else's accomplishments. In contrast, witnessing someone else's failures and setbacks can have a detrimental impact on an individual's motivation and confidence level as well (Bandura, 1994; Parajes & Schunk, 2002).

Social persuasion develops a person's self-efficacy because it cultivates their confidence about what they can accomplish (Bandura, 1994; Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

For instance, people are more likely to excel when receiving positive reinforcement from others. However their self-confidence may become impaired when they are the recipients of criticism and pessimism (Morris, 2004; Reid, 2007).

Emotional states of arousal (e.g., anxiety, fear, and depression) can have a negative effect on one's efficacy beliefs by preventing them from successfully accomplishing particular tasks such as driving, public speaking, and test-taking (Bandura, 1994). According to Bandura (1997), high levels of arousal during stressful situations can lead to failure. As such, those individuals who lack control over certain situations ironically can develop increased levels of stress that are likely to produce the very dysfunction that they originally feared.

Earlier research examined the relationships between self-efficacy and variables such as social phobia, depression, social skills, assertiveness, pain control, and athletic performance (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). However, within the past 4 decades, the construct has been the focus of various educational research studies particularly in the area of academic performance (Elias & Loomis, 2001, 2006; Lent, Brown & Larkin, 1986; Lopez et al., 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). The self-efficacy construct is one way in which scholars can examine the correlation between institutions of higher education and first generation Black males low success rates. Is there a correlation between the low success rates for first generation Black males whom embody a positive conviction about their capability to perform certain task and achieve specific outcomes (self-efficacy) regardless of the counterproductive systematic institutional ideologies that is historically geared for the success of elite White males?

Zimmerman's academic self-efficacy theory refers to a person's perception about their capability to attain a specific educational task (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Studies have found that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy, persistence, motivation, and achievement in educational settings too (Bandura, 1986; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Zimmerman, 1989). A number of scholars have suggested that the intensity of one's performance in academic settings is based upon their self-efficacy beliefs (Choi, 2005; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Miller, 1994; Wood & Locke, 1997). Schunk and Swartz (1993) argued that students acquire a heightened sense of self-efficacy through certain academic accomplishments (e.g., high GPAs and SAT scores). Others scholars have asserted that those individuals who possess a heightened sense of academic self-efficacy tend to persevere in seeking solutions. They also tend to have good cognitive, coping, critical thinking, and time management skills (Bandura, 1997; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Eccles, Midgley, & Adley, 1984; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991).

Tinto's Student Departure Theory

Tinto's (1988) student departure theory, which was based on van Gennep's research on human development amongst tribal communities, has been scrutinized by several scholars for being culturally insensitive (Guiffrida, 2006; Moore & Upcraft, 1992; Nora, 2001; Strayhorn, 2008a; Tierney, 1999). Van Gennep (1960) proposed that individuals evolve through a series of stages. Each stage is symbolic of a certain rite of passage and is acknowledged and celebrated through socially significant events. These events serve as tangible evidence of an individual's accomplishments and integration into his or her tribal community.

Tinto (1988) applied Van Gennep's rites of passage concept to that institutions of higher education setting. He strongly believed that a student's inability to properly acclimate to institutions culture would result in his or her departure from the institution. Tierney (1992) opposed Tinto's student departure theory. He posited that the theory was too broad and did not accurately reflect Van Gennep's theory, and that it had potentially damaging effects on racial and ethnic minority students. He believes that mentoring relationships reduce the effects of stress in student lives and strengthens their ability to cope with stress in certain social situations (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993), further, argued that students bring to college baggage from home that often interferes with their academic commitment. Thus, when they separate from home and start to engage in academic and social endeavors their commitment towards college grows stronger.

Delgado's Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) indicates that racism is thoroughly imparted in the roots and system of the American society. It has been part of the daily life of people since it is what they were taught in their homes and schools and what they see in their own society. The individual racist is not required to note that institutional racism has become prevalent and spread in the dominant culture. Instead, CRT uses an analytical lens to identify existing power structures. Based on this, CRT proposes that these power structures are formed on white supremacy and privileges, which upholds the marginalization of African American and people of color. In addition, CRT also refuses the assumptions towards traditions of meritocracy and liberalism. CRT also challenges the claim of legal disclosure regarding the neutrality and color blinding of law by

assessing the meritocracy and liberalism as the tools for power, self-interest, and privilege. CRT acknowledges that meritocracy and liberalism are often based on the tales heard from those with privilege, power, and wealth. These tales actually draw a fake image of the beliefs of meritocracy and liberalism that everyone can attain the privilege, power, and wealth through only hard work, while ignoring the systemic inequalities that institutional racism persists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Deficit Model

The deficit model suggests that students of color and students from low SES backgrounds are at a disadvantage when it comes to teachers' expectations and outcomes. Many of the student learning objectives outcomes goals are implemented and measured with the notion that if student work harder they will achieve the teachers expectation and student success will improve. This model focuses on the student's weaknesses rather than approaching student success from strength based pedagogy. According to a study by the NCES, teachers' expectations influence student success more than a student's own motivation. These influences impact student progresses as well as students desire to want to continue with school. As suggested by the African American male theory (AAMT) that the African American male is born innately and biologically different with a desire for self determination, morality, and intelligence (Bush & Bush, 2013). Models that are socially constructed to approach African American from a deficit model does not embrace these innate characteristics merely adds to the educational challenges facing African American male students.

Harper's Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework

The ADAF is one of the most widely discussed frameworks in research on undergraduate African American males, and it has been applied in recent literature on Black males in psychology, education, gender studies, sociology, and society. It was designed as a framework for qualitative research on students of African American students. The framework centers on the structures, restructures, and successes and can be used to frame research questions that assess a positive, anti-deficit approach to the subjects (Harper, 2012). Also, instead of concentrating on questions related to education disadvantages and underrepresentation among other challenges, scholars have applied this framework for an alternative perspective by focusing on positive characteristics of subjects. Harper (2012) indicated that this framework does not depend on the previous conceptual models and theories that have examined the deficits associated with African American males' academic success. The author argued that centering on the tenacity towards the attainment of the degree, this framework deliberately examines how some African American and other students of color can be successful. Apart from that, Bandura (1986, 1987) indicated that anti-deficit framework is also based on some social capital and cultural theories as well as some self-efficacy theories. On the other hand, Tinto (1993) claimed that this framework is based on college student retention theories while Yosso and Solórzano (2006) and Yosso (2005) claimed that this theory is based on critical race theory among others.

Many empirical studies on students of color amplify the failure and deficits of underrepresented student groups instead of their achievements (Harper, 2012). In addition to that, Samson (2004) argued that various authors use the deficiency model or

cultural deficit theories for the explanation of success and lack of success on the student of color. Similarly, Bandura (1994) asserts a strengths-based and positive framework can help us develop a better understanding of what leads to academic success and yield more outcomes that are effective. For example, deficit oriented research on Latino students has not diminished the rate of failure experienced by Latinos (Bandura, 1995). Owing to the nature of deficiency models which label failure to the culture and value of the underrepresented population, they essentially blame a marginalized group for its lack of achievement rather than considering the groups' achievements relative to the larger system (Barajas & Pierce, 2001).

Solutions

The current body of literature has a large amount of empirical evidence to support the educational merit of intentionally establishing racially diverse college campuses. Most of this literature has supported the evidence and testimony for affirmative action cases from University of Michigan (*Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*). These empirical studies confirmed that students in racially diverse colleges tend to be highly engaged in educationally purposeful activities, which also included the meaningful interactions with the diverse peers from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. In addition, they tend to come to college to enjoy the interpersonal, psychosocial and cognitive gains that are beneficial during and post college (Antonio et al., 2004; Chang, 1999, 2001; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Chang, Denson, Saenz & Misa 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Pike & Kuh, 2006). Further, Sáenz, Nagi, and Hurtado (2007) indicated that

Students, especially whites, who tend to engage meaningful with their peers from different racial backgrounds and diverse cultures both inside and outside college classroom are less likely to feel lonely or isolated within their own racial/ethnic communities. This indicates that exposure to diverse cultures during the college could challenge the longstanding segregation trends prevailing in the society. (p. 20)

However, Milem, Umbach and Liang (2004) argued that this is more effective after college in the environments which are sustainable such as residential neighborhoods. Contrary to these results, Levin, van Laar, and Sidanius (2003) suggested that students especially first-year undergraduates, who maintained racially homogenous friendships with their peers with outside their race, tended to have fewer biases and express less social anxiety towards other races/ethnicities at the end of the college. The findings of Antonio (2004) further revealed that “participants of this study on the friendship grouping agreed that their campus was racially segregated and that range of racially homogenous groups exist in their colleges” (p. 25). Despite these revelations, the findings stated that many students tend to develop best friendships with peers whom they interacted mostly in the first year of college regardless of their race or ethnicity. These results indicated the “significance of institutional intent in promoting spaces and opportunities for diverse and meaningful cross-racial engagement, especially for those students who are newly enrolled in the colleges” (p.32).

Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature related to the history of community colleges nationally and in the state of California, and the history of the Los Angeles Community

College District. Chapter 2 also framed the study using critical race theory and Harper's (2012) ADAF, and Bandura's self efficacy theory. The theoretical framework outlined critical issues Black males encounter. Building on the new phenomenon of reframing the anti-deficit approach includes challenging the traditional customs and legacies of institutions of higher education. Challenging these customs includes accessing the complexities of campus climate and culture as it relates to the first generation Black male. Institutions of higher education, have always had to address complex issues and many of them have begun to address the campus climate and culture and embracing the change.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of Research Design

This research aimed to determine the impact of traditional deficit indicators on Black male college students' experience and to explore Harper's (2012) ADAF as an additional approach to increase success rates of African American males. This chapter gives an overview of the research design strategies and qualitative methodology. The chapter starts with a description of the nature and history of the selected research methodology followed by the purpose statement and restatement of research questions. The chapter concludes with an outline of the data collection plan, sampling procedures, and overview of the IRB policies and procedures, data analysis plan, and an overall summary of the methods.

Background Qualifications of Researcher

As a member of the African American community, and an educator at a local community college the author frequently interacts with African American males in a variety of settings and roles. This experience is informative to the research process but it also important for any qualitative researcher to develop an awareness of their biases so that they do not unduly impact the research and interpretation of the findings. Bracketing is a process by which the principal investigator or researcher sets aside his or her personal experiences. Creswell (2009) claims bracketing "allows the researcher to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination" (p. 59). According to Moustakas (1994), "this state is seldom perfectly achieved" (p. 60). It is an attempt by the researcher to share experiences explicitly before proceeding with the collection of experiences and insights of others.

As principal investigator and a fourth year Organizational Leadership doctoral student at Pepperdine University, I embraced the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program wholeheartedly. During the orientation seminar, I noticed an extremely diverse group of first year students. I also noticed that this diverse group was heavily populated with females. The small minority group of males had even less African American males. That is when I begin to observe the success rates of African American males in higher education.

As an African American female, the success of African American males is important to my culture, community, and society as a whole. Being a wife and the mother of two African American men, it is important for me to understand their plight. To better understand their plight, I decided to research and contribute to the body of work regarding them. I have held several leadership positions working with this population. First, as president of Audacity Public Charter Schools, I led my staff as they executed contemporary curriculum to include productive and positive methods to ensure African American males at Audacity are successful. Secondly, I was Executive Director of a mentoring program in the greater Los Angeles area, California, which mentored and tutored primarily African American males where I was responsible for a budget of \$1.5 million. Thirdly, I supervised a staff of ten in the Family Services Program at the Los Angeles Urban League, and finally I have worked vigorously with several charter schools in the Los Angeles area and assisted with developing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and curricula for African Americans. I worked with African Methodist Episcopal Churches (AMEs) that included American Americans males. I have held board positions for the National Counsel for Negro Woman (NCNW) and Souls of

Mahogany (SOM), which has sponsored workshop for youth in the community. I have received awards from the City of Los Angeles for my community service and I have received Congressional Recognition in 2004. I have traveled nationally and internationally; designed and implemented programs to assist with African American males' education.

Currently, as an Assistant Professor at a community college for 4 years, the population of African American males is greater than any of the other nine Los Angeles Community College District. As a professor at Los Angeles Southwest Community College, I have encountered the challenges African American males face on a daily basis. Although there are, several programs offered at Los Angeles Southwest College to support and serve African American Males (EOPS/Care, Freshman Experience, Student Success Center, Talent Search, Trios Scholars, Trio STEM and Upward Bound). The PASSAGES program is unique because its sole purpose is to support minority males and of the programs offered to African American males on campus it has the highest enrollment of African American Males on campus.

Research Design

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), "qualitative researchers stress there is a socially constructed nature of reality the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquire" (p. 13). Given the research goals of this project and the nature of the topic, a qualitative approach was used to collect data. Qualitative research aims to recognize the world from the viewpoint of the subjects, revealing the meaning of their experiences and exposing their lived world (Brinkman & Steinar, 2015). Qualitative data was gathered through a

demographic questionnaire and a semi structured face-to-face interview using a standardized protocol. Additionally, narratives of lived experiences were documented. A standardized protocol was used to elicit responses to the same questions and then to identify commonalties of the shared lived experiences of the participants. The descriptions of what people experience lies in how they have experienced it (Patton, 1990).

In this study, the model by which the data were coded and analyzed is based on Moustakas (1994) and can be described as a combination of phenomenological and grounded theory approaches. The unit of analysis was each individual interview, the researcher coded the data according to the themes identified across the interviews. The themes were developed to highlight *the truth* of the participants' perceptions, as evidenced by the frequency with which these themes occurred across interviews.

Restatement of Research Questions

RQ1: How were aspirations for higher education cultivated among Black students who are currently enrolled in the PASSAGES program?

RQ2: What compels Black undergraduate men enrolled in the PASSAGES program to pursue leadership and engagement opportunities on their campuses?

RQ3: How do Black male collegians manage to persist and earn their degrees despite transition issues, racist stereotypes, academic under preparedness, and other negative forces?

RQ4: What resources are most effective in helping Black males achievers earn GPA above 3.0 in a variety of majors including STEM fields?

RQ5: How do Black men go about cultivating meaningful, value-added relationships with key institutional agents?

Target Population

The PASSAGES program consist of over 500 minority males and for this study, the participants consisted of 20 African American males, between the ages of 18-30, enrolled in the PASSAGES program at Los Angeles Southwest College. All participants met the minimum requirement to participate in the PASSAGES program. As previously stated the researcher had access to this population because of her current position as an Assistant Professor at Los Angeles Southwest College and she has a personal working relationship with the Coordinator of the PASSAGES program via department meetings, committees, and other campus activities. This is a convenience sample, based on the researcher's access to the program coordinator and student population. Although convenience samples have inherent limitations, such as unknown biases that may be present, there are practical benefits. The researcher gained trust with population based on her familiarity of the PASSAGES program, campus procedures, and relationship with students on campus. As a result, the researcher was able to interpret interview responses in the context of her, familiarity with the culture of the campus, student, and community.

Background of PASSAGES Program

The PASSAGES Program is an academic and student support service designed to increase the success of male students at Los Angeles Southwest College. The services offered feature; counseling, field trips, workshops, study halls, and mentors.

The program focuses on empowering and equipping male students with the tools for academic success.

The mission of the PASSAGES Program is to create an academically supportive and resourceful environment that cultivates college persistence and success for male students. The program fosters a holistic and student centered approach that includes academic, personal and social development. The goal is to create a sense of community, which promotes a shared learning experience, empowerment, integrity, citizenship, and unity (www.lasc.edu/passages).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Sample

The inclusion criteria for this study included:

- Participants must be African American males between the ages of 18-30 and enrolled in the PASSAGES program for at least two semesters.
- Maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and 6 units of coursework each semester.
- Meet with a counselor at least twice a semester to develop and review a comprehensive educational plan.
- Complete at least 3 hours of tutoring/study hall and sign the Passage Program tutoring log form.
- Submit two signed progress reports from all instructors. Progress reports are due to assigned counselor during the fourth and 12th week of each semester.
- Attend at least two Passage Program activities each semester.
- Meet with assigned mentor three times each semester.
- Attend Rites of Passage End of the Year Ceremony.

The exclusion criterion for this study was if a potential participant did not meet at least one or more of the inclusion criteria.

Data Collection Procedures

Potential participants were recruited via the PASSAGES office using a range of methods including email, telephone contact. The researcher gained access to the participants via the PASSAGES office. A flyer was posted in the PASSAGES office to recruit potential participants. No candidates had any personal relation to the researcher, and each potential participant was contacted and given an explanation of the study as well as the consent form for the study (see Appendix A). The participants who agreed to participate in the study were contacted for a face-to-face interview. The interview protocol was chosen in order to target the specific issues pertinent to this study (Spector, 1980).

The participants' information was kept confidential. The researcher generated generic codes for each participant. The participants were made aware of the study and given the consent to participate (see Appendix A). The participants who agreed to participate in the study were contacted for a face –to- face interview. The interview protocol was chosen in order to target the specific issues pertinent to this study (Spector, 1980).

Interview Process

After an individual agreed to participate in this study, the investigator and interviewee agreed on an interview date and time. Prior to the interview, the researcher provided the interviewees in advance of their appointments to remind them of their scheduled interviews. At the interview itself, the consent form again and the interviewee

had the chance to review the terms again before the actual interview. The investigator reassured the interviewee that they could decline to participate in the study at any time. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in a quiet private room in the PASSAGES office.

Using Harper's (2012) ADAF, a five-question semi structured interview was conducted with each participant. The interview questions were the same as the research questions posed for this study, and participants were provided with a copy of the questions for their reference. The investigator scheduled each face-to-face interview for 30-45 minutes and allowed the interviewee approximately 4 minutes to answer each question. To avoid interview fatigue on the part of the researcher, no more than four interviews were scheduled on any given day. The interviews were conducted between February 22, 2017 and March 2, 2017.

The investigator reminded the interviewee that the session is being recorded. In addition to the audio-recorded interviews, the investigator took handwritten notes to capture personal relayed by participants. The handwritten notes were further used for noting participant facial expressions and other forms of non-verbal communication, which could not be captured by the audio recorder. The investigator also probed for further information during the interviews as needed aims.

During the actual interview session, the researcher adhered to the following interview protocol for asking questions and recording answers:

1. Heading – stated the date, name of interviewer and numeric code to identify the interviewee.

2. Instructions – a set of standard procedures to be followed for all interviews.
3. Questions – open with an icebreaker question followed by the pre-determined interview questions and a concluding statement.
4. Probes – to follow up and ask individuals to explain their ideas in detail or elaborate on their answers.
5. Space – a break between questions to record responses.
6. Final Statement – a final gesture to thank the participant for his time.

Protection of Human Subjects

The Pepperdine Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee approved this study (Protocol ID 16-01-179, approval date February 29, 2016). In order to comply with the IRB and federal regulations, the investigator followed the protocol as specified in the above referenced approved protocol. To eliminate any potential risks that could harm the human subjects and the research site, the investigator followed the specific research procedure as approved by the IRB at Pepperdine University. Prior to conducting the interviews, the investigator conveyed the purpose of the study to each interviewee as part of the participant consent form. The investigator protected the confidentiality of human subjects by providing a numeric code for each interviewee and provided a pseudonym for and the research site and program.

During the recruitment of prospective interviewees, the investigator disclosed the purpose of the research project. In addition to the disclosure of the purpose, the investigator provided an opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions or seek clarification about the research project. Upon the interviewee's acceptance of the

interview offer, the investigator provided a copy of the participant consent form, which clearly outlined the purpose of the research project. The Participant Consent Form also discloses the interviewee's right to opt out of the research project (see Appendix A).

Confidentiality

Each participant was given unique numeric codes that were associated with the information they provided while participating in the study. Participant information was kept confidential. All electronic statistical and qualitative data was stored on a flash drive and on a researcher's personal computer, which is password protected. All information collected was backed up on an external hard drive. Only the principal investigator and the faculty advisor had access to the data, which was stored according to IRB requirements.

Risk to Participants

This study was classified as being minimal risk. Minimal risk is described as minor discomforts that might be encountered in normal daily life such as fatigue, stress or becoming upset. Participants experienced no more risk or stress than what would be experienced while at school or during an examination. The principal risk to the subject was potential for harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.

Several measures were taken by the investigator during administration of the interviews to monitor any potential distress or risk to participants. The participation of this study comprised economically and educationally disadvantaged African American male community college students between the ages of 18-30. During the interviews, the investigator observed the participants' facial expressions, gestures, hand movements, and non-verbal communication to assess their level of comfort. When the investigator

sensed that a participant was experiencing a minor level of discomfort she paused rephrased, and asked if they needed clarification.

Validity and Reliability

To address issues of validity and reliability the researcher and transcriber who was not involved with the data collection analyzed the de-identified data. The researcher used trained doctoral students in the Organizational Leadership program as assistant coders. In qualitative research, as in quantitative research reliability is determined by establishing the dependability of the investigator and the conclusions made in analyzing the data (van den Hoonaard, 2008). Validity refers to the truthfulness and certainty of the results (Hussein, 2009). Truthfulness in qualitative studies is generally captured by true situations and lived experiences.

Certainty refers to the extent to which the investigator results support the empirical data. Certainty also refers to how the researcher decided to collect and analyze the data.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided the reader with a history of qualitative research methods, overview of the design and approach. Chapter 3 began with the restatement of the purpose, and the research questions. The researcher detailed the methodology chosen for this study, including the sampling procedures, interview protocol, interview process, and the reliability and validity of the instruments used. In this chapter, information pertaining the protection of human subjects and the IRB process was also presented. Specifically, the researcher discussed confidentiality, minimizing risk, and informed consent procedures. Chapter 3 concluded with validity and reliability.

Chapter 4 highlights three core themes that emerged from the interview data. Other findings and analysis of this study will be presented in various forms such as graphs, tables, and narratives. Chapter 5 begins with the restatement of problem and purpose and overview of the methodological approach. Chapter 5 will provide summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter is organized in five parts: (a) data analysis and coding, (b) profile of participants, (c) analysis of interview question along with narratives of participants lived experiences, (d) themes, and (e) findings. The goal of this study was to assess the perceptions of 20 African American male students in enrolled in a federally funded program designed to improve academic success by examining both the traditional deficit model and Harper's (2012) ADAF model. This study examined the perceptions of the participants in the PASSAGES program, both within the traditional deficit model and within the anti-deficit framework. The interviews ranged in duration from 15-30 minutes in length and a semi-structured protocol was used with participants. All interviews were audio recorded and after data collection, the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a combination of grounded theory and phenomenological framework (Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, participant data such as demographics and academic major was gathered.

The investigator interviewed 20 African American male in the PASSAGES program using the ADAF geared specifically for African American males. Using qualitative methodology, the investigator analyzed the perceptions of the African American males from the personal interviews. They were asked five questions about their perceptions of the PASSAGES programs. The questions focused on PASSAGES's role in (a) cultivating aspirations for higher education; (b) encouraging the pursuit leadership and engagement opportunities on campus; (c) encouraging student persistence despite microaggressions such as transition issues, racist stereotypes, academic under preparedness etc.; (d) providing effective resources for their majors

including STEM fields; and (e) improving students ability to secure meaningful relationships with key institutional agents.

Data Analysis and Coding

The researcher opted to use Creswell's (2009) process for coding because it was based on observing and categorizing recurring themes that are essential and salient in the data. The investigator used Creswell's process of describing, identifying, and interpreting the codes into theme, which allowed interpretation of experiences described by participants during the interviews. This method was selected because of the intent to identify common and congruent perceptions across each participant's responses.

To begin this process, the researcher listened to all of the audio-recorded interviews after they were conducted. Then, each interviews was transcribed and de-identified in the process. The researcher and an additional coder who was not involved with the administration of the interviews read each transcript twice to understand and interpret the content and meaning. Once the transcriptions were completed, the researcher and additional coder (from the Pepperdine Organizational Leadership program) coded the data.

The researcher used Moustakas's (1994) methods to identify reoccurring themes in the data. Some examples of how these were identified included: (a) assessing possible structural meaning and lived experiences, (b) seeking themes and contexts (c) identifying characteristics that were universal, and (d) looking for examples that described the theme. In analyzing the data, the researcher identified key verbatim examples of the emerging themes from the interviews. This process facilitated the integration of the researcher's data analysis process and the participant's actual words

and descriptions from which the codes/themes were developed. Moustakas defined this as an integration of the individual interpretations of experiences, the researcher used probing questions to elicit detailed accounts of the participants lived experiences as African American male college students involved in the PASSAGES program. During the early interviews, did not know what to types of responses to expect from the participants. However, after the third interview the researcher begin to notice common themes such as spirituality, personal goals and financial stability. As the interviews continued, the researcher noted common themes, contexts and universal characteristics, and the researcher would ask the respondent to further describe the theme in the respondent felt comfortable. The researcher asked the respondent to further describe the themes if the respondent because she wanted to ensure that the themes were universal.

It took the researcher approximately 2 weeks to listen, transcribe, read, and code each interview. The researcher used the built in text dictation on her MacBook Air and downloaded an additional Audacity sound software tool to transcribe the audio recordings. Once the recordings were the researcher reviewed the document for errors and corrected them as she went through the document.

In the beginning to tally up the similarities, the researcher used a large pink poster board paper and drew lines and made it look like a Microsoft Excel sheet to alleviate confusion. The significant statements and themes that were overlapping in meaning were combined. For organization, visibility, and clarity, on a separate large yellow poster board was used to identify themes that were organized and labeled consistently looking for similarities.

After the coding was completed, the researcher gathered the qualitative research findings of the common themes that emerged because of the responses of the human subjects. After 4 days of deliberating, the researcher examined the coded data again, and then proceeded to address the correlation of the coded data to the proposed research questions.

Profile of Participants

The target population for this study was African American males between the ages of 18-30. All 20 participants were enrolled in the PASSAGES program with various majors. The participants agreed to share their personal experiences of how they were successfully navigating through the community college system with the help of the federally funded program PASSAGES. In addition to being enrolled in the PASSAGES program, the study inclusion criteria (a) self-identification as an African American male (b) age of 18-30 and (c) English as the primary language. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Prior to the interview, the respondents were given a demographic survey. The survey questions included race, disabilities, age, major, and primary language. There majors varied from pre-law music, business administration, and nursing. Although all of the students identified as being African American they were very different in the other demographic areas. Their interviews captured their profound similarities of their lived experiences as African American male students in the PASSAGES program.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

ID	Age	Ethnicity	Major	Disabilities	Language
2001	24	AA	Pre Law	No	English
2002	25	AA	Undecided	No	English
2003	28	AA	Nursing	No	English
2004	22	AA	Business	No	English
2005	30	AA	Psychology	No	English
2006	26	AA	History	No	English
2007	29	AA	Undecided	No	English
2008	30	AA	Business	No	English
2009	30	AA	Music	No	English
2010	29	AA	Engineering	No	English
2011	29	AA	Nursing	No	English
2012	26	AA	Business	No	English
2013	25	AA	Business	No	English
2014	19	AA	Music	No	English
2015	25	AA	Communications	No	English
2016	30	AA	Theater Art/Music	No	English
2017	30	AA	Social Work	No	English
2018	30	AA	Psychology	Yes	English
2019	19	AA	Music	No	English
2020	23	AA	Business	No	English

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Sample

As previously stated in Chapter 3, the participants must be African American males between the ages of 18-30 and enrolled in the PASSAGES program for at least two semesters. Additional requirements include the PASSAGES Program requirements, where students are expected to do the following:

- Maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and 6 units of coursework each semester.
- Meet with a counselor at least twice a semester to develop and review a comprehensive educational plan.
- Complete at least three hours of tutoring/study hall and sign the Passage Program tutoring log form.

- Submit two signed progress reports from all instructors. Progress reports are due to assigned counselor during the fourth and 12th week of each semester.
- Attend at least two Passage Program activities each semester.
- Meet with assigned mentor three times each semester.
- Attend Rites of Passage End of the Year Ceremony.

Analysis of Interview Questions

Research question one. *How were aspirations for higher education cultivated among Black students who are currently enrolled in the PASSAGES program?* By asking this question, the researcher was attempting to get a glimpse at the goals and motivation for students in the program to succeed.

The responses to question one were similar in nature. Three topics emerged personal goals, spirituality, and external motivators. Of the 20 participants, 16 stated, “it’s a goal for myself” 12 of the 20 stated “it is a goal for myself and my faith motivates me”, and four stated, “My mother wants me to get a college degree.” It is important to note of the 20 participants 18 of them identified Christianity as their faith. The only two grew up with a faith but as an adult questions faith; meaning not sure if there is a higher power that exist.

Table 2

Aspirations for Higher Education (N = 20)

Common Participant Comments	Number of Responses
It’s a goal for myself	16
My faith motivates me	12
My mother wants me to get a college degree	4

Note. Some participants responded to more than one question.

The investigator was prompted to ask the participant to elaborate by observing body language, facial expression and other non-verbal gestures. Respondent 2004 explained,

It's a goal for myself! As a Black man, people judge you. If you fit the a stereotype, you are looked down on and no one wants to help you so as an educated Black man I feel I can get rid of some of those stereotypes. (personal communication, February 24, 2017)

Respondent 2011 explained,

My faith motivates me. It's just God! All the negativity, obstacles, and adversity in my personal life, and all the no's and the doors that are closed in my face on a daily basis, at this school to not going to say any names, but God keeps me going. It is hard... I have been to jail. I have been homeless... and when I was homeless; I took all my classes online and sat at Starbucks to get my assignments done. The professor didn't know I was homeless nor did the PASSAGES program, and my mom she really can't help me out so I rely on God! It is hard to explain, I am not perfect but God he protects me. I need this degree for me. (personal communication, February 28, 2017)

Research question two. *What compels Black undergraduate men to enroll in the PASSAGES to pursue leadership and engagement opportunities on their campuses?* The response to this question were overwhelming similar, of the 20 participants interviewed 15 stated it's a reason to go on campus and the activities motivated them." 13 of the 20 stated it motivates them and the PASSAGES Coordinator is helpful. Five of the 20 stated, "a friend encouraged them to join the program."

Table 3

Reasons for Pursuing Leadership and Engagement Opportunities (N = 20)

Common Participant Comments	Number of Responses
It's a reason to go/be campus and the activities motivated them.	15
Motivates them and PASSAGES Coordinator is helpful.	13
Friend encouraged them to join program.	5

The investigator interviewed a former Associated Student Organization (ASO) and the Respondent 2002 stated,

As a freshman begin going to campus events and one of my music professors told me to run for president and in I high school participated in all the civic activities. Therefore, I decided to run for President, I won! It was God! He blessed me. That was the best experience because as President many doors were opened for me, I represented the school at all types of functions. I know the Chancellor he recently called me on my cell phone because he wanted me to attend an event for the district and he said he would write me a recommendation letter for USC. This campus feels like home, I mean don't get me wrong I know I am still a Black men and some staff and faculty often remind me but I can say being President opened a lot of doors for me. I encourage a friend to run and now she is President and she is a *sista*. (personal communication, February 22, 2017)

Research question three. *How do Black male collegians manage to persist and earn their degrees despite transition issues, racist stereotypes, academic under-preparedness, and other negative forces?* The participants gave several different responses to the question, after further content analysis, the responses were grouped

into four different categories and the participants were asked to elaborate on each category individually. Table 3 illustrates the categories, number of comments, and sample comments. It is important to note for this question the respondents gave multiple answers for each category..

Respondent 2014 added,

You know I can be enrolled in any academic support services program, but they are all set of for political gain, I am just a number, none of the programs are personal life experiences like first thing in the morning what I am I going to eat do I have enough bus fare to make it to school today. Besides my school supplies I keep an extra set of clothes with me in my backpack cause my housing situation is “shaky” right now. If they really cared it would be more personal professors administrators would care if I have food to eat and a place to lay my head. You know last semester I scheduled a meeting with the president just to introduce myself but I had to cancel because I woke up that morning like what I am I going to eat. I used the bus fare for school to get me something to eat. What am I supposed to do call the President and be like hey I cannot make it today because I do not have food to eat? I never rescheduled the appointment because I was embarrassed and I thought she would judge me... That is the stereotype stuff that I deal with every day as a Black man. (personal communication, February 22, 2017)

Research question 4. *What resources are most effective in helping Black male achievers earn GPA above 3.0 in a variety of majors including STEM fields?* The respondents provided the researcher with four common statements as answers to the

question. The researcher labeled the common themed answers and charted them in Figure 1 and Table 4.

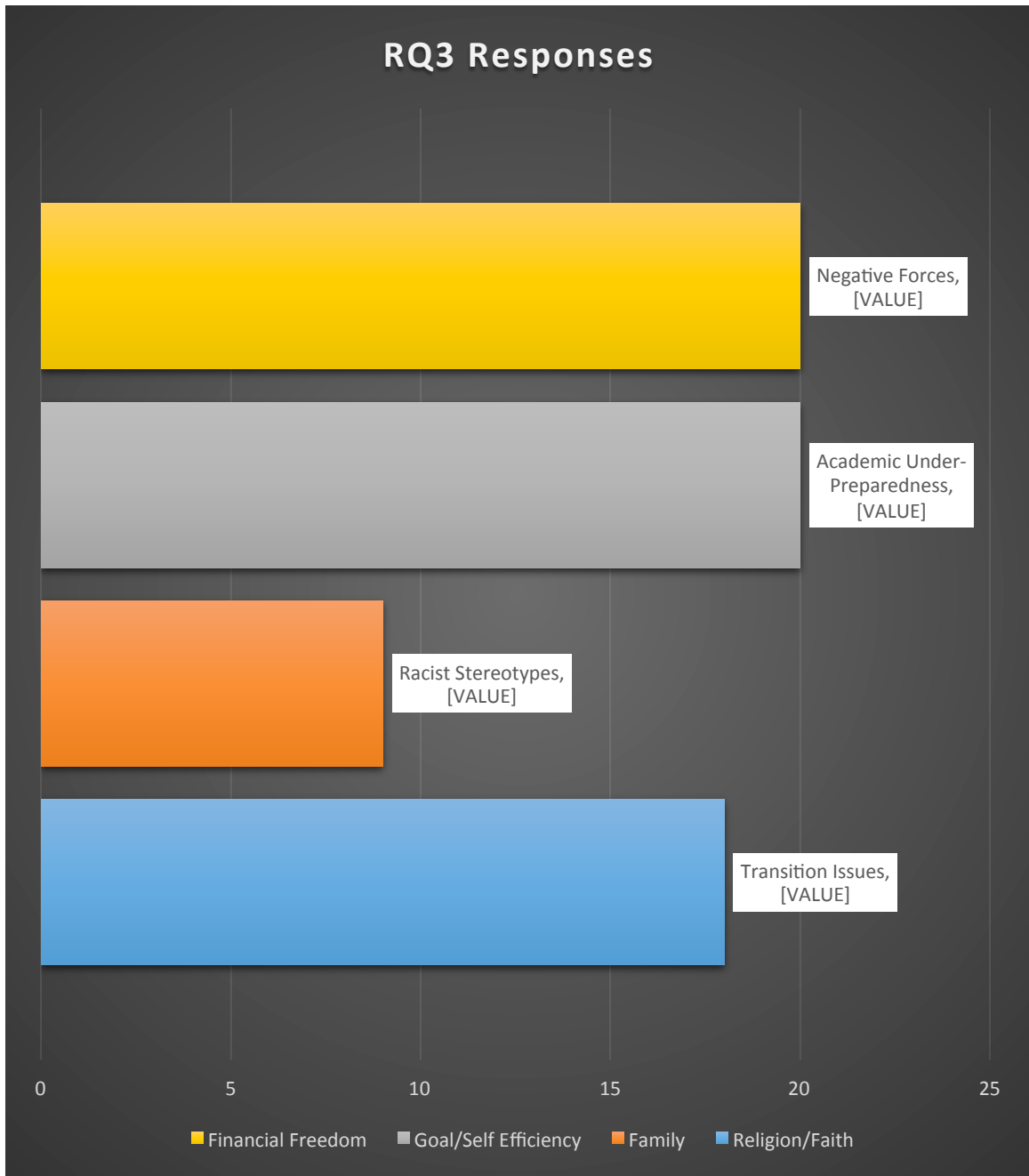


Figure 1. RQ3 responses.

Table 4

Effective Resources for Majors Including STEM (N = 20)

Common Participant Comments	Number of Responses
More Book Vouchers	20
Scholarships	15
African American male STEM Mentors	17

Respondents overwhelmingly concluded that additional book vouchers, scholarships, and more African American male STEM mentors were the most effective resources in helping Black males earn a GPA above 3.0 in a variety of majors including STEM fields. Respondent number 2001 further explained,

I want to go to Harvard, right now my GPA is a 3.8. I know when I get to Harvard I going to start all over but that is my dream. I stop telling people that I want to go to Harvard because they would give me this look like I cannot get in or something. So now I do everything by myself, I get my own book vouchers, I look for my own scholarships and I even submit my poetry in essay contest for extra cash. I mean, I am enrolled in PASSAGES but it is all political. It is just another way to say oh we are helping them we are making a differences. Everything that I need to know about Harvard I do on my own. I even went to Santa Monica College Transfer Fair because I knew a Harvard representative was going to be there. It helped a lot I have her contact inform and I email her from time to time so when I submit my application she will remember me. I am going to Harvard, watch!

Research question five. *How do Black men go about cultivating meaningful, value added relationships with key institutional agents?* Figure 2 presents the main

themes identified from the interview responses to the final research question. The included faith/religion, mindset and goals.

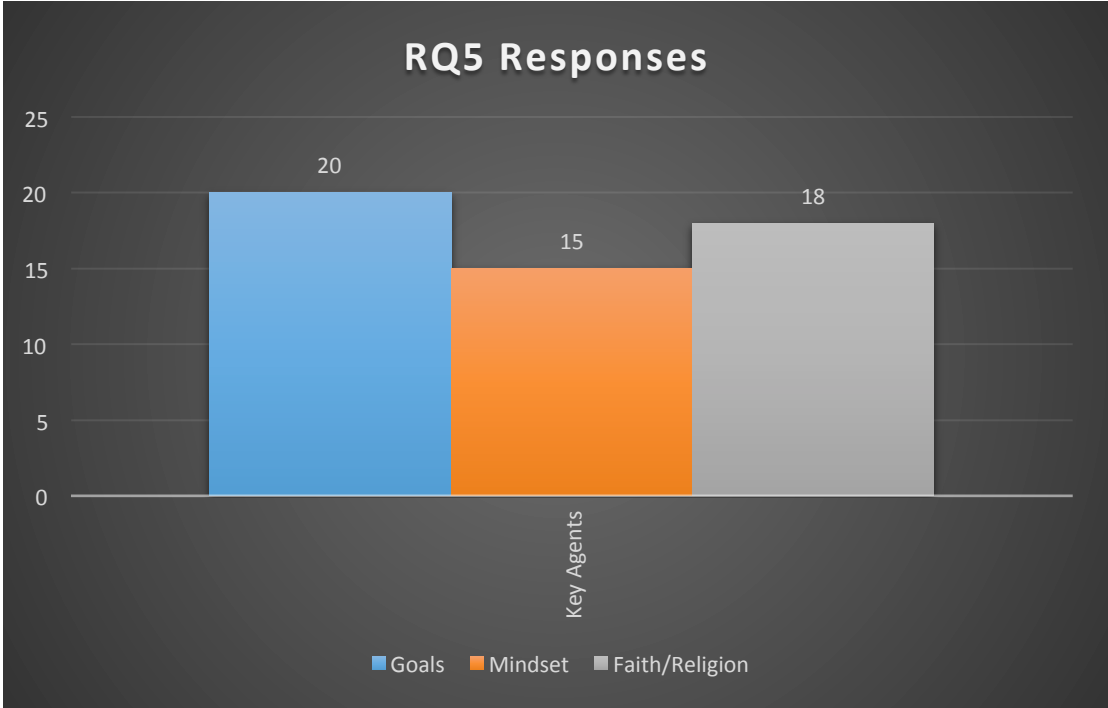


Figure 2. RQ5 themes.

Respondent number 2015 explained,
You know, values, morals, ethics, childhood, upbringing, tradition, culture; those things drive me to get to your goal. Formal and informal personalities. You must use these personalities to meet people to bond and get value added relationships. It enable you achieve certain things misconceptions hinder you they are challenges, there are challenges but as a Black man you must be persistent. It is hard it's challenging, it is hard I know where I want to be I know where I want to go. Within myself I have the positive mind set to get where I want to be in life so I meet with the tutors I meet with my professors I meet with

administrators and I participate with the program. It tough; it is really, really tough. (personal communication, February 27, 2017)

Overall Themes across Research Questions

Themes were developed from the face-to-face interviews of the participants. The daily emotions of the participant's human experience as African American male enrolled in the PASSAGES program were observed during the interviews. According to von Eckartsberg (1986) daily life experiences such as emotion, relationships, and culture as they spontaneously occur can be coded as qualitative themes. In this study the investigator, after transcribing the data, used a process known as open coding to create themes. Open coding is defined as classifying concepts and categories by sectioning the data in small elements, labeling them, and describing the theoretical properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this study, three emerging themes were identified during open coding.

Theme one: Personal goals. Personal goals were articulated as part of the interview responses to all five-research questions. Personal goals are defined as goals an individual set to influence the direction of their efforts/life. Personal goals are dreams that are trying to become a reality (Webster, 2012). Participants with clearly defined personal goals often have a heightened sense of self- efficacy and are likely to have high aspirations (Bandura, 1994).

Many of the participants spoke about how important it was for them to accomplish their own goals in order to have a sense of self-efficacy. They indicated their experiences of negative misconceptions and stereotypes in fact prompted them to remain steadfast in their goals. They were also aware that the negative misconceptions

and stereotypes did not define them as a person, even though they encountered them on a daily basis as African American males. Many of them discussed how they asserted a certain type of persona when confronted with a negative misconception. Many described speaking *proper* English when in a formal setting, being cognizant of their body language, being cognizant of their facial expressions and appearance, not being aggressive when in the presence of a person of authority and *dumbing down* their goals when in front of strangers including administrators, professors and other people in position of power. They hold their personal goals as sacred and are selective of whom they reveal them to in fear of being laughed at, mocked, or ridiculed. As identified as 20001 participant explained,

I want to be a medical doctor, but my major is nursing when I meet with the counselors here I did not tell them I wanted to be a medical doctor. I have a 3.8; have already researched the school I want to attend in North Carolina. I am in constant contact with the recruiter. I did that all on my own. (personal communication, February 24, 2017)

Personal goals motivated the participants to remain persistent despite the perceived negative stereotypes. They were able to demonstrate control when confronted with threatening situations as perceived threatening situations. Their mastery of experiences and emotional states and the ability to process task and emotions proficiently enabled them to rebound from setbacks and understand that success requires hard work and effort (Bandura, 1994; Parajes & Schunk, 2002).

Theme two: Spirituality. Spirituality is the believing and behaving as if non-material and non-observable life forces have ultimate powers in one's day-to-day affairs

(Jagers & Mock, 1993). Spirituality largely accounts for coping mechanisms, problem solving and persistence amongst African American males students (Constaine, Wilton, Gainor, & Lewis, 2002). Of the 20 participants interviewed in this study, 18 of them had strong spiritual beliefs based in Christianity. The two participants that did not assert a faith explained that their childhood morals, values, and beliefs centered on Christianity, however as adults they had chosen not to practice in the faith due to undisclosed reasons.

When faced with life and college challenges, almost all of the participants relied heavily on their faith for sound decision- making and coping skills. They explained or attempted to explain their motivation to be persistence when faced with homelessness, legal challenges, and other hard- pressed situations, and they described turning to their faith; Christianity. One respondent stated the following:

I have been homeless, I have a misdemeanor on my record, I am unemployed full-time student right now. I take the bus to school and there have been plenty of days when I didn't have money to eat, but finishing school is my number one priority right now. Even when I am dealing with the politics of being an African American male student I just trust God. It's hard! Its tough! When I was homeless God kept me. I mean, I didn't go to church but I would talk to God, pray to God to help me. I am going to be real with you right now. I grew up in foster care my mom was on drugs and you know how that goes and on the real if it was not for my girlfriend I would not have a place to stay. I was homeless when I met her but she didn't know. She encouraged me to go back to school and right now I have a

3.3. As a Black man, it's hard to watch your girl pay all the bills take care of

everything while you go to school. I mean don't get me wrong, I am not taking advantage of the situation, I cook, I clean, I help out in areas that I can. But still it hurts my pride and my ego. We get into it about it sometimes because of the role she plays and the role I play you know what I am saying its tough. Sometimes I feel less than a man when I need her help, as a man I am supposed to be helping her. But she look out for me I really believe God sent her to help me. Man, 100, without God I don't know where I would be. God keeps me going. I can't explain it, it's just God! (personal communication, March 1, 2017)

Spirituality provides a sense of purpose for African American male students (Hernon, 2002). According to Dancy (2010), African American male students see spirituality as a sources of support and dependency and it serves as a core understanding of their identities which helps them combat challenges in life and as college students.

Theme three: Financial security. Financial security refers to the peace of mind one feels when they have enough money to cover their expenses, have money saved for emergencies and for future goals (Webster, 2016). In the African American culture, financial security correlates to success. Often times African American males students who grow up in low SES backgrounds use financial barriers as motivation to persist and move into a higher social class. Despite growing up in low SES backgrounds, having limited access to financial aid and balancing work and life, Black male use financial barriers as motivation to move into a higher social class (Goings, 2016). As a respondent explained:

We live in a capitalist society everything is based on your social class. For me, growing up poor and even now experience the hardship that I experiences in my personal goal God and financial freedom motivates me. Being a broke uneducated Black man is different from broke any other race. We are at the bottom of the barrel. I see it I see how we are treated. Society thinks we do not want to work but the truth is we do we want to work and provide for families and ourselves. Seriously I have applied for jobs at Target, Wal-Mart, and stuff like that during the holiday season. Never get a call back and I call them still nothing. That's depressing! But with a degree at least I know I qualify. So financial freedom motivates me. Financial freedom affords me I a lot of things and when I achieve that I can give back; help my family, help my community. Because I understand what's it is like to be without food, shelter just nothing. (personal communication, February 23, 2017)

Personal Observations of the Researcher

This study provided an opportunity to look through the lens of African American male students enrolled in a successful academic student support program at a community college. It provided me with more insight into the understanding of the plight of the African American male. I sensed a connection with the 20 African American male participants. During each interview I strategically selected- my attire and vernacular. I did not this because I did not want them to view me as staff or a person of authority, but yet more like a peer. Based on my experience with this population trust is essential for them get comfortable with a stranger. As a result, I sensed a level of trust while they explained their experiences. I cannot conclude whether they viewed me as a sister,

cousin, neighbor, or friend; but they definitely did not conclude that I was a professor or a person of authority. Nevertheless, I did sense that they felt I understood them and that I could relate to their trials.

As they were recollecting and retelling their stories it appeared to be extremely painful, but courage and, confidence, in their dreams allowed them to continue through the pain. In essence, the more they thought about the challenges the more they talked; and the more they trusted me. By building a level of trust with the participants, I was able to witness painful challenges such as choosing between eating for the day or using the money for public transportation to attend a self-motivated meeting with a campus president. It is my hope that this study provides new conversation to the barriers that African American males encounter while enrolled in a success academic support services program.

Collectively, the 20 participants' lived experiences shaped the perceptions of the PASSAGES program. Although the PASSAGES program is a successful program almost all of the participants concluded that they use the program as a vehicle to achieve their goal. All participants explained that the goal was embedded in them first and that this was the reason they sought out the PASSAGES program. All 20 participants had a goal for themselves and the goal motivated them to be persistent. The goal has motivated them to pursue a college degree. In addition, within that goal, other sub- tasks and sub goals are acquired and that gives them motivation to stay on task. Their true motivation behind their persistence was their personal goals, spirituality, and financial security.

The researcher also observed that almost all the participants had their own zeal to continue on their path to success despite obstacles and challenging circumstances in their lives. Most of them mentioned that this positive attribute was embedded in them from a very early age; as young as 4 years of age. The participants stated that the positive reinforcement from such a young age helped them remain steadfast during their most challenging times in life. The researcher made note of this because, It is important for educators, administrators, and policymakers to take these things into consideration when developing programs for this population.

Summary

This chapter provided details of the data gathered from the 20 respondents. All the students had 3.0 GPA. All were enrolled in the PASSAGES program and perceived the program as beneficial and helpful. They were all thoroughly impressed with the coordinator of the program; however, the program was not the primary indicator for success.

The investigator used qualitative reasoning by using a demographic survey instrument and semi structured open-ended face-to-face interviews. With the assistance of an additional coder seven themes emerged and three were dominant and consistent.

Chapter 5 will begin with the restatement of the problem and purpose, research methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Summary Conclusion and Recommendations

Statement of the Problem

At the community college level, efforts such as increasing support services and equity funding have been implemented to address the problem of low success rates among minority males. For example, in the largest community college district in California the—Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD)—several federal and state programs have been created namely; Achieving the Dream, TRIO programs Upward Bound, Talent Search and other federal student support services. Other programs include state funded programs, CALWORKS/GAIN, EOPS/CARE, and the Puente Program (<https://www.laccd.edu>). The effectiveness of these programs in improving African American male success rates is unknown because there is a lack of data.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned programs were not developed specifically for African American males, and they have all been conceptualized within a traditional deficit model. The traditional deficit model focuses on low SES and lack of rigorous courses in high school and for college, and neglects existing strengths and contextual factors that may impact male students' success rates. This deficit model also fails to take a holistic and relational approach to understanding individual behavior, and therefore is insufficient and as the data suggests, ineffective. In this study, an alternative framework, Harper's (2012) ADAF was used to examine a support program titled PASSAGES at Los Angeles Southwest Community College.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to assess the significance of a federally funded academic and support services program titled PASSAGES, which aims to increase success rates for African American males. PASSAGES is conceptualized within a traditional deficit model, which is based on standardized test performance and focuses on limitations as opposed to strengths. This study evaluated PASSAGES through an alternative framework, the ADAF, which is specifically designed for African American males. This study examined current PASSAGES participant's perceptions of the program, both within the traditional deficit model and within ADAF. Specifically, this study examined factors such as microaggressions that undermine African American male's achievement by examining their perceptions of the institutional traditional practices within a student support services program PASSAGES at Los Angeles Southwest Community College, which prohibits them from being successful. The intent of this study was to provide the educational community serving the African American male population with some insight into contemporary techniques to improve their success rates through a positive framework.

Research Methodology

This researcher applied qualitative methods to accomplish the goals of this study. Qualitative data was gathered through a demographic questionnaire and standardized semi structures interview protocol. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with 20 African American males and digitally recorded them for further analysis. The researcher was able to gain access to the participants because of her role on the campus and her relationship to the program coordinator. Harper's (2012) ADAF was

used to examine the perspectives of the participants in the PASSAGES program. The investigator interviewed each participant and captured his or her lived experiences. The participants were recruited to participate in this through poster posted in the PASSAGES office.- emails and telephone calls. There were five opened-ended interview questions with probes. After the interviews were recorded, and the filed notes gathered the data was transcribed, coded and categorized into themes.

Research Questions

- RQ1: How were aspirations for higher education cultivated among Black students who are currently enrolled in the PASSAGES program?
- RQ2: What compels Black undergraduate men enrolled in the PASSAGES program to pursue leadership and engagement opportunities on their campuses?
- RQ3: How do Black male collegians manage to persist and earn their degrees despite transition issues, racist stereotypes, academic under preparedness, and other negative forces?
- RQ4: What resources are most effective in helping Black males achievers earn GPA above 3.0 in a variety of majors including STEM fields?
- RQ5: How do Black men go about cultivating meaningful, value-added relationships with key institutional agents?

Analysis of Findings

The 20 African American male respondents were presented with five research questions regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of the PASSAGES program. The interview focused on PASSAGES's role in (a) cultivating aspirations for higher

education; (b) encouraging the pursuit leadership and engagement opportunities on campus; (c) encouraging student persistence despite microaggressions such as transition issues, racist stereotypes, academic under preparedness etc.; (d) providing effective resources for their majors including STEM fields; and (e) improving students' ability to secure meaningful relationships with key institutional agents.

The results of the study supported the conclusion that PASSAGES is an effective program not primarily because of its traditional organizational structure that aligned with Harpers ADAF but, because of its (a) African American male program coordinator and (b) the constant lecturing or awareness that academic and student support services increase student chances of success. The data also showed that the 20 participants had their own motivators that assisted with them being persistent prior to enrolling in PASSAGES. PASSAGES was used as a vehicle: an additional subtask to assist with the primary goal.

Across the interviews, seven themes emerged. The three most prevalent themes were personal goals, spirituality, and financial security. These three themes emerged as responses in all five -research questions. Narratives of the respondents lived experiences depicted the depth of the importance of these themes. Other themes included external motivators (family), campus engagement, and the need for African American male mentors, additional financial assistance, and mindset. Degree attainment for African American males is not only beneficial for society but it also decreases the likelihood of incarceration and life expectancy (Bush & Bush, 2010).

The researcher observed from the participants body language and other non-verbal gestures, that the participants truly believed that an education was a secure

pathway the brighter future and a stable life. Although the encounter several obstacles along the way they were going to remain persistent and obtain their degrees and pursue other personal goals.

Conclusions

Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that PASSAGES is an effective support services program for the African American males who participated in this study. The three dominant themes emerged were interrelated. Personal goals, spirituality, and financial security support one another. All themes develop a strong sense of self-worth and accountability. Unfortunately, none of these qualities cannot be learned; they are self-developed and manifested. However as educators we can teach the concepts of these themes. The findings also concluded that campus engagement and African American male mentors serve as secondary motivators to be persistent for the respondents.

Many of the respondents in this study were involved in campus engagement. Campus engagement included things such as student government positions, a member of the campus band, working on campus, and interaction with professors, staff and administrators. All of the respondents that participated in the campus engagement reported that it increased their sense of belonging and made them feel at home. One respondent stated, "I feel I belong here."

As stated in Chapter 2, campus engagement and African American male mentors have a direct link to the desired educational process and emphasize the actions the institution can take to encourage student interactions on campus in and out of the classroom. Educators need to increase culturally relative engagement on campuses.

Almost all scholarly work on this subject points to increased success when students participant in on campus activities.

African American male students' perception of campus climate and culture also directly correlates with their engagement and success, but the research on success and engagement is limited to the African American male experience in 2-year colleges. The literature indicates that, nationally, African American males have the lowest rate of engagement on college campuses (Cuyjet, 2006; Foster, 2008). Yet, most of the literature on African American males at community college campuses is primarily quantitative research that used surveys or analysis of data sets. The literature provides data about the males' lack of engagement, but the reasons for it remain un-discussed. The literature on African American males at community colleges is beginning to increase, but these voices need to be included in the literature base.

Although many of the respondents were involved in campus engagement activities there were several that were not involved in activities on campus due to hardship such as transportation and housing. These personal social dilemmas often hinder the student's ability to persist and be successful. Unfortunately these personal problems often go unnoticed because students are reluctant to disclose personal information such as these personal issues. One of the respondents stated, "My ego, my pride not allow me to walk up to any one on campus tell them I am or was homeless. They would understand they don't come from where I come from." As a result, it is important there are mentors available for African American students. Research shows a direct link between mentoring and the success of African American males.

Students enrolled in mentoring programs tend to be open to new experiences and receive constructive criticism well, and develop as enhanced critical thinking skills. Implementing mentoring programs as a tool to encourage retention for African American males often increases their self-esteem and academic motivation (Hoffman & Wallace, 2005). Within the last ten years scholarly articles have pointed to the direct correlation between pairing African American males with a mentor from the same background or culture are often the most successful programs.

College campuses should incorporate innovative strategies to encourage mentoring. Strategies can include pilot programs such as “A day with the Dean” or “A day with the President” or “A day with any key institutional agents.” This pilot program could be valuable to students in building relationships and a rapport with staff in positions to make decisions. In addition, these is valuable time that students would have to observe and understand the business aspect of the college they attend. These valuable mentoring moments could change the lives of students and encourage them to continue to be persistent and chose a career in higher education.

Despite the fact PASSAGES is one of the few programs that has an African American male Coordinator, it is impossible for the coordinator to mentor all of the students enrolled in the program. Nevertheless, there are other programs available that campuses should use in assisting with pairing African American male students with mentors with similar backgrounds. Such organizations include:

1. African American Mentoring Network Development (A2MEND)

PO Box 151

Elk Grove, CA 95759

www.a2mend.org

2. African American Big Brothers and Big Sisters

3150 N. San Fernando Rd. c

Los Angeles CA, 90065

www.bbbs.org

3. Concerned Black Men of Los Angeles

PO Box 5614

Gardena, CA 90249

www.cbmla.org

4. Ok Program

East Oakland

Frick Impact Academy and Castlemont High School

www.okprogram.org

5. 100 Black Men of Long Beach

701 Pine Ave #130

Long Beach, CA 90813

www.100blackmenlbc.com

6. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

www.allianceforbmoc.org

7. Los Angeles Urban League

3458 W Mt Vernon Dr.

Los Angeles, CA 90008

www.laul.org.

8 Young Men of Color

www.mentoringusa.org

Community college campuses across the state should have a resource guide available for students that are interested in selecting a mentor with a similar background. The campuses should invite mentoring programs to campus events as a way for students to meet and select a mentor or just get more information of the mentoring services that the organization offers.

Recommendations

These findings conclude that, PASSAGES is an effective academic student success program. Despite the fact that it is designed to operate under a traditional deficit model, it also uses Harper's (2012) ADAF model for African American males. Moreover, the findings conclude that although PASSAGES is effective, personal goals, spirituality and financial security served as dominate motivators for the participants to persist and be successful. Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

Recommendation 1: Policymakers and educators should consider expanding the scope of counseling from the required general guidelines to an increased awareness on personal goals. Although most students are required to enroll in a personal development course if they are receiving any assistance from student success and academic support services programs- more emphasis should be placed on self-worth self-efficacy and goals. Most of the courses are development with a deficit model and focuses on emotional intelligence, time management, and building unrealistic goals and are culturally biased. If the courses were developed from a cultural

competency framework and focused on more real life experiences (such as homelessness and unemployment), this would empower students to make better decisions when faced with a personal or academic crisis. Students bring baggage from their childhood homes and this often interferes with their academic commitment (Tinto, 1993). Today's student is unlike any other student, particularly the African American male student. African American males students need a personal development course with curriculum developed and designed with them in mind. The curriculum should be strengths based and focus on their ability to cope and persist during challenging times.

The notion of separation of church and state has plagued our country for years with a debate. However, as societal issues become increasingly complex, students should be allowed to develop their spirituality. Institutions should allow a space for students, particularly African American male students to affirm their faith because of the direct correlation to their faith and success. Spirituality serves as a source of support to identity and helps aid in combating challenges in real life and in college (Dancy, 2010). Traditional methods have failed African American male students for decades. Institutions must commit to developing innovative success programs geared toward the retention and success of African American males.

Recommendation 2. Policymakers and educators should consider expanding financial aid counseling from loan management and to include financial security counseling as well. Again, these counseling sessions should be culturally based and relevant to the demographics of the campus population. LACCD is comprised of more than 85% first generation low-income students (Chancellor F, personal communication, March 1, 2017). Student from marginalized communities have

limited experience in financial literacy and maintaining financial security. As a result, it is imperative the second largest community college district in the nation empower their students with strategies to save, manage and acquire wealth.

Recommendations for Future Research

This researcher has provided insight and findings as a part of the conclusion of this research project. The following, possible areas of exploration are offered for future research on the effectiveness of PASSAGES program while implementing Harper's ADAF model:

1. A phenomenological research study of on campus executive administrator's empathy surrounding hardship.
2. A study of the effect of having more African American male students and less administrator's faculty, and staff.
3. A study of the effects of spirituality in African American males at community college.
4. A study of homelessness and African American males in community colleges.
5. A study of the effects of transparent situational leaders as Presidents of community colleges.
6. African American males in business majors and spirituality.
7. A study of the effects of homelessness in African American that attend community colleges.
8. A study on hunger and African American men attending Community Colleges.
9. A comparative study of African American men's and Latino men's hardships in community colleges.

10. African American male Millennials attending college and homelessness.

Recommendations for Publication

The findings in this study revealed that despite years of negative research on African American males low success rates in higher education, they are steadfast. African American males are overcoming hardship obstacles and adversity in ways that were neither publicized nor being documented because they are reluctant to tell their stories. Presently there is very little research on African American males attending community college who and are suffering from homelessness, hunger and other negatives factors that may contribute from them being successful in college.

Positive factors such as spirituality, personal goals, and financial stability assist with African American males being persistent and completing their college goals. Often times positive forces are over looked and negative influences are looked at, however it is important for the positive indicators to be studied so that resources can be provided for this population when faced with hardship and the desire to drop out of college.

Scholars, educators, and public officials are encouraged to provide this population with resources to better their lives. Not only does it benefit the population but it also benefits local communities, state and the nation as a whole. With an objective to deal with this issue, numerous African-American educators and policymakers, who identified the decline in enrollment of African American population, alarmed the warning bells various years ago and work towards enhancing the college enrollment and completion rates of African American men through engagement and success programs designed for such specific purpose.

Solutions

African American males low success rates are not just a community problem they are a national problem. Our country stands to benefit from increasing the success rates of African American male students. Studies show that African American men with a degree increase their life span and their financial earnings, and their communities are safer. There are several other reasons for society, educators and policies makers to ensure that African American males success rates increase. Everyone benefits from solving the problem.

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APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate in the Study

A qualitative program evaluation measuring the success rates of African American males at a Community College

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Nyree Berry; a doctoral student at Pepperdine University and Dr. Natasha Thapar-Olmos at the Pepperdine University, because you identify with being an African American male between the ages of 10-30 and current participate in the PASSAGES program at Los Angeles Southwest Community College located at 1600 W. Imperial Hwy, Los Angeles CA 90047. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read this document. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends.

The purpose of the study is to examine a federally funded academic and support services program; which is required to use traditional deficit indicators (poverty, inadequate high school education preparation) for recruitment is sufficient as a model to increase success rates for African American males. This study will evaluate an alternative framework; Harper's (2012); specifically designed for African American Males. This study will examine rather institutional psychological micro aggressions (subtle verbal, nonverbal, or visual insults), undermine African American male's achievement by examining their perceptions of the institution traditional practices with a student academic support services program PASSAGES at Los Angeles Southwest Community College which prohibits them from being a successful student

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 5 minute survey and a 3-45 minute audio-taped interview. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to; if you don't want to be taped, you cannot participate in this study.

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be coded, de-identified, identifiable, transcribed.

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your responses will be coded with a pseudonym and transcript data will be maintained separately. The audio-tapes will be destroyed once they have been transcribed.

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Nyree Berry at [REDACTED] or (310) xxx-xxxx. Or you may also contact Dr. Natasha Thapar- Olmos; faculty supervisor at [REDACTED], if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University
6100 Center Drive Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

Verbal Consent: Do you have any questions about what participation in this research involves? Would you like to participate in this research study?

Would you like a copy of this form to document your participation in this research study?

APPENDIX B

Projected Timeline and Activity Schedule

- November 2015 met twice with Maria Brahme, Manager of Pepperdine Library West Los Angeles regarding solid problem and purpose statements for study.
- December 2015 Met face to face with Dr. Diana Hiatt Michael at West LA and submitted 25 pages of Literature Review.
- Dec 2015 conducted three telephonic follow up calls and text messages follow up calls with Chairperson, Dr. Diana Hiatt Michael. Received no feedback on 25 pages. Advised to schedule meeting with Regina Meister regarding Chapter 1.
- Dec 8, 2015 met with Regina Meister revised research questions as advised by Dr. Diana Hiatt Michael Received. Scheduled another apt.
- Jan 4, 2016 Met face to face with Dr. Diana Hiatt Michael at her home 1-4pm, submitted timeline and calendar reviewed chapters 1-3 advised to seek site approval.
- Jan 5, 2016 met with Regina Meister, Manager of writing support regarding Chapters 1-3 and scheduled future visits.
- Jan 5, 2016 verbal site approval received from PASSAGES Coordinator, Dr. Ralph Davis scheduled an interview with him 01/13/2016.
- Jan 9, 2016 Met with Dr. Diana Hiatt Michaels at her home from 3-630pm. Review chapters 1-3.
- Jan 11, 2016 emailed committee member Dr. Joan Mills-Buffehr to schedule meeting.
- Jan 12, 2016 Met with Dr. Thema Bryant Davis confirmed 3rd committee member.

- Jan 12, 2016 met with Dr. Diana Hiatt Michael from 3-7pm. Discussed Chapters 1-3 necessary edits, submitted timeline, calendar and possibility of scheduling Preliminary Oral.
- Jan 13, 2016 interviewed Dr. Ralph Davis discussed research project and PASSAGES program in great detail. Scheduled interview with Dr. Linda Rose President of Los Angeles Southwest College for 02/2/16.
- Jan 13, 2016 emailed several EDOL faculty regarding chairing dissertation.
- Jan 14, 2016 talk to C. Dialo regarding requirements of faculty chairing dissertation.
- Jan 14, 2016 Scheduled a meeting with Dean Williams for 01/25/2016.
- Jan 18, 2016 emailed Dr. Natasha Thapar- Olmos regarding chairing dissertation.
- Jan 19, 2016 Face to Face meeting with Dr. TO regarding possibility of chairing dissertation
- Jan 2016 File Form A2 to Reconstitute Dissertation Committee.
- Jan 2016 email committee members informing them of new committee and arrange day to get signatures.
- Jan 2016 Submit Chapters 1-3 to Chairperson/ Committee.
- Jan-Feb 2016 Submit form P2 Preliminary Oral Exam Request.
- Feb 2016 Preliminary Oral Defense; file Form P3 Preliminary Oral. Completion, submit expedited IRB Application.
- Feb – Mar 2016 Await IRB Approval.
- Mar. 2016 Obtain site Approvals.

- Mar. 2016 Order cap and gown
- Mar. 2016 Data Collection and Analysis Development of Program.
- Mar. 2016 Write Chapter 4 results.
- Apr. 2016 writing Chapter 5 recommendations, conclusions and further.
Research.
- Apr. 2016 with Chair and committee approval submit study to Pepperdine.
Approved Editor.
- Apr. 4, 2016 File Form F1 and F2 Oral Defense Request and Defense.
Announcement with Chairperson Approval and Schedule April 19-22, 2016 or
Apr. 25-29,2016 Defend Study.
- Apr.-May 2016, if addressing changes and modifications to study.
- May 2016 with Chairperson and Committee approval submit for APA Review.
- May 21, 2016 Graduation.

APPENDIX C

Requests for Site Approval

Site Approval

Dear Dr. Davis

My name is Nyree Berry, I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am writing to request site approval for the Passages Program. Additionally, I am requesting permission to recruit participants, interview students with a signed informed consent, collect and/or gather data for my study on a Qualitative program evaluation measuring the success rates of African American Males at a community college

Currently, I am an adjunct Sociology instructor in the Social Sciences Department at Los Angeles Southwest College for the past three years. The study is designed to investigate and understand the success rates of African American males between the ages of 18-30, and initiate new practice changes to assist this population. The professor supervising my study is Dr. Natasha Thapar- Olmos.

If you have any questions regarding this information that I have provided above please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have any further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns please contact Dr. Natasha Thapar-Olmos at 310 568- 5600. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact Dr. Judy Ho, Ph.D. at

[REDACTED]

If you have any further questions I can be contacted at [REDACTED]

Or by phone at 310-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,
Nyree Berry
Doctoral Student
Pepperdine University

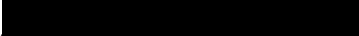
Site Approval

Dear President Linda Rose,

My name is Nyree Berry, I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am writing to request site approval and permission to recruit participants, interview students with a signed informed consent, collect and/or gather data for my study a qualitative program evaluation measuring the success rates of African American males at a Community College.

Currently, I am an adjunct Sociology instructor in the Social Sciences Department at Los Angeles Southwest College for the past three years. The study is designed to investigate and understand the low success rates of African American males between the ages of 18-30, and initiate new practice changes to assist this population. The professor supervising my study is Dr. Natasha Thapar-Olmos.

If you have any questions regarding this information that I have provided above please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have any further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns please contact Dr. Natasha Thapar- Olmos at 310 568- 5600. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact Dr. Judy Ho, Ph.D. at



If you have any further questions I can be contacted at 

Or by phone at 310-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Nyree Berry

Doctoral Student

APPENDIX D

Permissions for Site Use

Dear _____

Thank you for granting me permission to recruit participants, interview students with a verbal informed consent, collect and/or gather data for my study on the Success Rates of African American Males in Higher Education at Los Angeles Southwest College.

Again, the study is designed to investigate and understand the low success rates of African American males between the ages of 18-30, and initiate new practice changes to assist this population. The professor supervising my study is Dr. Natasha Thapar-Olmos. A copy of your approvals will be placed in the references in the study

If you have any questions regarding this information that I have provided above please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have any further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns please contact Dr. Natasha Thapar-Olmos at 310 568- 5600. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact Dr. Judy Ho, Ph.D. at

If you have any further questions I can be contacted at _____

Or by phone at 310-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Nyree Berry

Doctoral Student

Pepperdine University

APPENDIX E

IRB Approval



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 29, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Nyree Berry-Nelson

Protocol #: 16-01-179

Project Title: A qualitative program evaluation measuring the success rates of African American males at a community college

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Nyree Berry-Nelson:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

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