AN EXPLORATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES CONCERNING THEIR SUCCESSFUL

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

by
Robin Michele Dabney
Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the EDUC 980 Course

Liberty University
November 28, 2012

AN EXPLORATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES CONCERNING THEIR SUCCESSFUL
POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT
by
Robin Michele Dabney

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University
November 28, 2012

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Sharon Michael-Chadwell EdD, Committee Chair

Dr. Amanda Dunnagan EdD, Committee Member

Dr. Joel Nkemakolam PhD, Committee Member

Scott Watson, PhD, Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

Abstract

Despite increased numbers of African American male students in higher education, their academic achievement levels continue to be at disproportionate numbers compared to other ethnic groups and genders (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore lived experiences of African American male community college students concerning factors hindering their academic progress and to understand perceptions of factors that influence their academic achievement in higher education.

The current study identifies pertinent factors that will assist African American males to become successful in their postsecondary experiences. Findings from this study provide insights into predictors that may lead to academic achievement for African American male students. Phenomenological hermeneutic analysis was used to explore lived experiences of African American community college students.

Six African American male students attending a community college in Virginia were interviewed. A semi-structured interview protocol approach was used to establish dialogue between the participants and the researcher. The interview questions were designed based on the literature review. The results illustrate how African American male students are able to overcome obstacles to ascertain academic success regardless of their race and postsecondary challenges.

Keywords: African American males, community college, academic success, higher education, lived experiences

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful children, Carlethia, DeShondria, Rahtisha, and Romaro, who endured this experience with me and gave me inspiration and strength to finalize this process. This dissertation is also dedicated to my family and friends who motivated me to achieve to the best of my ability and beyond expectations.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I thank my heavenly father, Lord and savior; through His guidance and spiritual healing, I was able to withstand this experience. To my dissertation committee: Dr. Sharon Michael-Chadwell, Chairperson, Faculty, Liberty University; Dr. Joel Nkemakolam, Faculty, Online and San Antonio Campus, University of Phoenix; and Dr. Amanda Dunnagan, Ed.D. Assistant Professor of English, instructional mentor, College of General Studies, Adjunct Professor of Education, thank you. Special thanks to Mr. Tawan Perry, national motivational speaker and dear friend; Mr. Waymon Hyman; Mrs. Tanja Chappelle-Logan; Mr. Mark Gibson; Danville Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; family and friends that motivated and encouraged me! Know that through God, all things and everything is possible: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 38:8, King James Version).

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

DCC - Danville Community College

IRB – Institutional Review Board

NCES – National Center for Education Statistics

SACS – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

VCCS – Virginia Community College

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A common misconception about African American male students is they are uneducated and have low expectations for their future (McMilliam, 2003). A significant portion of this population in the United States lives in single parent homes, mainly consisting of single mothers who are uneducated and living below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The U.S. Census Bureau (2008) reported on African American income levels for 2006-2008 and concluded there are more African Americans living below the poverty line than any other population group Of this poverty status, African American households consisting of a single female headed household have an 11% higher rate of poverty levels than an average African American household with both parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). African American males living in this condition are likely to experience challenges and barriers for educational attainment; their chances of experiencing risky behavior such as crime and violence increase, while those of pursuing college education decreases (Owens, Lacy, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010).

With social problems challenging African American males, the focus of the current study was to understand the challenges facing African American male community college students as well as factors promoting their engagement in the school environment. Chapter one contains information regarding the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the theoretical framework, and significance to the study. The chapter also contains the nature of the study, research questions, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Background of the Problem

The effect of the recession in the United States in 2008-2009 caused a downward spiral in the U.S. economy and affected the African American community severely (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). The distress of the downward slope led to a record high unemployment rate within the African American community, leaving this population worse off than it had been before the recession (Woolf, Jones, Johnson, Phillips, Oliver, Bazemore, &Vichare, 2010). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), African American unemployment jumped to 13.4% since the recession began in December 2007, when the nation's unemployment rate was 8.5%. With these high unemployment rates among African Americans, the likelihood of African American males pursuing a college degree has become even lower as a result of the need to become providers for their household (Daire, LaMothe, & Fuller, 2007). Addressing social and economic needs of the African American community has become the focus rather than exploring issues of educational success and school experiences (Daire et al., 2007).

According to the American Political Science Association (2006), such difficulties on the part of communities that have already experienced socioeconomic hardships cause further inequalities, which make African American males vulnerable to other socioeconomic barriers. Events of personal affliction, according to the American Political Science Association, make it difficult to envision a favorable learning environment. As the nation's unemployment rate continues to increase, crime and educational failure continues to rise among the African American community, particularly among African American males aged 15 to 24 years old (Donnor & Shockley, 2010).

To improve their socioeconomic circumstances, African American males must perceive higher education as an opportunity for advancement (McMilliam, 2003/2004). A significant

factor hindering their progress towards academic achievement beyond high school is a lack of parental guidance and inadequate academic preparation that would contribute towards academic success (Battle, 2002). The culture of violence and disengagement from the school environment is another barrier to attaining educational opportunities for minority male students (Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, & McLoyd, 2002).

African American, Latino, and Native American males collectively experience more challenges to educational attainment or barriers to receiving higher educational opportunities than any other culture (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2001). For Latino students, educational outcome is declining; their opportunities to enter into postsecondary education are challenged by teen pregnancy, illegal activities, and social destructive behaviors (NCES, 2001). The NCES does not provide statistics of the actual number of Latinos finishing high school by age 30; however, it does indicate GED as the path often used by Latinos to finish high school by age 25 or 26. The U.S. Census also indicated 80% of native-born Latino youth finish high school by age 25 to 29 (NCES, 2001).

The California Department of Education (2009) released its high school dropout rates for its minority students: African American high school students' are 41.3%, Native Americans 31.3%, Hispanics 30.3%, Pacific Islanders 27.9%, and White 10.2%. Identified causes for the extremely high dropout rate among Latino students were low English language ability, poverty, impoverished family factor, and length of residence in the United States. Despite the high dropout rate among both African American and Latino students, both groups face the problems of underachievement, low academic performance, and low academic aspirations (California Department of Education, 2009).

Higher educational access for minority male students is limited by criminal activities and U.S. drug policies that restrict the chances of entering into higher education using student aid (Swain, 2006). African American male youth account for 48.8% of juvenile drug arrests, while their White counterparts only account for 4%. Juvenile arrests of Latinos are 13 times more frequent than of Whites. The 1998 Higher Educational Act passed by the U.S. Congress denies federal aid to students with a misdemeanor or felony drug offense (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Given the numbers of African American and Latino youths arrested and convicted from drug offenses in the U.S., opportunities to higher education access are impacted; these students become susceptible to dropping out of high school, engaging in criminal activities, or displaying aggressive behavior because a college education appears to be unachievable (Schlesinger, 2005). The negative implications of the socioeconomic barriers minority males face affects their attitudes and, therefore, diminishes aspirations for continuing higher education beyond high school.

The lack of motivation and academic preparedness increases aggressive behavior among minority males, particularly African American males (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2008). According to the CDC, homicide among African American males aged 10 to 24 doubled since 2010, which is a higher increase than that of any other male population. African American males' involvement in some type of aggressive offense on school property lessens achievement capabilities and makes them more likely to be unwilling to participate in the school culture (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2008).

Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzl and Leinbach (2005) identified factors that may hinder student success and stated instructional support and student support services are leading factors for successful outcomes. These factors should be considered when attempting to understand the

impact of institutional practices affecting the persistence and successful outcomes among minority students. Institutions not implementing practice strategies that would help African American males persist and remain in college would result in low student persistence and low graduation rates. According to Davis (1994), implementing mechanisms that target African American males, specifically their experience, performance, and achievement outcomes, increases their achievement status and reduces the achievement gap between African American males and their school peers.

Problem Statement

The general problem related to the current qualitative study is that African American male students in higher education are at a higher risk than their counterparts of facing adversity, inequality, and subjective claims because of misunderstood cultural interchanges or economic status (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006). To face such challenges, it is difficult for at-risk African American males to believe they can change their future out of poverty or successfully complete postsecondary education without racial disparity (McCarter, 2009). According to a study conducted by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University (2001), African Americans may achieve at a higher economic status; however, they will continue to experience discrimination or some type of racial judgment.

The specific problem is that poverty continues to influence African American males' abilities to encounter access into higher education systems as well as their determination to pursue higher education opportunities (D'Andrea, 1995; Mistry, 2002; Swain, 2006). D'Andrea (1995) explained how the issues of poverty, lack of educational opportunities, racial disparity, and unequal access to educational opportunity prevent academic success for student development and impact academic performance. Identifying challenges hindering academic progress among

African American males in higher education will expose positive aspects to assist those students to remain in higher education and possibly increase the likelihood of postsecondary education completion.

Purpose Statement

Foster (2004) cited John Ogbu's theory that minority students' learning is based on two sets of factors influence academic performance: how society and the school treats minorities and how minority groups respond to those treatments and schooling. The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold: (a) to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress in higher education, and (b) to understand the perceptions of factors influencing their academic achievement in an institution of higher education.

The institution selected for the current study was Danville Community College (DCC) in Virginia, and the participants were students from the targeted two-year college. Although Virginia ranked 12th in the lowest poverty rate in 2008 compared to other states in the U.S., the Southern region where the study was conducted has the highest percentage of individuals living below the poverty level (18.5%) of any region in Virginia (Virginia Community College System, 2008).

Significance of the Study

Caldwell and Siwatu (2003) stated the academic persistence of African American students is challenged and marked continuously as a conflict indicator for performance achievement. When students are not involved in the academic process, academic persistence and motivation becomes weakened, and education is devalued (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009). According to Tinto (1997), "What is needed and what is not available is a model of institutional

action that provides guidelines for the development of effective policies and programs that institutions can reasonably employ to enhance the persistence of all students" (pp. 6-7). The findings from the current study generated themes and recommendations that support the development of an effective institutional action model targeting academic achievement for African American males.

Significance of the Study to Leadership

Researchers (Credle & Dean, 1991; Warde, 2008) have examined concepts such as empowerment and control to understand influences supporting African American males' success in higher education. The significance of the current qualitative phenomenological study was that the findings would provide useful information to develop educational support services and intensive academic programs for minority students, particularly African American males, to help them reach their academic potential. The findings may also provide information on how to improve persistence levels among minority students by identifying factors hindering their academic success and improve opportunities advancing them in higher education through supportive mechanisms.

From a higher institutional standpoint, Credle and Dean (1991) and Warde (2008) concluded African American males would generally benefit from research studies conducted on retention strategies, with an emphasis on academic, social, and other forces that would enable guidance and support at the higher institutional level. Uncovering these practices and strategies would help improve educational outcomes for African American male students and allow better opportunities for advancement and success in higher education. In addition, the significance of the study to higher educational leadership lies in identifying useful instructive methods that would improve educational attainment and success rate among African American males. By

analyzing instructive methods, the study's findings revealed factors that influence retention of African American male students in higher education.

Research Questions

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold: first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering their academic progress in higher education, and second, to understand the perceptions of factors influencing their academic achievement in an institution of higher education.

Three research questions guided the study:

R1: How do African American male students identify academic success?

R2: What outside influences impinge on African American male students' view of higher education?

R3: What factors influence African American male's academic success in a community college?

Appendix A contains a copy of the interview protocol developed for the current study.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the current qualitative study, the operational terms listed below are defined as follows:

African American. A person descended from any of the Black racial groups of Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Hispanic or Latino. A person descended from any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachments (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Asian, not Hispanic or Latino. A person descended from any of the peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan; Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Black. A person descended from any of the Black racial groups of Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Delimitations. Characteristics the researcher establishes on a study or description of the population that will determine how the results are interpreted (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006).

Disparity (Racial). Refers to services that are poorly or inadequately provided to addressing the needs of one segment of a community relative to other segments. It also means that such differences in service delivery are not justifiable on the basis of a family's identified need, available agency resources, or other objective criteria (Vandiver, Cross, Flagen-Smith, Worrell, Swim, & Caldwell, 2000).

Educational Attainment. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, educational attainment refers to the highest level of education that an individual has completed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Hispanic or Latino. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Limitations. Characteristics of a design or methodology that may restrict the scope of the study's findings (Ary et al., 2006).

Minority of Color. A citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States with ethnic background such as Black (a person having origins of Black racial groups of Africa); Hispanic (a

person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, Spanish or Portuguese culture); Native American (an American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, or Native Hawaiian); Pacific-Asian (a person from Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Samoa, Guam, or the United States Trust Territories of the Pacific including the Northern Marianas); Asian-Indian (a person whose origins are from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh); or any other group identified as minorities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Poverty. The United States Census Bureau (2005) uses a set of income thresholds to determine poverty levels according to family size and employment. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, the family and every individual within the family is considered to be in poverty.

Recession (Economic). The United States' National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) defines a recession as a significant decline in economic activity lasting more than a few months (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

Resilience. Masten (1994) defined resilience within an individual as adaptation despite risk and adversity. Gordon (1995) defined resilience as a pattern over time characterized by good eventual adaptation despite developmental risk, acute stressors, or chronic adversities.

White, not Hispanic or Latino. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005), an individual considered White, not Hispanic or Latino is any person descended from any of the ethnic or cultural groups originating in Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Assumptions

Since the current study intends to obtain insight into African American males' perceptions and lived experiences related to educational success in higher education, I interacted closely with participants to understand their responses, which were assumed to be truthful and

accurate. The majority of the research was based on perspectives and categories of interest to uncover patterns and form theories to explain the phenomenal interest of the study. To establish overall accuracy, I verified information obtained from participants by comparing it with disclosed information from their questionnaires and verified enrollment through the campus registrar.

Limitations

According to Mitchell, Wirt and Marshall (1986), educational research limitations and delimitations define restrictions that could hinder conclusions drawn from a study. College freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior African American male students were invited to participate. Since this research was confined to a small-sized campus, known limitations associated with the current study included a limited number of participants available for selection and participation. According to the Danville Community College (DCC) Institutional Research Department, summer enrollment varies between 2,600 and 2,800 students (Danville Community College, Fact Book, 2010). Since the majority of full-time, actively enrolled students are enrolled during the fall and spring semesters, recruitment efforts targeting African American males to participate in the study during the summer may be limited.

A second known limitation is related to the timing of the study's administration. The summer term at Danville Community College is eight weeks compared to fall and spring terms of 16-18 weeks. Efforts to recruit participants during the summer term, schedule interviews, and gather all data was challenging and under severe time restrictions. I depended on the participants' full cooperation and willingness to participate to obtain significant data that met the needs of the research and addressed the research questions to gain a full understanding of their educational perspectives and experiences in higher education.

Since African American male students were recruited from one institution, and the study was carried out during one semester term, the results may not be generalizable to all community colleges. The study also involved interviewing six African American male students, which may limit the assessment of a larger number of data. Individual information such as grade point average (GPA), program of study, and length of enrollment since initial enrollment into college will not meet eligibility requirements for recruitment of participants for the study.

Delimitations

The current study contains three delimitations. First, the participants for the study were selected from one community college. Second, the focus is primarily on African American male students. Third, the coverage of the study was restricted to a small sample size associated with the exploration of these students' perceptions and responses.

Overview of the Research Method

The current qualitative study explored issues facing African American male students' achievement in higher education. Significant achievements among African American males have occurred in higher educational institutions establishing good practices with respect to cooperation from faculty and institutional practices that focused on retention, persistence, and attainment for successful completion (Warde, 2008). According to Warde, continued factors that could hinder African American males' successful enrollment include institutional challenges and social and cultural expectations. Strayhorn (2008) emphasized how similar factors impede academic achievement and influence failure to complete college among African American male students.

According to Hull (1997), qualitative research provides an opportunity in the "understanding of human experiences to reveal the process which people say about their worlds

and report what those meanings are" (p. 14). Qualitative inquiries are a process of understanding based on a distinct methodological tradition of inquiry, and such methods can be used to explore social or human problems to build a holistic picture or report the study based on its natural setting for a convincing interpretation (Creswell, 1998). The current study occurred in the participants' natural setting; hence, data was easily obtained from the participants to gain their perspectives and understand their behavior or experiences throughout their enrollment in higher education.

Gay (1996) explained quantitative research involves a collection of data that test the hypothesis or answer the questions. Because quantitative research involves numbers, it was difficult to obtain a larger sample size from the selected population because of low percentage enrollment rates among African American males at the chosen institution (Virginia Community College System, 2008). It would have been difficult to control or predict the expected outcome to establish relationships between two or more variables, gain insights of achievement levels and expected outcome of successful postsecondary enrollment among African American male students. Collection of data for the current study involved a small sample size of six participants from a community college campus. The data would not have shown a comparison or established an association among indicated variables, and a qualitative study was therefore considered more appropriate based on the questions the study sought to answer and the phenomenon being examined.

The guiding questions sought to identify characteristics of persistence as perceived by the participants to understand their perceptions of successful educational experiences and perhaps identify common practices considered relevant to a successful educational experience. Merriam (1998) asserted, "Phenomenological studies focus on the overall essence of an experience which

allow perspectives and worldviews of the people involved in the experience" (p. 11). Therefore, usage of a phenomenological study for this research allows insights that would enrich African American males' college enrollment and inspire similar studies to be conducted using similar methods based on this current study.

Overview of the Design Appropriateness

Conducting a phenomenological study supports the ability to understand African American male students in two-year institutions and their lived experiences related to academic support, social integration from non-black instructors, and institutional practices to support their persistence. Findings from the current study might provide information needed to support African American males' access to higher educational services upon enrollment and academic support targeting their specific needs as well as policy shaping institutional characteristics that affects African American males' retention status.

Although many prominent scholars in the educational field have conducted qualitative studies related to African American males' enrollment status in higher education, Harper, Carini, Bridges and Hayek (2002) specifically studied predominantly White institutions (PWI) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Findings from the study of Harper et al. (2002) indicated various factors affected African American male student's persistence, retention, and graduation challenges. Although previous studies explored problems African Americans face, including African American males, few have researched factors underlying the success of African American males attending colleges or analyzed their perspectives concerning the phenomenon under study (Davis, 1994). The current phenomenological study will allow a more qualitative dialogue in which perspectives from participants can be understood and assist in explaining practices that will help shape their success at the community college level.

Summary

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on college enrollment and college degrees conferred, African American males continue to rank at a smaller representative percentage compared to Whites. Further, both the national and state unemployment rates among African American males continue to show increased rates since 1997 compared to Whites and other races (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998).

The U.S. Department of Justice (2002) asserted approximately one third of African American males within the United States are incarcerated or have experienced incarceration. It appears African American males are at an overall disadvantage in terms of opportunities in the workforce and successful educational experiences. This disadvantage also affects the learning achievement gap between African American males and their counterparts. The findings from the current study may expose the need to focus on factors leading to inequalities among races, aspects of diversity in higher education, and lack of multicultural education services that would help success rates among these students. Exposing various learning styles and the lived personal experiences perceived by African American males of successful outcomes will help educators develop better educational practices and policies.

By reporting on the lived experiences of African American male students in higher education, the findings may expose barriers that often hinder their academic progress. Second, the information obtained from the interviews may influence success in academic achievement for African American males at any institution of higher learning, which would improve ongoing information and resources pertaining to educational issues and teaching. The study was carried

out on the campus of Danville Community College (DCC) in Danville, Virginia. Participants selected were African American males, full-time enrolled at DCC (12 credit hours or more).

Existing phenomenological studies reveal factors leading to success among various student populations; however, none particularly focused on factors supporting African American male students' success in community colleges. Calcagno et al. (2005), Davis (1994), Strayhorn (2008) and Warde (2008) conducted studies to understand the effects of higher education institutional practices on minority students' persistence in attaining academic goals. Factors such as student access to instructional and other student support services were found to correlate with student success, especially among minority students (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2005). Other research revealed a lack in institutional practices of strategies that would help African American males persist and remain in college leads to low student persistence and low graduation rates at any institution of higher learning (Davis, 1994).

Chapter two provides the literature review with insights concerning educational research theoretical models influencing student retention, engagement, and performance among African American males. Other elements explored in the literature review are socio-economic status among minorities, including African American males, as well as how economic barriers affect their persistence in higher education. Further observations within the literature will address the roles higher educational institutions play in supporting college retention and graduation rates for African American males.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold: first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering their academic progress in higher education, and second to understand the perceptions of factors influencing African American male students' academic achievement in an institution of higher education. Chapter two contains the results of title searches from research journals and books related to the phenomenon to determine the availability of sources to support the current qualitative study. The chapter also contains a historic overview and discussions of theoretical models influencing student retention, engagement, and performance among African American males. The review of the literature highlights topics such as Tinto's theoretical longitudinal model, socio-economic status and economic barriers, and extended family relationships.

Historical Overview

Since the late nineties, African American student enrollment in higher education, percentage-wise, has increased slowly in comparison to other races (CollegeBoard, 1999). The growing enrollment rate among these students could be dependent on numerous factors, but an ongoing tendency surrounds programs targeting African American male college experiences and academic support to increase achievement levels (Foster, 2004). Dee (2006) analyzed connections between teachers' educational expectations for minority student achievement because some teachers had higher educational expectations for academic performance. The experiment explored how this assumption affected minority students when they were assigned to teachers of their own race. The experiment results found no significant change in student achievement levels among students assigned to teachers of their own race (Dee, 2006).

Ogbu (1978) examined African American males in K-12 to determine how culture affected their educational experiences. This study analyzed academic experiences among different racial and economic groups compared to African American males. Ogbu concluded culture influences minority education. Fordham's (1992) study analyzed student achievement levels among various racial groups, particularly Black students. The study emphasized culture and group identity often preceded academic achievement among Black students.

Deci and Ryan (1991), Enger (1993), and Fortier, Valler and Guay (1995) conducted studies analyzing African American males' educational experiences. Findings from those studies identified socioeconomic status, motivational approaches, family support, and access to school resources effectively enhanced student performance. Achievement levels could increase among these students through educational materials from teachers to parents to support students' academic progress (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997).

To understand achievement levels among African Americans in higher education, comparative studies were conducted analyzing college experiences of Blacks in predominantly Black or White colleges (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Daire, LaMothe, & Fuller, 2007; Davis, 1994). Most of the studies analyzed the academic discipline of African Americans students. In consideration of attitudes and actions occasioned by the history of inequality, social structures were implemented to deter unfair practices based on discrimination. Under the conditions of understanding problems from discriminatory practices in education, the purpose of Civil Rights Laws and Affirmative Action is to protect students of all races from racial and ethnic imbalances (Davis, 1994).

Davis (1994) analyzed differences between African American and White college students to understand different class relations and the value placed on education. College access,

retention, and graduation rates for African Americans at historically black colleges and universities and predominantly White colleges and universities have been a cause for concern (Daire, LaMothe, & Fuller, 2007). Institutions continue to tackle issues related to African American and other minorities for continued access to college, retention, and graduation. Davis (1994) further explained how many institutions are implementing support programs. Conclusions based on the studies' findings suggested social integration and support programs targeting academic achievement increased graduation rates for African American males.

Theoretical Framework

Significant theory models have been designed to address circumstances of minority students and solutions to enhance institutional practices. According to Cuyjet (1997), there are a disproportionate number of Black males attending college versus Black females and White students in general. According to statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics (2007) and American Council on Education (2005), of the 14 million students enrolled in American colleges and universities, only 38% are Black males, compared to 45% White males. In consideration of other minority groups, 49% are Asian students, 44% are Hispanic students, and 2% are Native American students. Implementing effective student development theory models can change this disproportionate representation among African American males and counter institutionalized negative perceptions of Black men (Cuyjet, 1997).

Research findings show that African American men in college can be affected by the institution's social environment (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). If faculty and institutional members in teaching-learning positions do not integrate student development theories, African American men can become disengaged from the campus community (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). The lack of social skills may also prevent student learning. According to Reid and

Radhakrishnan (2003), African American students remain socially segregated in higher education. Implementing social and educational programs in higher education influences student learning and social interaction among African American students (Reid and Radhakrishnan, 2003).

Studies on the background of African American males conclude these students want to go to college but lack social skills for coping in a learning environment (Bell, 2010). To develop effective programs and raise accountability standards for educating African American males, researchers are focusing more on the identity development and success of African American men as these relate to college experiences (Harris, Palmer, & Struve, 2011). Understanding behavior and adaptive functioning to college life helps colleges and universities implement social and educational experiences for African American males (Harris et al., 2011).

African American men entering college may have limited resources for academic support while facing demands of social growth (Strayhorn, 2008). Tinto's theory on retention concludes African American men undergoing supportive programs experience high levels of satisfaction rather than experiencing academic achievement (Tinto, 1997). Further research suggests supportive influences for African American men include school environment, identity development, resilience, and recognizing leadership potential (Gayles, 2006). Because leadership development can be influential among African American male college students, teachers and the school environment can be effective and maximize the success of African American male students.

Theoretical frameworks can enhance college experiences of African American male students. When faced with critical issues and obstacles challenging their pursuit of academic success, African American males may become disconnected from the campus environment and

no longer desire to contribute toward positive outcomes (Cross, 1991). Chickering and Reisser's theory of student development assessed student services that assisted students with personal and emotional development (Hastings, 1999). Results of Chickering and Reisser's longitudinal study suggest students should have a basic foundation of college knowledge to progress. A student's ability to progress in college depends on their developmental journey. Chickering's theory further suggests that seven educational environmental influences impact a student's development: institutional objectives, institutional size, student-faculty relationship, curriculum, teaching, friendships and student communities, and student development programs (Hastings, 1999).

Other student development theories reflect how students may struggle through the matriculation process, including admissions, counseling, and assessment examinations. These theories are designed to enhance student affairs and support services dealing with the diverse population of students. Hastings (1999) emphasizes the importance of understanding diverse populations of students because it influences effective practices for identifying vectors such as attitudes, behaviors, norms, and learning outcomes.

Student developmental theories could also enhance growth and development as a student transition into real life situations. According to Patton, McEwen, Rendon and Howard-Hamilton (2007), student development theories target diversity and increase the understanding of individuals in college. Researchers have relied on student development theories to enhance campus environments. However, these theories are inadequate insofar as they relate to race relations and the role of racism in students' learning and development. Other student development theories have evolved to examine racial meaning and context for implementing practical programs when facing these circumstances (Henfield, Malik, Moore, James, & Wood,

2008). Theory-to-practice models such as Cross's theory of racial identity development model (Cross Racial Identity Scale – CRIS) specifies several approaches that embrace the intellectual needs of African American male students (Cross & Vandiver, 2001).

Useful interventions within this theory include appropriate teaching practices, promoting differences, including a safe space for the expression of personal experiences, and exploring issues related to Black masculinity, which constructs leadership and vocational identity to increase interaction and build relations among African American college males (Strayhorn, 2010). According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory, three elements affect Black students' academic achievement levels: parental environment, teacher perceptions, and school environment. To improve personal and social growth and influence student learning among African American males, research suggests identifying theories related to individual developmental needs and connections with life experiences (Strayhorn, 2010).

The lack of social development among African American men relates to characteristics of personal development and fundamental differences (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009). Personal development can be an important factor when facilitating educational growth among African American men. According to Hughes (2010), characteristics connected to high-achievement levels normally manifest before adolescence or early adulthood among African American men. If these students are not thinking in terms of academic success, or if academic capabilities are not identified during this period, African American males are more likely to visualize failure rather than educational success (Hughes, 2010). Researchers identified programs that push African American males towards educational success and influence higher education during adolescence (Gardenshire-Crooks, Collado, & Martin, 2010).

Studies conducted on African American male educational experiences report social equity affects their attitudes (Gardenshire-Crooks et al., 2010). Based on school experiences, if students' expectations are low and they are subject to negative racial and gender stereotypes, they are likely to have negative attitudes toward their current and future educational plans. Since the perception of racial status ties into racial identity, implementing personal development theories could enhance African American college men's learning experiences (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Cross and Vandiver (2001) cautioned that identity models may exploit African American men's social, intellectual, personality, and moral development; therefore, higher education institutions must provide resolution and commitment to identity development as well.

Researchers suggest exploring environmental factors such as community experiences and other cultural influences to determine strengths and support that illustrate educational views of African American students (Strayhorn, 2010). Student development theories can also aid African American male students when coping with circumstances that challenge their educational outcomes. Some common occurrences are fundamental differences that led to academic failure. Davis (1994) described fundamental differences as socialization, moral decision making, and economic factors. Although student development theories do not push toward academic achievement, researchers believe these theories contribute to the connection of racial identities and educational success (Bell, 2010).

Cunia (2005), Phelan (2009), and Boddington (2009) studied various human behavior approaches and suggested student learning could result from personal experience or practices. According to Cunia (2005), autonomy is a factor in how people condition themselves in experiences, whether morally or in accordance to their own will. Behaviorists theorize that autonomy is an important element in human development models because individuals achieve

better when they are self-sufficient. Within education, autonomy enables students to express choices and select experiences within a learning environment. When students are self-sufficient, they adapt to the institution's values and interact in their social environment (Cunia, 2005). Two theories support the theories of student development and the influence of autonomy: (a) Erickson's psychosocial development theory and (b) Anderson and Honneth's social theory.

Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory

Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory expounded on personality traits and human behaviors influenced through nurture and personal experience (Phelan, 2009; (Boddington, 2009). Wagner (1983) evaluated Erik Erikson's final developmental stage, ego integrity versus despair, which occurs in adulthood. Wagner's study assessed psychosocial behavior as it relates to a person's experiences with stressors during the final developmental stage. Boddington focused on the development of ego identity and boundaries of self-identity in Erikson's theory. This theory addressed the manner of living from the perspective of a person's personality and self-representation.

Self-representation is defined as a person's ego identity. A person's sense of identity can depend on a particular setting or structure of his experience as a whole (Boddington, 2009). Wagner (1983) noted the similarity to Sigmund Freud's theory of ego and id, in which the id helps shapes an individual's behavior as he or she develops into adulthood. Although, Freud's notion of the ego relates to an individual's mind, Erikson's ego has less emphasis on an individual's behavior. Wagner (1983) concludes that Erikson's theory is one of the best-known theories for personality development in psychology and more useful in studies of psychological and other personality perspectives.

Erikson's psychosocial development theory, according to Boddington (2009), characterized human development as an extension of social development throughout a person's lifespan. Because the definition of ego identity is "the conscious sense of self that we develop through social interaction" (Boddington, 2009), an individual's ego identity is constantly developed as a person experiences life changes. As a person experiences new information in daily routines and undergoes interactions with others, ego identity is developed (Boddington, 2009).

Erikson's psychosocial development theory of ego identity is found to be more comprehensive than Freud's because it includes normal personality and neurotics (Boddington, 2009). The broadened scope of personality theory can be incorporated into society and culture rather than just into the influences of sexuality. Erikson's theory on ego identity, according to Vygotsky (1986), described preceding stages to succeeding stages, which can describe a person's way of living and how their development of self centers on their identity.

Each of Erikson's stages represents a psychosocial crisis based on the premise that a sense of competence can motivate a person's behavior and actions (Boddington, 2009). A key element to this premise is social interaction, which explains behavior in cognitive and communicative functions to aid in learning when a person interacts with people, objects, and events (Vygotsky, 1986). Erikson's psychosocial theory explores personality to understand an individual's social and culture development. An important aspect described in Erikson's theory draws on social factors and events that influence a person's learning and development. Each stage relates to a framework that interprets an individual's interaction when dealing with society. This involvement consists of a person's motivation to attempt tasks using critical features

learned from developmental skills, as described by Erikson's stages, which leads to individuals becoming more mature in the decision-making process (Erikson, 1968).

Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory and Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory interpret human cognitive development according to similar methods. Erikson's theory emphasizes social behavior as adaptive stages, which focuses on an individuals' personality rather than applied concepts (Erikson, 1968). Freud's psychosexual theory suggests that a person's biological needs and social expectations occur through various life stages. Freud further hypothesized that the role of sexuality plays an important part in how people mature. Erikson's stages of physiological development explain that maturity develops during a specific part of life, whether through instruction from an individual's parents or society. Phelan (2009) used Erikson's developmental stages in an effort to evaluate an appropriate balance of external control and self-control strategies to motivate and increase awareness in any environment.

Freud's and Erikson's psychosocial behavior theories demonstrate an individual's experience from various developmental stages from childhood to adulthood (Boddington, 2009). Erikson's theories describe how an individual can be influenced by his environment. Phelan (2009) conducted studies on youth with behavioral problems. Youths in residential programs were analyzed to determine behavior in controlled treatment areas. Results concluded that institutionalized youths' negative behavior increased and motivational levels decreased because of confinement (Phelan, 2009). This poses a challenge to the strategist developing solutions for external control in a treatment process. Phelan suggests reducing external control to allow autonomy and independence with fewer rules and routines, as this type of self-sufficiency increases an individual's sense of self-worth and personal development.

When there is a reduction in external control within institutionalized programs, learning can be achieved because the individual starts to interact within the environment and does not feel a sense of harsh structure implemented by the organization (Phelan, 2009). According to Phelan (2009), learning and teaching develops throughout an individual's lifespan, especially when choices are encouraged at appropriate levels within progressive developmental stages. Phelan asserted, "The transfer of control from the environment or the adult to the youth's self-control function is what therapeutic milieu work is all about" (p. 46).

Phelan (2009) described methods using Erikson's personality theory development stages that are effective among youths if implemented appropriately. This method includes trust, mistrust, autonomy versus shame, and doubt stages. According to Phelan, youth in institutionalized facilities with challenged behaviors should be carefully assessed using developmental frameworks and strategies. This development framework must involve youth and the facility's staff. Youth's behavior in institutionalized environments can be unchanging if there is no transformational point that allows for understanding and comprehending environmental expectations. Their ego-centric and unskilled social behavior, according to Phelan, will not meet their academic needs.

Youth in institutions tend to challenge patience, manipulate situations, and not show remorse about their inappropriate behavior (Phelan, 2009). This is why the appealing process from the institution includes social behavioral rules to follow that stipulate appropriate conduct and behavior toward others. In Erikson's second stage, that of autonomy versus shame, mistrust can develop as choices or capabilities to experience challenges (Boddington, 2009). Institutions should implement standards of conduct and adjust procedural language, methods of reasoning, and judgments to match the level of expectations and not immediately demand appropriate

behavior when it is not part of the youth's upbringing (Phelan, 2009). The institution should help make logical decisions implementing choices and encouraging self-reliance for successful outcomes.

In an ideal world, crises in each of Erikson's stages are resolved in the ego stage, so personality development proceeds correctly; however, it does not always work that way (Boddington, 2009). The outcome of one stage is not lasting but adjusts through later experiences occurring throughout the course of people's lives. Erikson's theory concludes that everyone has a mixture of traits at each developmental stage. However, personality development is more successful if the person has more good traits than bad (Phelan, 2009; Boddington, 2009).

Cunia (2005) described behavioral approaches within the social learning environment. A person's ability to participate effectively and make good choices occurs within their social environment, and further explains that people sharing common principles achieve positive outcomes.

Honneth's Social Theory

Honneth's approach, modeled on the of Georg Hegel, who completed *Phenomenology of the Spirit* in 1807, theorized that humans are dependent and thrive on well-established, ethical relations within a social environment. Non-conflictual social environments allow self-realization to occur, in which people become aware of themselves and their potential (Stojanov, 2009). Honneth's social theory emphasized the importance of social relationships to human development and a person's identity (Stojanov, 2009). Important elements of social development that establish societal relationships are peer relations, parenting, sibling relations, and social class (Stojanov, 2009). Intimate relationships affect a person's development from early stages throughout his lifetime (Stojanov, 2009). As a person develops, interpersonal relations may form

in their societal environment. The individual must seek ways to adapt and interact in their social environment. The development of psychological maturity allows a person to function in interpersonal relations and cope in societal environments (Stojanov, 2009).

Honneth's social theory involves object-relations theory (Stojanov, 2009), drawing on the object-relations development work of Donald Winnicott, who theorized that the transitional phenomenon is an individual's emotional capability to do the work (Stojanov, 2009). Winnicott further explained that as individuals respond to a facilitating environment, they become self-aware of their experiences (Stojanov, 2009). As outlined in Winnicott's framework of self-development, Anderson and Honneth noted that transitional phenomena are linked to maternal care. Individual's environmental care is developed from the mother. The basis of transitional objects occurs when the mother helps the child adapt to immediate physical needs, which in turn develops the ability to adapt and transition to other cultural environments (Stojanov, 2009).

Individuals can thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances (Stojanov, 2009). Adverse circumstances may include biological abnormalities and environmental obstacles, and may be chronic and consistent, or severe and infrequent. To thrive, mature, and increase competence, a person must draw on all resources to adapt and transition to the environment. Transitional resources can be biological, psychological, and environmental (Stojanov, 2009). Winnocott further concluded that transitional phenomena form individuals' perception of reality to adapt to their environment (Stojanov, 2009). When the environment is nurturing, the individual is likely to seek approaches to develop independence to overcome challenging obstacles.

Tinto's Theoretical Longitudinal Models

Student retention is considered an important factor for success in higher education (Tinto, 1975; 1993; 1994; & 1995). Tinto's theoretical longitudinal models analyzed influences of persistence and factors supporting students' departure from community colleges. Important elements noted as key attributes within Tinto's models that led toward academic integration include internal motivation, goal commitment, advancement, support, and search for knowledge. These attributes are important because they support student persistence and integrate social and academic development as influences of student learning. Tinto's theoretical model's results suggest that voluntary withdrawal occurs when there is minimal campus community involvement (Tinto & Love, 1995).

Tinto's (1993) retention model emphasized student retention and circumstances that influenced early departure. Institutions implemented various strategies, including retention models, to enhance freshman experiences in college. These approaches include student support services surrounding social integration, goals and attitudes, and academic achievement levels (Veenstra, 2009). Academic and social integration were important aspects of both Tinto's (1993) retention model and Astin's theory models on student involvement (Burks & Barrett, 2009). Astin's (1977) theory model explains that students actively involved in and closely connected to their college campus excel academically and persist in higher education. "As long as students were satisfied with their academic experiences and took pride in their campus community, they persist in educational programs" (Janes, 1997). Bean and Metzner's (1985) attrition model targeted non-traditional students and cited elements similar to those noted in Astin's theory and Tinto's models. Social variables were found to impact departure decisions or perceived as leading indicators for student persistence (Meyer, Bruwelheide, & Poulin, 2009). Other

important factors evolving from Astin's theory on student persistence were perceptions of the college campus community, relationships established with other students, emotional support, and active involvement with the university (Bean & Metzner, 1985).

Remedial Education

According to Jones (2007), community colleges are dumping grounds for students with skill deficiencies rather than institutions preparing students for four-year colleges. A 2008 report by the Massachusetts Department of Education and Board of Higher Education states that low-income African American and Hispanic students are not academically prepared to enroll in a four-year university. These students are more likely to enroll in community college remedial courses (Community College Week, 2008).

Data from the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board (2008) reports 17% of students not graduating from high school, with higher rates among African American, Native American, and Hispanic students. The data report also reveals that approximately 45% of African Americans, 49% of Native Americans, and 53% of Hispanics may complete postsecondary education within six years if they successfully complete remedial courses. Remedial education enables students to develop academically and achieve in college-level courses (Jones 2007). Data reported from the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board indicated that underprepared minority students in secondary education lack the necessary preparation to succeed beyond high school (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2008).

Roach (2000) discussed the effects of remedial course policies and concerns of increased enrollment of African American and Latino college students. Results of state-wide surveys on remedial education continuously show high enrollment rates among African American,

Hispanics, and Latino students. According to a Maryland State Higher Education Commission (MSHEC) (1996) study conducted on undergraduate minority students, approximately 46,000 (49%) were under-prepared for postsecondary education based on remedial analysis. The study further examined remediation policies and the success of remedial students within developmental programs and the cost related to readiness (MSHEC, 1996). Findings concluded that students enrolled in remediation programs lacked academic skill levels to progress in traditional programs and needed extensive amounts of remediation at the community college level to achieve. Findings also concluded undergraduate minority students had lower achievement levels at a four-year university than traditional students (MSHEC, 1996).

From 1994 to 1995, 75% of African American students were enrolled in remedial programs at a community college, and over 40% of African Americans were enrolled in remedial programs at four-year colleges (MSHEC, 1996). In general, studies conclude a higher need for remedial programs among minority students than White students for college success and college access (England, 1994). Although states continue to analyze remediation programs in higher education, most states reflect disproportionate numbers of underprepared students among African American, Hispanic, and Latino students. These minority students continuously exhibit insufficient preparedness for college-level work (England, 1994).

Few studies have addressed theory approaches of remedial education among African American students, particularly African American males. According to Abraham and Creech (2000), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) are addressing issues of the increasing number of students entering college requiring remedial education and policies of college-level assessment and placement tests. The outcomes for remedial programs will include follow-up and progress tracking for degree-seeking and first-time college students.

Minority College Enrollment

Studies conducted on minority college enrollment have concluded that a large percentage of students fail to meet college enrollment requirements. According to Finkelstein and Fong (2008), minority student's course-taking patterns in secondary education are not of college-preparatory coursework. These students have a difficult time keeping pace with their counterparts in overall academic performance. California's public university system reported that 40% of African American students in 9th grade enrolled in coursework meeting California's university or state college admission requirements (Finkelstein & Fong, 2008, p. 4). This finding demonstrates an inconsistent pattern of college-preparedness among various ethnic groups, particularly among minority students.

California community colleges report higher remedial placement among Hispanics and African American students than their White peers (Finkelstein & Fong, 2008). Despite the educational gap among various ethnic groups, African American and Hispanic students are known to be interactive and engaged in their campus communities; indeed, according to Greene, Marti, and McClenney (2008), African American and Hispanic students are more engaged in the college environment than their White counterparts. Although African American and Hispanic students' academic performance is lower than that of White students, these students are involved in educational activities and the institution's environment.

Studies show that minority students such as Hispanic, Latino, and African American endure similar experiences of racial discrimination and equal access opportunities in an educational environment (Wakefield & Fajardo, 2004). Although African American males reflect higher enrollment numbers in higher education, Hispanic male students were found to be lacking equal access to higher education. Latino student enrollment in community colleges was

identified to be trailing behind African American and Hispanic students, experiencing similar educational challenges and under-representation (Radovcic, 2010).

In addition to minority retention challenges, research shows differences in proportional enrollment and persistence among minority groups (Griffin, 2010). Among various minority groups, studies found a range of characteristics that influenced enrollment among Latino, African American, and Hispanic students. Financial and academic support consistently influences persistence and graduation among these racial groups (Radovcic, 2010). Few research studies have identified factors that affected enrollment experiences of Hispanic and Latino students (Griffin, 2010). Recent studies conducted on Hispanic, African American, and Latino male community college students found that resilience to adversity and financial support led to persistence and graduation (Griffin, 2010; Page, 2010; Radovcic, 2010).

African American and Latino students share similar enrollment motives with Hispanic college students (Radovcic, 2010). Statistics show that Hispanic and African American students are among the poorest and least educated on a national level (U.S. Department of Education). Because of the socioeconomic status of these ethnic groups, recent studies have closely examined their college experiences to determine best practices for retention, persistence, and graduating minority male students. Outcomes of these studies indicated the importance of academic support programs and cultural identity, particularly among Latino and African American male students (Radovcic, 2010). Hispanic male students face more challenges for college enrollment because of citizenry and financial aid. Citizenry and student aid requires reporting of student's background documentation, family information, and verification of household finances (Radovcic, 2010).

Because of the large differences in education attainment among minority students, researchers are focusing on college preparation procedures to determine enrollment, retention, and graduation rates (Finkelstein & Fong, 2008). California public college preparation consists of college preparatory mathematics and English coursework; however, within the ethnicity gap, a large percentage of minority students are not enrolled in these courses before their 12th grade year. According to Finkelstein and Fong (2008), half of Asian and White students completed required college-preparatory English and mathematics requirements by their 12th grade year compared to a third of Hispanic and African American students (p. 4).

Researchers have noted the gender and ethnic achievement gap as a national problem that continues to challenge educators in higher institutions (Ashburn, 2007). Studies conducted on gender educational gaps and educational attainment outcomes among minority males and females concluded that minority males lag behind minority females in developmental education (Lee, 2010). These results were compared to other ethnic groups revealing an achievement gap among genders. While the ethnic achievement gap continues to widen, academic development discrepancies among genders are even at a larger percentage, with female students outperforming male students regardless of race (Ashburn, 2007).

Bembenutty (2010) studied roles of gender differences in academic performance and found that a higher percentage of minority females than minority male students in higher education are motivated and self-disciplined. The trend of dropout rates among male and female students reflects a high risk of failure and higher dropout rates among males than female students. According to Jorgensen, Ferraro, Fichten and Havel (2009), the main predictors of higher education dropout and academic successors are within high school academic trends and grades. Male students with low academic scores dropped out of secondary education more

frequently than female students. The study of Jorgensen et al. also concluded male community college students on average scored lower on academic skills, motivation, and discipline questionnaires than female students.

Studies conducted on academic success among overall diversity of students show African American and Hispanic students generally have lower academic outcomes than White students (Greene, Marti, & McClenney, 2008). Barriers that continue to emerge from these studies indicate academic and social obstacles prevent educational success. According to Ashburn (2007), community colleges are concerned about the growing achievement and gender gap between White and minority students. Community colleges witness a growing trend of minority female students outperforming and out-enrolling minority male students (Ashburn, 2007). In view of the increasingly disproportionate numbers among gender and ethnic groups, researchers are focusing on support services for at-risk minority students, particularly Black males in community colleges (Ashburn, 2007).

Carson (2009) explained focusing on racial identity helps students understand their roles within the educational environment. An African American student's perception of his cultural role within the educational environment correlates with his attitude and aspiration to succeed. If an African American student experiences negative perceptions about their racial group or feels disconnected to the campus community, the likelihood of disengagement and dropping out increases (Harris, Palmer, & Struve, 2011).

African American Male College Mentoring

According to Wyatt (2009), literature resources are limited with regard to best practices and approaches to retain and graduate minority male students. Institutions are identifying influences that increase campus engagement and decrease dropout rates among minority male

students. Wyatt (2009) found professional mentoring programs targeting minority students increase academic success and achievement levels among African American males and other minority groups. ACT Inc. (2010) recently conducted a national survey on student retention strategies. This study found professional mentoring programs increased the number of Black students retained in community colleges and universities. Additional results found assigning professional mentors to minority student's enhanced social growth and increased aspirations to continue beyond a two-year program (ACT, 2010).

Furthermore, minority students being placed in mentoring programs improved in their educational environment and showed higher percentages of career placement than those who were not (Wyatt, 2009: Patton, 2009). Studies conducted on self-efficacy among African American students link mentoring as aiding support for minority students and empowering throughout their college experiences (Carson, 2009). Additional literature stresses the importance of mentoring under-represented students to provide support in their academic environment (Edman, 2009).

Literature reviewed explains how professional mentoring positively impacts African American students and influences socialization and learning experiences. Institutions implementing mentoring programs can help African American students with self-identity and understand their roles as college students (Kingsbury, 2007). Racial identity is an important aspect among African American students. It encourages a sense of belonging and membership within an environmental setting (Harper & Quaye, 2007). Harper and Quaye (2007) explain professional mentoring programs help foster students' attitudes toward their campus and reduce social barriers students may face. Under-represented students may lack efficacy and

incompetence; therefore, a professional mentor could prevent dropout and hence create a greater number of available career options (Davis, 2007).

Baker (2007) analyzed cross-cultural relationships within higher institutions and found mentoring programs impact the campus climate, student persistence, and college completion regardless of race. For Black students, professional mentoring could increase a sense of connectedness to the college campus and retention (Carson, 2009). Empirical studies conducted on mentors of African American students found mentoring programs increase student retention and increase academic results at higher levels (Davis, 2007). Barker (2007) stated mentoring relationships increased student-faculty interactions and enabled additional access to resources related to career placement. Studies conducted on African American male college students' experiences after participating in mentoring programs found these students to be more tolerant of racial adversity and resilient to obstacles challenging their lives and learning experiences (Warde, 2008).

Community College Retention

Few research and theories address persistence among African American community college students. Community colleges offer an open enrollment access to higher education; however, Black students face challenges to remain, persist, or graduate (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Persons, 2006). Rosenbaum et al. (2006) discussed problems students experience within community colleges and advised support procedures to minimize barriers. *After Admission: From College Access to College Success* was developed by Rosenbaum et al. (2006) and consists of mixed methods research on American Community Colleges. *After Admissions* identified barriers that limit access and completion for underprepared students, namely Blacks and Hispanic students. Rosenbaum et al. (2006) explained Blacks and Hispanics students are more

likely to the first person in their families to attend college, and therefore to lack knowledge of college culture and academic skills for college success.

The research of Rosenbaum et al. (2006) compared occupational colleges to community colleges, concluding occupational colleges are more successful with degree completion rates among minority students than community colleges. Rosenbaum et al. (2006) offered suggestions for community colleges to improve student retention and college success, particularly among minority students. Recommendations included improving student confidence, student aspirations, and greater efforts toward counseling and advising.

Data from Achieving the Dream: Community College Count (as cited in Topper & Achieving the Dream, 2009) shows that African American and Hispanic students have the highest "stop-out" rates within community colleges. Stop-outs are defined as students completing few credits, particularly during their first academic year. Stop-out students are less likely to persist or attain credents through the second year to obtain a degree or transfer into a higher institution (Topper, 2009). Achieving the Dream is a national initiative focusing on the success of community college students (Topper, 2009). An October 2009 Achieving the Dream report stated Hispanic and Black students are less likely than White students to complete their degree within their fifth academic term or transfer.

Achieving the Dream data (2009) concluded African American and Hispanic students are slower to complete degrees and face more enrollment and retention challenges to persist in a community college setting. DeSousa (2001) also researched student retention and minority populations in higher education. This research found fewer African American students are graduating from colleges and universities than White students, with 19.4% of African American students compared to 42.7% of Caucasian students.

Research focusing on the socioeconomic and retention interventions for community college students strongly advises revamping its institutional policies and practices from the traditional credential concept to meeting the needs of current student attributes (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person, 2006). Focusing on areas that support social context and student deficiencies can lead to institutional improvement and student outcomes, particularly for underprepared minority students (Rosenbaum et al., 2006).

Socioeconomic Status and Economic Barriers

According to Pascarelli and Terenzini (2005), financial aid affects persistence for community college students, particularly among those with the lowest income. Financial aid is essential to persistence and retention among minority students in higher education (Bettinger, 2004). The rising cost of higher education tuition has increased a substantial amount from 1975 to 2005, at a rate surpassing those of household income and inflation levels (Collegeboard, 2006). Financial aid cannot keep pace with the rising cost of college tuition, which surpassed family income levels from the past decade.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation support efforts of increasing higher education enrollment by increasing available aid resources for low-income, minority students. The Foundation also facilitates college access for low-income, minority students. These students are susceptible to dropping out because of lack of financial resources (Ashburn, 2010).

Hurtado, Saeny and Dar's (2006) study concluded financial support does enable minorities and students of color gain access to higher education and persist beyond educational levels. Minorities and students of color can persist in higher education if funds are available to cover their college costs and tuition needs. According to Collegeboard (2006), the primary need-based financial aid resource for low-income and minority students is a federal program called

Pell Grant. In 1975-1976, the maximum award distributed by Pell Grants was $5,064. By 2005-2006, the Pell Grant decreased to $4,050 because of inflation (Collegeboard, 2006). Because low-income and students of color depend on financial aid to afford college, persistence and retention then become a challenge to continue education (Collegeboard, 2006a; 2006b).

Other literature suggests parental and financial support helps African American male students persist in higher education (Moore, 2001; Hrabowski, Maton, & Greif, 1998). Studies conducted on parental support among first-generation minority college students conclude lack of family involvement affects academic performance. Choy (2002) stated parents of first-generation, low-income students are less likely to understand the importance of a college education than non-minority students. First-generation African American male students are particularly difficult to retain in college because of expectations of supporting the family's income or their parents not valuing education (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010).

First generation students lacking parental support have difficulties in emotional and social environments (Hurtado, Laird, & Perorazio, 2003). Other than facing academic and social pressures in higher education, first generation students experience financial barriers because of a lack of guidance to secure financial support. According to Hurtado et al. (2003), parents of first-generation students may not have the knowledge to assist with financial resources to help students continue in college. Most colleges and universities have resources to assist first generation, low-income students with financial resources; however, the students must seek and apply for funds to continue in college.

Because parents of first-generation students have not completed higher education, studies show their children may lack preparation for college enrollment (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010). Owens et al. (2010) conclude enrollment trends among first-generation

students are minimal. Success rates among first-generation students whose parents did not attend college are challenged by lack of support for learning and student finances. Student achievement among first-generation students can be attained by interaction between African American males and supportive parents of post-secondary education opportunities beyond high school (Perry, 2004).

Research shows that educational aspirations have a tremendous impact on academic achievement to pursue advanced degrees (Warner & Phelps, 2008). Studies conducted on African American males' educational aspiration in community college conclude influence and sense of belonging enables them to excel beyond expectations regardless of their socioeconomic status (Bush, 2005). Because minority students are known to have a profound need for financial support in four-year institutions as well as two-year programs, institutions are re-evaluating remedial curricula to determine the connection between college preparation and financial assistance (MSDE, 2006).

To effectively address successes and failures of minority student's performance in remedial curricula such as reading, math, and science, institutions are shifting toward cost-effective methods to lessen the need for corrective programs to degree completion (MSDE, 2006). Intervention methods include remedial programs that encourage social interaction among students and faculty within the remedial curriculum (Brock, 2010). Not only would this method improve retention outcome, but also promote academic improvement among minority students on a cost-effective level.

Maryland's K-16 Leadership Council established a task force targeting African American males' persistence and educational problems that continue to challenge them. Although institutional practices seek to enhance academic and student development, African American

male's completion rates continue to spiral downwards (Perrakis, 2008). Perrakis (2008) stated completion rates among African American males are reporting higher in two-year programs than four-year programs using supportive practices. It is evident from various researchers that there is a great need for supportive practices such as culturally competent teachers, in-school support, and prevention services to ensure educational success, especially when there is no family and community support (MSDE, 2006).

Other states followed suit to integrating programs that enhance minority recruitment and enrollment in higher institutions. South Carolina reported statewide equity programs such as retention grants and incentive programs to ensure access and equity support for minority students, particularly within public colleges and universities (South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 2010). Nevada's System of Higher Education (NSHE) also employs efforts to retain and recruit minority students within colleges and universities. According to NSHE demographer, by 2026, Nevada expects its minority population to grow 49.3 %, and the states' colleges and universities find it challenging to retain and graduate incoming minority students. Although minority student enrollment within Nevada colleges is increasing, there continues to be a disproportionate number of minority graduates in comparison to White students (NSHE, 2009).

Extended Family Relationships

Literature suggests implementing social integration to support African American male students' enrollment in institutions of higher learning. Herndon and Hirt (2004) described family and college administrators as *fictive kin* or extended family members. Fictive kin members serve as role models for African American male students while providing emotional and spiritual support throughout their enrollment in higher education. Extended family networks can be an

important source of social support and help identify appropriate services for African American males in higher education (Stewart, 2007).

Stewart (2007) described fictive kin relationships as kin or non-kinship. Non-kinship refers to individuals not related by blood. They can be established into aspiring friendships and strong social networks by teachers and African American students. This development, according to Stewart, could also enhance students' learning experiences through the influences of non-kinship bonding.

Anthropological concepts reveal fictive kinships among African American families date back to slavery when Black children addressed adults not of kinship as relatives (Fordham, 1992). This concept theorizes using social integration among Black children to strengthen adult-child relationships within other cultures and communities. African Americans place high value on family and kinship. This type of bonding relationship helps integrate social behavior and establishes communal obligations when coping with other cultures (Stewart, 2007). Fictive kin models accept the concept of "it takes a village to raise a child" to ensure student success. This concept can include African American males aspiring and establishing positive attitudes with the help of other people, including other African Americans, to become successful.

Title Search

Since 2005, considerable research has been conducted on African American students in higher education (Hughes, 2010); however, few studies have addressed African American male experiences, persistence, and success in college. Articles from between 2005 and 2009 are researched highlighting observations related to topics of African American male college students, further narrowing the scope of the inquiry to (a) adaptation, (b) academic achievement, (c) motivational, (d) social support, (e) cultural diversity, (f) transition, (g) academic at-risk

African American males and (h) persistence among African American male college students.

Table 1 highlights resulting outcomes from peer-reviewed library database searches between the

years 2005-2009.

Table 1

Title Search Table

Keyword or Phrase	EBSCOhost (Academic Search Complete)	ProQuest	ERIC
Academic At-Risk African American Male College Students	21	34	696
Academic Achievement Among African American Male College Students	29	47	30
African American Male College Student Experience	22	88	17
African American Male Recruitment in College	2	16	7
African American Male Persistence in College	0	4	14
Access and Persistence Among African American Males in Community College	0	1	1
Motivation of African American Male College Students	0	11	4
Student Achievement Among African American Male Student	3	4	2
Social Support Among African American Male Students	2	15	2
Cultural Diversity Among Minority College Students	3	9	1
Campus Engagement Among African American Male College Students	3	13	5
College Enrollment for African American Males	6	14	5
Increasing Academic Achievement Among	23	0	72

African American Male College Students			
Social Adjustments Among African American Male College Students	0	2	6
Adaptation of Minorities and African American College Students	0	4	6
Student Success of African American Male Students	2	2	78
Student Retention of African American Male Students	13	21	18

Hughes (2010) affirmed considerable research focuses on the negative educational outcomes of African American but a lack of research exists on the educational success of these students. Hughes (2010) further suggested specifically addressing African American male students' success at the university level without focusing on shortfalls leading to academic failure. Searches of educational outcomes among African American male college students in Table 1 also resulted in substantial research within the past five years on negative educational outcomes, and few studies on academic achievement among African American male college students were found.

Conclusions

Identifying various educational practices that promote the success of African American male students will help improve not only their but also other minorities' educational outcomes and college experiences (Hughes, 2010). To further increase enrollment and retention among African American males in higher education, Reid and Radhakrishnan (2003) and Ogbu (2003) maintained the development of intervention programs based on cultural influences and academic encouragement will improve student achievement levels among African American males and minorities in higher education.

Summary

An overview of the literature shows a gap in the research from the point of initial enrollment for first year African American college students, African American male retention in community colleges, and race relations within the community college environment. Current research assesses previous literature and addresses the gap in literature emphasizing problems with current approaches not effectively and culturally responding to racial identification and interventions to strengthen educational policies (Serpell, Hayling, Stevenson, & Kern, 2009). Previous literature may have indicated suggestive approaches that effectively serve African American males, such as school-based programs, but does not allude to educational achievement problems that continue to hinder future academic success of African American males.

According to Martin, Martin, Gibson and Wilkins (2007), studies conducted on African American male students in higher education continuously reflect disproportionate rates in comparison to other ethnic groups. Researchers are determining if these skewed ratios relate to behavior or academic viewpoints of educational experiences. For most African American college students, economic and academic opportunities are of great concern (Ashburn, 2007). Studies examining cultural and academic experiences of African American male community college students conclude educational access and success are interrelated to economic and social status (Mosby, Esters, Robinson, & Beckles, 2009). African American males enrolling in community colleges are considered disadvantaged because of the lack of academic and social support to persist and graduate. Roberts's (2009) study of African American males in Virginia community colleges concludes supportive campus climates and academic programs enabled academic success and persistence among African American males.

To maintain African American male students in community colleges beyond their first year, Martin, et al. (2007) suggested implementing evaluation and assessment practices that targets retention and real-world approaches to improve educational experiences for African American males. McKinney (2010) described utilizing evaluation assessment practices in community colleges to retain African American males. These practices help institutions understand attributes that guide these students' behaviors and develop effective responsive methods for positive outcomes.

Studies conducted on African American males in community college conclude that implementing retention theories and models increases retention and persistence beyond first year experiences to possible higher education such as bachelor's or graduate levels (McKinney, 2010). These retention models include cultural and social components to help researchers understand African American males' lived experiences to improve existing programs and prevent these students from dropping out (McKinney, 2010).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold: first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress in higher education, and second, to understand the perceptions of factors influencing African American males' academic achievement in an institution of higher education. A random selection of African American males enrolled in the same community college will be asked to share lived experiences as college students in an institution of higher education.

This chapter provides information related to the research method and procedures selected to support the purpose of the current study. The chapter contains information on the research design, research questions, the population, the geographic location, data collection, and analysis procedures as well as the maintenance of confidentiality and ethics within the study. The chapter also contains information concerning my role.

Research Questions

Three research questions will guide the course of the study:

R1: How do African American male students identify academic success?

R2: What types of outside influences impinge on African American male students' view of higher education?

R3: What types of factors influence African American males' academic success in a community college?

Appendix A contains a copy of the interview protocol developed for the current study.

Research Design and Appropriateness

The location selected for the current study was a community college campus in Southside Virginia, Danville Community College, due to its serving African American males and offering limited academic resources that support persistence and retention for on-time college completion. Because this study focused on the academic and educational experiences of African American males in higher education, conducting a single-site phenomenological study was considered the best approach to analyze and understand African American males' perspectives.

According to Frankel and Devers (2000b), a qualitative researcher assesses research needs and examines issues based on the researcher's purpose. Researchers use phenomenological studies to understand personal experiences in a particular environment (Frankel & Devers, 2000a). Because there will not be a sole perception to educational experiences encountered on the community college level, the selected study design captures each individual's perceptions regarding his own experiences of higher education. Each individual student also described his academic experiences and supportive services on the basis of my questions**.**

Case studies can support a phenomenal study through reflective analysis of the participant's perception about the phenomenon. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), case studies can describe, explain, assess, and evaluate a phenomenon. Given the purpose of the current study (to explore African American males' experiences in higher education), a case study would describe or explain their educational experiences and help provide secondary data collection of the participants' perceptions. However, according to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), analysis data collection must include evaluation of patterns and constructing commonalities to explain the phenomenon. However, the six selected participants will not reflect a large data

collection to evaluate the studied phenomenon to pinpoint a pattern or construct a commonality for this population of people.

Ethnographic research studies describe social scenes and groups that recreate a shared belief, practice, folk knowledge, and behavior within that culture or group (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). This process also requires that the researcher use multiple data collection processes to ensure a grounded or triangulated result. Bracketing would serve as an excellent method to allow the researcher to become engaged and involved in the data and finding process without bias. According to Ashworth (1999), bracketing is often used in phenomenology studies to establish theories and reveal lived experiences. Because I expect to explore lived experiences of African American male community college students, particularly face-to-face interaction for interviewing, bracketing could ensure that the focus remains on the participant and that the data hence remains objective. The researcher must observe the participant while being careful not to be subjective and biased.

I have worked extensively with African American males; therefore, personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions could intervene when collecting data from field resources. According to Goetz et al. (1984), the researcher's findings must be reported in the form of analytical vignettes and interpretive observations, which again may be difficult because I work closely with the selected population. Bracketing would allow careful development of language and help set aside my own assumptions when applying this concept (Fischer, 2009).

Grounded theory research requires data collection within a natural setting; the process allows the development of a theory based on patterns or similarities sharing the same meanings (Creswell, 1994). This type of study requires close interaction among subjects to link two or more categories or similarity in topics to validate expected outcomes. This process might become

very complex for the current study because the analysis will involve the exploration of each participant's perceptions and lived experiences, and the findings may therefore not produce a grounded theory.

Focus groups use moderators to exchange perspectives or opinions on a particular topic using a selection of people (Gall et al., 2003). This type of research design can quickly identify issues related to the subject matter and allow participants to respond immediately to the interview protocol. This design also allows the researcher to observe participant's emotional behavior as it relates to the topic and analyze participant's reactions firsthand. One drawback to focus groups is longer interview discussions, which may lead to expressed or analyzed unrelated issues causing bias in the research reporting (Gall et al., 2003).

Wiserman (1995) defined historical research as "an original or first-hand account of the event or experience" (p. 234). Information obtained in this study would consist of using secondary sources examined from databases to learn of reasons for the event or phenomenon. Because historical research uses prior events or experiences, the current qualitative study will not test or analyze past events because higher educational experience among African American male students is an ongoing issue and challenging experience. Therefore, a historic research design for this study would not be appropriate.

Qualitative research design studies allow the researcher to analyze methods that question the social and cultural experiences of African American male community college students (Merriam, 2001). A single phenomenology study is determined the best approach to fully understand African American males' perspectives of their educational experience with-in a two-year institution. In qualitative research, the role of the qualitative researcher is to serve as an instrument, gathering data to ensure an objective viewpoint (Merriam, 2001). Educational and

professional experience, including 10 years of experience working with African American males and annual training under the U.S. Department of Education application for TRiO Upward Bound Programs serving low-income, first-generation students, qualifies me to conduct this study.

Population

African American males face a number of issues, such as socioeconomic barriers, that make them vulnerable to crime and educational failure (Serpell, Hayling, Stevenson, & Kern, 2009). According to McMilliam (2003), to improve their socioeconomic circumstances, African American males must see higher education as an opportunity for advancement and not a hindrance to their professional development. Participants selected for the current qualitative phenomenological study are self-identified Black or African American males of U.S. citizenship between the ages of 18 and 45, to represent a general population of the college. The selected six (6) participants were fluent in English and enrolled full-time at Danville Community College. Each participant completed an informed consent form (see Appendix D) and obtained copies for their records. To ensure an adequate return of student consent forms, completion of the forms occurred during the initial meeting and after the participant willingly agreed to participate in the study.

Setting (Study Site)

Danville, Virginia, is a small city with a population of 44,047 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Danville Community College (DCC) is governed by an advisory board consisting of nine members, supervised by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and the State Board for Community Colleges (Danville Community College Facts, n.d.). DCC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award associate degrees, and its

mission and goals are to provide exemplary educational programs and services to promote student success and enhance business and community development (Danville Community College Facts, n.d.). DCC's student enrollment in 2009-2010 consisted of 6,951 students, of which 39% was African American, 57% White, and 4% reported as other ethnicity (DCC Facts Enrollment Summary Report, 2010).

Procedures

Sampling frame.

Because of professional affiliation to Danville Community College, procedures were in place to avoid the imposition of demands and undue influence on faculty and staff during recruitment. To ensure compliance procedures were adhered to and that I remained within institutional guidelines as approved by campus administration, written permission was obtained confirming support procedures of the study. I used recruitment practices such as campus student e-mail list service to recruit eligible African American male students, posted invitational flyers in densely populated areas on campus, and posted flyers in the campus newsletter.

Phenomenological research captures in-depth structure life and experiences of its participants (Morgan, 2000). According to Morgan (2000), phenomenology exposes human awareness in the production of social action, social situations, and social worlds. This study attempted to understand African American males' community college experiences in the framework of personal and academic challenges to achieve academic success. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) state college experiences relate to positive changes in student mentality, such as knowledge, cognitive skills, intelligence, self-esteem, attitudes, and educational aspirations, features associated with both graduation and retention.

I used a non-probability sampling technique to select participants for the phenomenology study. Because I conducted qualitative research on characteristics and shared experiences of African American community college males, more than one type of purposive sampling technique was used in the research design. Patton (2002) states homogeneous purposeful sampling applies, "focus, reduce variation, and simplify analysis" (p. 247), and that "snowballing" and "chain" purposeful sampling identifies situations and interest from people and could serve as good examples for study and good interview subjects (p. 247).

Important factors for selection of participants were age, gender, race, credit hours, degree seeking status, and willingness to participate. Selected participants were 18 years or older to support the data collection process and to ensure proper consent. Selected participants were African American males, as established by self-reporting, and degree-seeking students, such as Associate degrees (A.S. or A.A. degrees) who were currently enrolled or who have completed at least 12 hours of coursework prior to participation in the study. Participants' willingness to participate and remain in the study was a strong factor in the recruitment process.

According to Lester (1999), common concerns of sample size arise with phenomenological or any qualitative approaches. Sample sizes may vary; however, depending on the topic and engagement of participants, the entire result should be surfacing deep issues and making voices heard (Lester, 1999). The researcher selected six (6) African American male community college students for the study based on the indicated criteria established for participating. In order to understand their lived experiences, Creswell (2007) suggests that the researcher focus on the common experiences of the participants.

To explain the lived experiences of African American community college males, first-person point-of-view and descriptive perspectives and opinions from the participants described

their perceive situations and circumstances (Creswell, 2003). Although the study involved only a few participants, Merriam (2001) explains characteristics of qualitative research are interactive and interpretive methods that holistically explore social phenomena and develop a rapport with the participants. Van Manen (1990) claims that it can be a good idea to, "Reduce individuals with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence to grasp the very nature of the thing." This approach interprets participants' perspectives and how meaning, actions, and events shape their lived experiences (p. 177).

The approaches the researcher used to recruit six eligible African American male students were emails and posting email invitational flyers in densely populated areas on campus (Appendix C). These locations included the campus Student Center, the campus Learning Resource Center and the Library, and the campus Student Lounge. Campus clubs and organizations benefiting African American males also received invitational information. Other methods for recruitment announcements were utilizing the campus newsletter to advertise information regarding the study; usage of the campus newsletter, *LeCourier*, which was free to the campus staff, faculty, and administrators to post messages or provide information to students. Campus newsletters are printed in bulk copies and placed in each building. The campus also utilizes Teleprompters, which post messages and provide information of upcoming events or programs. This service is free to campus staff, administrators, and faculty located in each building on campus, which was a valuable resource in the recruitment process that did not require payment.

Instrumentation.

Following the guidelines of Patton (2002), I used a short interview procedure consisting of guiding questions covering a broad area of participants' conversation. By using guiding

questions, I explored the lived experiences of African American male students and sought to understand the perceptions of factors influencing their academic achievement in an institution of higher education. The guiding questions were: (1) how do African American male students identify academic success? (2) What type of outside influences impinge on African American male students' view of higher education? (3) What types of factors influence African American male academic success in a community college? These questions also helped in the process of analyzing the participants' experiences with the phenomenon under the study.

The interview protocol consisted of 21 open-ended questions that supported the three guiding questions. According to Creswell (2003), "Interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (p. 188). The interview protocol questions encouraged follow-up and probing. To acquire perspective description and support of the three guiding questions, each interview protocol question began with general inquiries, such as asking about the student's program of study followed by asking for brief description of his academic experiences.

The following questions lead to motivational factors that allowed continuance, questions related to identifying supportive mechanisms such as peers, family, friends, and other aids used in their first year college experience. Concluding questions related to obstacles and other perspectives that challenged participants' college experiences. Table 2 outlines principal matters related to each interview question within the interview protocol.

Table 2

Interview Question Outline

Guiding Questions	Interview Questions
R1: How do African American male students identify academic success?	1. What is your major or program of study? 2. Identify what factors contributed to your academic success. 3. What type of academic challenges have you experienced? 4. How would you describe academic experiences of African American males when they first start community college? 5. Did or do you currently receive academic support services at Danville Community College? If so, what kind of services? 6. Do you feel your educational experiences differ according to your financial situation? Why or why not? 7. Who or what plays an important role in your life that contributes to your educational goals? 8. Do you feel people are supportive or not supportive of you, as an African American male, completing a college degree?
R2: What types of outside influences impinge on African American male students' view of higher education?	1. Do you have outside priorities other than your education? If so, list. 2. Considering your outside responsibilities, is it challenging to continue your education? 3. How encouraging is your family (spouse, children, parents, etc.) of you getting a college degree? 4. Do you feel your educational experiences differ according to your gender? Why or why not? 5. Do you feel your educational experiences differ according to your race? Why or why not?
R3: What types of factors influence African American males' academic success in a community college?	1. What is your main reason for attending Danville Community College? 2. How many hours per week do you spend studying? Do you feel this is sufficient time based on other demands? 3. Do you feel comfortable asking questions in class? If not, what about meeting with your instructor outside of class time? 4. How different are your college peers to your outside college friends? 5. Do you feel accepted by your college instructors? What about from the college campus? 6. Do you interact socially on the campus, such as with campus activities and programs? Why or why not? 7. What has been the best part of attending Danville Community College? 8. If you were President of Danville Community College, what would be your first priority?

The development of the interview questions was under the assumption that they would address the needs of the participants and focus on the issue within the current study, as suggested by Creswell (2005). I met with selected participants to discuss the requirements of the study, evaluation sequence and explanation of expectations of the participants, and share additional information about the requirements of the study to include distribution of consent forms (Appendix D) and a demographic survey questionnaire (Appendix E).

Distribution of the questionnaires was a two-part process; first, I met with participants asking of any concerns related to the study; second, I redirected participants to the demographic questionnaire and interpreted answers as it related to the research topic. This method enhanced the credibility of the data and ensured questionnaire responses related to the direct questions. This process also allowed me to address pertinent issues related to the study and provide valid measurements for the study.

Participants were allowed a three-day waiting period, which allowed an opportunity to ask questions, address concerns before beginning the research interview, or withdraw from the study. During the three-day waiting period, I verified and categorized responses from their demographic questionnaire. I was responsible for managing all data collection to ensure confidentiality of participant's responses and completion of questionnaires.

Van Manen (1990) states:

In hermeneutic phenomenological human science, the interview serves very specific purposes: (1) it may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon. (p. 66)

The interview approach for this study proved to be a reliable and consistent method for identifying and drawing specific knowledge from participants. The interview technique was consistent with other practices related to cultural development and sensitive research on human studies (Tillman, 2002). The interview protocol clearly drew on the lived experiences of the participants as identified by Solorzano and Yosso (2002) when analyzing lived experiences from people of color. Other studies using interviews as a means of establishing a culturally congruent research method were Brieschke (1997), Cohen (1997), Maddox and Solorzano (2002), Solorzano and Yosso (2002), Stanley and Slattery (2003), and White (1998).

My Role or Bio

The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument when data is collected (Merriam, 2001). As the sole facilitator and person analyzing the research procedure, I took steps to avoid unduly influencing and biasing the results of the study. Because I am African American and work closely with African American males, I must refrain from biased comments or probing questions based on a personal attitude toward instructional support or feelings in general about the institutional setting (Merriam, 2001).

I must ensure that questions are not one-sided or too focused on negative aspects of the institution. I must adhere to ethical standards at all times and be impartial throughout the research. Because I know the majority of the campus members, including senior administrators and departmental deans, I am not obligated to write bias comments or influence the outcome in any manner. I am subject to ethical reflection and expression throughout the research (Merriam, 2001).

Because I am a college administrator, participants may react inappropriate toward research procedures, which may influence the data. Although the established interview questions

will be direct and open-ended questions, responses may not be true or may indicate information based on the respondent's feeling of answering to satisfy his perception of my wants or needs (Hiles, 1999). Hiles (1999) further asserts within a phenomenology research design, interviews afford the opportunities of examining participants' responses to questions rather than administering standard questionnaires. Although interviewing affords me an opportunity of capturing interpersonal depth and detail, the design must ensure equilibrium to prevent overly biased and subjective responses from the participants as well as from me when analyzing the data (Hiles, 1999).

Because the research was conducted on the community college campus on which I am also employed, participants may have felt reluctant to answer honestly in fear of retribution or think the campus administrators would know of their answers. To capture the true perceptions of the participant's lived experiences, Creswell (2005) suggests employing two perspectives of phenomenological analysis: from the participants living through the phenomenon, and from the researcher who has an interest in the phenomena.

Husserl (1970) states the researcher should not impose meanings for the learners because they are the absolute source of their own existence living through the learning environment. To detach personal opinions and interpretations from the study, the researcher must be aware of his own experiences to avoid misinterpretations or bias of the participant's responses. When infused or engaged in the interviews and data analysis, Creswell (2005) and Moustakas (1994) state a researcher's influence from point of research's introduction to the participants, their environment, and responses can involve the researcher's biases through bracketing.

To set aside preconceived judgments and bracket the researcher's experiences, Moustakas (1994) recommends establishing the truth by keeping a balance between subjectivity

and objectivity. The researcher must reflect on the meaning of his or her experience before interviewing to establish intersubjective validity, testing out this understanding with other persons through a back and forth social interaction.

The research location could affect the results of the study because of the temperament of the environment and the participant's feelings about answering in a certain way because of the researcher. To prevent this, Patton (1990) suggests a period of appropriate communication, such as an introduction period for participants to feel a level of comfort. Therefore, I used ice-breaker techniques as part of an introduction period.

Data Collection

Creswell (2003) states, "Researchers need to tailor their data analysis beyond the more generic approaches to specific types of qualitative research strategies" (p. 191). Because educational research widely uses questionnaires, data obtained from questionnaires describe trends associated with research methods (Creswell, 2005). Although emails, recording, and other types of correspondences collect data, the primary source of data collection is interview questions exploring participants' community college experiences. Multiple-collection methods or triangulation strengthens and increases validity within educational research (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

Intensive interviews with participants generate textual data from their transcripts. Long or intensive interviews are recognized as a standard process for collecting data in phenomenological studies. "Typically in the phenomenological investigation, the long interview is the method to use through which data is collected on the topic and question" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114).

A brief demographic questionnaire consisting of 14 questions was administered to interested study participants (see Appendix E). This Demographic Survey questionnaire was

designed to ensure participants met the study's criteria and qualified to complete the study. The interview protocol was an integral part of the current study and met my needs. As an unstructured interview process, continued dialogue between the participant and the researcher was established. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), unstructured interview questioning enables more in-depth responses and forms a dialogue between an interviewer and interviewee, particularly if they are open-ended structured questions (p. 315). Because my role was to serve as an instrument, it was crucial that I keep the participant's responses relevant to phenomenon in the study.

Unstructured interviewing allows for the use of predefined questions that would keep the participant's answers related to the subject matter with minimum control over the conversation, as suggested by Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1990): "unstructured interview is always a controlled conversation, which is geared to the interviewer's research interest" (p. 93). Structured interviews may be similar to survey and questionnaire usage, but procedures of the interview may not allow the researcher the opportunity of responding to the observations of the participants or in-depth knowledge of the relating experiences (Minichiello et al., 1990). An unstructured interview procedure was conducted to ensure interaction between the participants and me without imposing any unnatural flow. To explore participant's college experience while minimizing influence on their answers, I used predefined questions established in the Interview Protocol (see Appendix A).

This open-ended type of format also expounded participant's aspirations and socioeconomic status. In-depth information was collected consisting of participants' profile as it related to their educational aspiration, parents' educational background, engagement on campus, and other pertinent information, which were unavailable in institutional records (DiCicco-Bloom

& Crabtree, 2006). This type of data collection also captured a "number of perspectives on other topics and perspectives that includes the student's family and friends" (DiCicco-Bloom et al., 2006).

There were several interviews conducted by the researcher. The initial interview took place after enrollment of the participants to allow a college experience and adaptation to the college environment in preparedness for a detailed reflection on their experience. To ensure confidentially and confidence, all interviews were conducted in a private, impartial location on the college campus. The interview location was quiet, which allowed clear audio recordings for accurate transcriptions by the researcher.

The audio recordings consist of a digital recorder for computer connectivity for software usage. This technology will help me download notations in a transcribed format. Audio recordings helped me recall certain assertions of the interview that may not have been properly notated in my memos, which could be relevant later in the analysis (Gall et al., 2003). Observational notations recalled participant's reactions to particular statements and reactions that could have been non-verbal. The first interview time was approximately 45 minutes to an hour depending on question responses. The researcher began each interview by reading the consent form (see Appendix D) aloud to ensure participants voluntarily wanted to participate. After the consent form was read, participants signed the consent form and were given a copy.

A second interview was scheduled while participants were still enrolled in college and after their three-day waiting period. The second interview yielded concern that participants would not continue in the study, drop out of college, or their contact information changed since the initial interview. Suggestions from peers at Danville Community College were to correspond by mail to the last known address should a participant withdraw from college or request a

relative contact information during the recruitment process in case a participant withdrew from college or changed their contact number. Therefore, the researcher obtained both email and contact phone number information in case contact information or enrollment status changed after the initial interview.

According to Czaja and Blair (2005), as a result of difficulties that arise during longitudinal qualitative data collections, the researcher should utilize resources for survey design and adapt to face-to-face and telephone surveys as a means to maintain communication. Data information obtained from both interviews was compiled and developed a structured analysis.

Data Analysis

An essential task of the researcher is to establish trust among study participants while achieving insights of their lives experiences on a community college campus (Patton, 1990). To establish a positive rapport with participants while achieving in-depth knowledge of their experiences, an epoche approach was appropriate. Van Manen (1990) states that epoche and bracketing can work interchangeably in phenomenological inquiry. Other researchers unrelated the terms, claiming that epoche permits understanding and sympathy connecting the research, whereas bracketing expands the process by facilitating the meaning of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2004; Moustaka, 1994). Moustaka (1994) suggests that researchers conduct epoche prior to conducting the study, documenting their beliefs and assumptions to set aside any preconceived notations of participants; experiences. I conducted a bracketing approach to identify perceptions and misconceived notations prior to conducting the research interview with participants.

To increase the credibility of the study, I conducted a pilot study to further examine the question interview protocol questions and determine the feasibility of the study (Creswell, 2005).

Prior to conducting the research interviews, the researcher recruited three campus staff members to participate in the pilot study. The pilot study consisted of using similar procedures to the study, such as completing informed consent procedures and demographic questionnaires. Van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley and Graham (2001) state that pilot studies are relevant to best practices in research because they could expose potential problems within the actual research such as methods to distributing questionnaires, gaining access to participants, and reliance on gatekeepers. To avoid pitfalls or mistakes within the study, Van Teijlingen et al. (2005) suggest conducting the pilot study prior to conducting the interview to help improve the study's reliability.

A systematic technique was used to analyze the data collected. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) explain coding in action research and how it categorized into manageable segments (p. 553). Huberman and Miles (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1984) further explain that the researcher should develop a core set of goals consisting of research questions, conceptual framework, pre-hypothesized codes, and a method of data analysis prior to collecting data. After the data was obtained, it was transcribed in written form and summarized to reduce unwarranted data. The data summary was assembled into diagrams and table-making tools using Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint to create visual aids to help the researcher confirm conclusions. Huberman and Miles (1994) was a guiding method for analyzing the data obtained in this research.

The first method of coding was using the software program NVivo to analyze the data and link the finding using conceptual mapping (QSRInternational, n.d.). I coded interview transcriptions with highlighters and pens to identify relevant and important statements for data

interpretation. Coding the data consisted of crucial and interpretative methods to help identify key statements appearing consistently throughout the interview transcription.

According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), data collection grouping approach allows the researcher to identify key statements or themes appearing to repeat throughout transcripts of the data being analyzed. Once the data was analyzed, I created groups for sub-themes. A listing of the sub-themes was assigned codes according to each participant's responses and cross-referenced for comparison to other participant's responses to identify repetitive or similar statements. To better analyze and identify repetitive or similar statements, sub-theme notations were placed on top of each page of participant's interview questions for quick reference and identification. Salient Points were also assigned using a Salient Point form that quickly connects themes and sub-themes (see Appendix F).

Repetitive statements and themes were highlighted within each participant's transcriptions and Salient Point forms. Once the repetitive statements and themes were identified, I merged with other sections repeating throughout each document until all statements or themes were identified. Statements and themes were grouped into categories, "Cycling is required through the data several times, each time conducting an analysis to identify categories and themes" (Creswell, 1994, pp. 143-172). To prevent subjective bias in the coding and analysis of the qualitative data, another individual who was not part of the study was asked to examine the data collection for accuracy (Creswell, 2005). At any point of inconsistency, the researcher reviewed and discussed with the individual examiner to determine proper placement. After all sub-themes and repetitive statements were identified and coded, they were merged on a contact summary form to define the overall theme of the study (Creswell, 2005). Creswell (2005)

explains commonly shared themes indicated by participants should support evidence found in the researcher's literature.

Trustworthiness

According to Merriam (1998), issues of validity and reliability must be addressed in educational research. To address credibility, several techniques were used to ensure data was original, accurate, and directly obtained from the participant. Lincoln and Guba (1986) encouraged researchers to follow certain techniques to increase transferability, credibility, internal validity, dependability, and conformability. Lincoln and Guba (1986) also explain thoroughness can be found in naturalist or hermeneutic research, which could be as important as it would be in a positivist research. Brannick and Coghlan (2007) cautioned the *naive* researcher to be aware of the dynamics of insider research, including issues of access, institutional awareness, role duality, and organizational policy. As the researcher with experience in higher education and as a campus administrator at the institution where the study was conducted, measures were taken to remain objective and detached throughout the current study.

The process of triangulation was used to ensure credibility of the research results. Yin (2003) stated the goals of reliability in research are to minimize errors and biases and use multiple sources of evidence for data triangulation findings to strengthen the research's credibility. I used multiple methods for data management, organization, coding, and analysis of data increased reliability among the findings. Konecki (2008) explains realness as a process of achieving compatibility of explanations concerning the rationality and typicality of human action in everyday experiences. To ensure realness, Konecki (2008) explains procedures for evaluating the realness of social research, validity, reliability, and triangulation. These procedures are valuable tools for ensuring realness within social research.

A consideration of the current study is that the findings allow generalizability or transferability to Asian or Hispanic populations at Danville Community College or at a larger college. Misco (2007) explained transferability and its relation to generalizability of the findings: "as long as the research approach share the same general rules, data collection and analyzing, and the situation are similar, another investigator should conclude the same results" (p. 6). Therefore, the current research study might be transferrable to similar educational environments. The findings from the current study may also provide ample information for external validity for readers to compare with other educational institutions regarding similar subjects as long as the study expands and simplifies theories and does not incorporate statistical frequencies.

Ethical Considerations

 Informed consent.

Any additional issues related to the protection and rights of the participants were agreed upon after clearance with Liberty's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Study participants assigned their own pseudonyms and informed unrelated documents were to be destroyed three years from the date of the study. Because the study site is open to all students enrolled at the community college, participants should not encounter difficulties, such as other students identifying them as study participants. I used protective methods to ensure confidentiality of participants' identities. Another issue was private information asked of participants during the interview process, which may have been uncomfortable or embarrassing. I ensured participants research questions were designed to support the study in general and their responses would not deliberately personally identify them.

Each participant had an opportunity to ask questions related to the study to ensure full understanding and expectations related it. Once participants were allowed an opportunity to ask

questions, I read the consent form (see Appendix D). After I read the consent form, they were

asked to sign the form to verify consent to participate and acknowledge they understood the

study is strictly voluntary. Participants were given a copy of the consent form. The consent form

informed them of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time, particularly during any

uncomfortable situations or questioning throughout the research.

Participants were asked to provide contact information, such as home and email address,

so I could communicate with them to provide further instructions related to the study. E-mail

addresses were preferred; however, several participants indicated that they had no computer and

Internet access. I obtained home and cellular contact information if an e-mail address was not

available. I explained inappropriate behavior would not be tolerated and would lead to immediate

removal from the study.

As part of the initial intake of identifying and selecting participants, I provided the

college a list of participants completing the study. Because study participants assigned their own

pseudonyms, it allowed manageable reporting on documents and tracking of their participation.

This method also protects participants' privacy in case documents are exposed to others not

affiliated with the study or college, as suggested by Creswell (2005).

Confidentiality.

Within the organization and data management, protecting participant's identity is vital.

Therefore, I only obtained information related to the study, from students meeting the selection

criteria, and only from students who actually participated in the study (Creswell, 2005). Data

collected and used in surveys was used in NVivo version 9 and MS Word software, and manual

coding was under assigned pseudonyms to identify participants. To ensure data collected

remained anonymous, no wording of the participants' actual name, personal information, contact

information such as e-mail, phone number, or any other identifying information used in the study's writings was notated. I allowed each participant to choose their own pseudonym to reinforce confidentiality and help identify themselves in the research transcriptions.

Participants listened to their voice recordings after each interview and reviewed final transcripts in order to protect their identity and confirm actual names or any other identifiers were not applied. Listening to their voice recordings allowed me to confirm with the participant information obtained reflected their own perceptions and was properly quoted and summarized. I informed participants data collected was subject to publication. All information, including data collected, would be subject to inspection by Liberty's Institutional Review Board and campus-based institutional board to ensure student protection from public disclosure.

Summary

The purpose of the current phenomenological study was to understand factors that influence persistence and promote student success and academic performance in higher education among African American males in a community college setting. For this particular study, a phenomenological approach was considered the most appropriate. Interviewing is the primary instrument used to collect data, and I performed transcription and coding using NVivo software.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold. First, the purpose was to explore lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress of this population of students in higher education. Second, the purpose was to understand the perceptions of factors influencing African American male's academic achievement in an institution of higher education. A random selection of six African American males enrolled in the same community college occurred to share their lived experiences as college students in an institution of higher education.

Chapters one through three detailed information of the research study's purpose, literature reviewed and methods to support the current study. Chapter 1 provided summary relating to the problem statement and significance of the study. Chapter 2 provided a summary of the literature reviewed that identified factors related to African American male's higher educational experience under the study. Chapter 3 contains an analysis of the interview transcripts to find the answers of the three research questions presented in the study. The results of the analysis of the transcripts present data as pertinent factors related to African American male student success and progress. The chapter also concludes with a basic discussion of emerging themes and descriptions of the participant's perceptions of their postsecondary educational experiences. Chapter 4 includes the collected data and analyzed procedures used to result in the findings related to the research interview as discussed within the research interview protocol, achievement of the validity and reliability within the research before providing an overall summary of the current study. Chapter 5 will provide the current research conclusion based on the current study's findings.

Constructing Questions for the Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interview protocol consists of three research questions:

R1: How do African American male students at Danville Community College identify academic success?

R2: What types of outside influences impinge on African American male students' view of higher education?

R3: What types of factors influence African American male academic success in Community College?

The theoretical framework found in Chapter 2 of the current study laid the foundation for constructing the three research questions to help in the process of analyzing the participants lived experiences with the phenomenon under the study. Appendix A contains the research Interview Protocol list of questions designed to align with the research questions.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The design of the current research study consisted of interviewing six African American male community college students using an interview protocol. The interview protocol consisted of 21 open-end questions designed to support the three guiding questions. These questions allowed follow-up and probing to acquire perspective description of the participants' lived experiences and opinions that supported the three guiding questions. The development of the interview questions were under the assumption they would address the needs of the participants and focus on the issue within the current study.

Data collection involved interviewing selected participants based on eligibility requirements. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants based on: (a) age: 18years and older, (b) gender: male, (c) race: African American, (d) credit hours: completed at least 12 credit

hours of coursework, (e) degree seeking status: seeking Associate degree or diploma program, and (f) willingness to participate and retain in the study.

The approach to recruiting African American males based on the established criteria was through the use of e-mails and posting of e-mail invitational flyers in high-populated areas on Danville Community College campus. Appendix C consists of the e-mail invitation that was sent to current students enrolled during the summer term using the campus student listserv. Appendix C was also posted on the campus bulletin board in the student center. Invitational flyers for prospective participants (see Appendix G) were posted in the campus library, resource center, distributed to campus club organizations, and posted in the campus newsletter.

The researcher received numerous inquiries and responses from the email request and referrals made by college instructors. Based on this eligibility criterion, the researcher identified six eligible participants over a one-month span, between June 2012 and July 2012 to conduct the current research study. Before conducting the study, each participant was read the Debrief Statement (see Appendix H), which highlights the purpose of the study, details of the study's expectations, permission to record, data collection process, maintenance of transcripts and recordings, confidentiality statement, and participant's rights to withdraw from the study.

Pilot Study Results

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold; first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress in higher education, second, was to understand the perceptions of factors influencing his academic achievement in an institution of higher education.

To increase the credibility of the study, a pilot study occurred to examine the approach and procedures with the interview protocol and further determine the feasibility, appropriateness,

and clarity of the interview protocol questions. Prior to conducting the research interview, three community college staff members were selected as participants for the pilot study. The researcher used similar procedures to the study such as procedures for scheduling interviews, review of the interview script, and procedures for completing the informed consent form and demographic survey to help ensure reliability of the study.

Data collection for the pilot study consisted of three Danville Community College African American male staff members during the week of June 4 – 8, 2012. The educational levels of the pilot participants varied from undergraduate to graduate degrees. Members of the Pilot Study received a copy of the Demographic Questionnaire and informed consent forms and read the introductory letter for the qualitative phenomenological study. Each participant of the Pilot Study was asked to document concerns, make suggestive notations on the research forms, and provide critique feedback to determine areas of weakness within the interview protocol. Pilot Study participants were also asked to identify areas of concern, if any, to improve the intent practice for the interview protocol.

The Pilot Study participants made several suggestions with particular feedback on the interview script and interview questions. Two of the Pilot Study participants indicated both areas were vague or required additional information from the researcher for clarity. Suggestions were added to the interview script (see Appendix H) based on the Pilot Study participants' suggestions and to the following research study documents:

1. Demographic Survey (Appendix E.)

   a. Questions relate to study. What if participants did not want to answer? How will this affect the research? (Researcher's response: There is a section on the survey

indicating a choice not to answer. Hopefully details will be presented in the

Interview Protocol questions to further analyze the research questions).

b. Does a student qualify to participate if his race is mixed, (i.e., African American

and another race)? (Researcher's response: The study will be conducted only on

students meeting selection criteria; therefore, they must indicate race as African

American).

c. How do you distinguish between "Black" and "African American"? Will students

still qualify if they select "Black"? (Researcher's response: Based on the

terminology used with the study, African American and Black share the same

definition, which is persons sharing origins in any of the black racial groups of

Africa which was found in the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005. Therefore, if a

participant selects their racial status as Black, they will still qualify to participate

in the study).

d. What if you did not attend a full year stopped-out but came back? (Researcher's

response: as long as the student completed 12 credit hours and currently enrolled

as a full-time student, he will qualify to participate in the study).

e. Paragraph five is confusing. Advise to ask student complete the demographic

survey first to make sure they qualify before requiring completion of consent form

if this section is not recorded. Require participants to sign Consent Form during

second interview and start interview. Give consent form to students during initial

interview to take with them during the three-day holding period in case they have

questions they could call the researcher or chose not to continue. (Researcher's

response: Consideration given to have participants complete to the Demographic

Survey to ensure interested students meet qualifications. Participants were issue

the consent form for their review during 3-day holding period and ask they bring

the consent form with them for the second interview. The researcher will read the

Consent Form before obtaining signatures to ensure participants are aware of the

study's expectations).

2. Interview Protocol Questionnaire (see Appendix A)

   a. Do students complete the protocol questionnaire? (Researcher's response: No, the

   researcher will ask participants each question to ensure questions are asked in the

   same manner. However, participants received copies of the questionnaire to

   follow along to ensure they understand each question as they are asked).

   b. Will the script remain the same for everyone or will the researcher change with

   each student? (Researcher's response: The script will remain the same for each

   interview (for all participants). Interview question responses are subject to

   probing to encourage participants to elaborate on yes/no responses).

   c. Questions 16 and 18 should change to two different questions instead of one to

   ensure student answers both. (Researcher's response: I will consider asking

   questions separately during the Interview Protocol form to obtain two answers).

   d. Question 21 repeats labeling of college president and priority should be specific to

   address African American males (i.e., "…what would be your first priority to

   ensure academic success of African American males…") (Researcher's response:

   I will revise the question on the Interview Protocol form to state, "If you were

   President of Danville Community College, what would be your first priority to

   ensure academic success of African American males?")

3. Consent Form (see Appendix D).

    a. Very lengthy. Advices to read to students not just give to them and expect them to read before signing (they may not read it). (Researcher's response: Participants given a copy of the Consent form; read information (ask they read along); ask if they understood information read; ask of any questions or concerns before obtaining signatures. A copy issued to participants after signatures).

    b. Immediately give copy of consent form to student before starting study to allow students time to ask questions or decide to proceed. (Researcher's response: Consent forms was read to participants, time allowed for questions or response; signatures obtained before the researcher conducted the study).

Last, the Pilot Study participants believed procedures for interviewing participants were efficient to maintain confidentiality of participants and away from general population of the campus community. After conducting the Pilot Study, interviews were scheduled based on the participants' request and time schedule. All interviews were conducted away from the general campus population for privacy and confidentiality. The researcher met with selected participants to discuss the requirements of the study, evaluation sequence, explain expectations of the participants, and provide additional information about the requirements of the study to include consent forms and demographic survey.

Description of Participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted on six African American male students enrolled and currently attending Danville Community College (DCC). Prior to conducting the initial interview, invitational flyers (see Appendix C) were posted in high populated areas, such as the campus student center and library and invitational emails were sent via email on the

college's student list serv. The researcher obtained numerous responses from interested students willing to participate in the study. Interested students were given study requirements information and asked to meet at a location to obtain additional information.

During the initial meeting, the study's requirements and a copy of the demographic survey were provided before scheduling an interview. The researcher contacted interested participants directly to schedule a date to meet privately and address concerns related to the expectations of the study. Participants had the opportunity to review information related to the study, complete the Demographic Survey, and schedule another interview date to conduct the study.

A second interview was scheduled three-days after the initial interview to allow the participant time to consider withdrawal or participation. During the second interview, participants were allowed an opportunity to review their completed Demographic Survey Form (see Appendix E) before the researcher complied with their remaining documentations. Before the initial start of the Interview Protocol procedures, the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) was read, reviewed, and discussed with the participants before obtaining signatures. Each participant received a copy of the consent form before audio recording the interview.

All participants interviewed during the months of June (late June) – July (early July) 2012. Before beginning the interview questions, the researcher asked each participant to assign their own pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of their information and protect their identity throughout the data transcriptions. For the purpose of this current study, information gathered and obtained from the Demographic Survey to give description of each participant. Table 3 highlights participant's enrollment data as it relates to their postsecondary enrollment status. The

start date of participant's postsecondary enrollment varied; two of the six participants expected

to graduate in the summer term of 2012.

Table 3

Participant Description Table

Assigned Pseudonym	Program of Study	Enrollment Start Date	Brief Description of Participant
John	Electronic Engineering Program	DCC Fall 2009	John began enrollment in the Automotive Program seeking a certificate in Auto Mechanics. John completed the one-year program and later re-enrolled at DCC the Fall term of 2010 seeking an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Electronic Engineering. John is expected to graduate with the advanced degree in summer 2012
Marcus	Electronic Engineering Program	DCC Fall 2010	Marcus expects to complete an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Electronic Engineering in the summer of 2012. Marcus expects to continue his education beyond a two-year program at a 4-yr university
David	Business Administration Program	DCC Fall 2011	David began enrollment at a 4-yr university in the Fall 2008 immediately after high school but stopped enrollment after Spring 2009 because of financial concerns. David re-enrolled at DCC in Fall 2011 and plans to continue his postsecondary education beyond the 2-yr program
Kevin	Automotive Mechanics Program	DCC Spring 2012	Kevin is continuing his enrollment in the summer term. This is Kevin first year experience in postsecondary education
Charles	Building and Trades Program	DCC Fall 2011	Charles is continuing his enrollment in the summer term. This is Charles first year experience in postsecondary education
Martin	Electronic and Engineering Program	DCC Fall 2010	Martin is continuing his enrollment in the summer term. Martin stopped-out throughout the course of his enrollment because of family health and financial concerns. Martin has changed his program of study several times throughout his course of enrollment to secure job placement

All participants indicated initial placement in remedial courses upon first enrollment in

postsecondary education. Remediation courses were developmental math and reading subjects.

Bracketing (Epoche)

According to Brannick and Coghlan (2007), a preliminary procedure is conducted prior to data collection and analysis of the interviews to distinguish between the researcher's awareness of experiences and elements identified in the participant's data. Therefore, before conducting the study, the researcher devised questions concerning African American males in community colleges educational experiences to establish differences between personal beliefs to minimize personal judgments about African American Community College students.

Figure 1 illustrates the approach the researcher used to identify with her own perceptions of the study's purposes to remain focused on the participants' responses to the research questions. Participant's responses were documented and reflective annotations reflected awareness of feelings, thinking, and possible bias judgments about African American males' experiences in higher education.

The researcher's own self-awareness of expected outcomes helped keep personal reflections from the interview process. The bracketing approach also helped the researcher sustain from asking leading questions, which may affect the overall outcome of the research. By using this bracketing approach, the researcher could distinguish between the participant's own responses without inflecting personal judgments within the data results.

Once the researcher documented personal judgments and assessed thoughts and feelings towards the expected outcome, the researcher can identify themes and pertinent information related to the study while remaining objective to participant's responses. This approach shows the researcher's attempts to set aside any biased or skew responses during interviews and coding.

Figure 1

Bracketing Between Researcher and Study Participants

```
 ┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
 │   Researcher's  │        │   Participant's │
 └────────┬────────┘        └────────┬────────┘
          │                          │
           \                        /
            \                      /
             ▼                    ▼
          ┌──────────────────────────┐
          │          Analyze         │
          └────────────┬─────────────┘
                       │
                       ▼
          ┌──────────────────────────┐
          │         Interpret        │
          └──────────────────────────┘
```
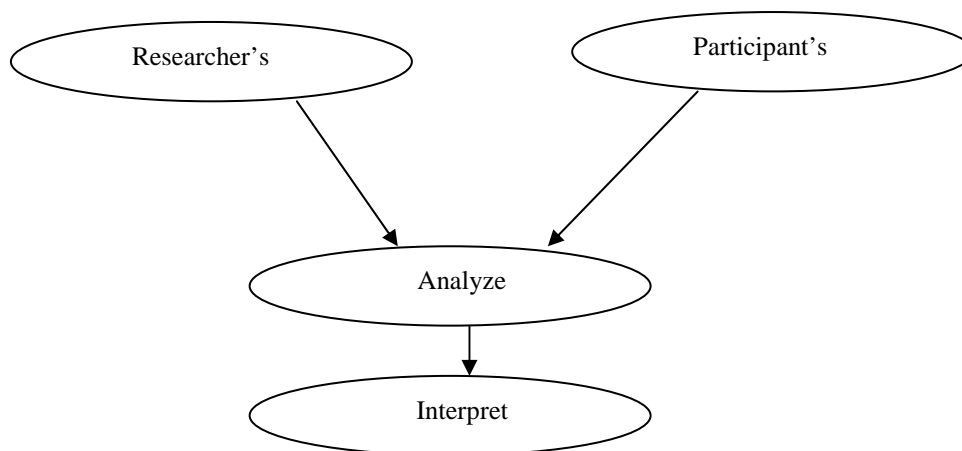
Study Participants

The researcher read the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) to the study

participants during their interviews and asked if there were questions or concerns related to

expectations of the study or their participation before signing. After receipt of signatures, the

researcher left the room to make a copy of the Consent Form before issuing a copy to the

participant. Participants assigned their own pseudonym during the first interview. Participants

were reminded their actual name or any affiliation to the college would be kept confidential and

would not be written anywhere in the research or final publication. The researcher ensured

participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any given moment within the interview

or recordings without penalty.

After verbal and written consent of doing an audio recording, the interview began using

an audio recorder, Phillips Voice Tracer LFH0662, which also allows the capability of computer

connectivity to download voice recording into dictation software. The researcher requested the

participants attach a small microphone to their clothing, which directly connected to a mini-laptop programmed with Dragon Naturally Speaking Home version12 software for direct dictation into Microsoft Word 2010 software. Dragon Naturally Speaking Home v12 allows the capability of saving transcribed interviews into manageable files and easy linkage with NVivo 9 for coding. The audio recorder served as a backup to clarify words incorrectly stated in the dictation and to ensure accuracy of the transcription.

Table 4 depicts detailed demographic information obtained from the Demographic Survey (see Appendix E) from study participants and overall responses from participants from their completed Demographic Survey. Tables 4 (a–c) detail specific demographic responses such as participant's age, employment status, and number of years attending college. Several participants indicated during the interview a period of stop-out of college before reenrollment in their selected program of student.

Table 4

Demographic Survey Results

	Marcus	Charles	David	Martin	Kevin	John
#1 Age Group	26-33	26-33	18-25	34-40	26-33	40-50
#2 U.S. Citizenship	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
#3 Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
#4 Race	Black	Black	African American	African American	African American	Black
#5 Language	English	English	English	English	English	English
#6 Reside with	Alone	Girlfriend	Spouse	Alone	Children	Spouse and Children
#7 # of Adults in Household	No answer	No answer	2	No answer	No answer	2

| #8 Employment	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
#9 Income Levels	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer	$20,000 – $40,000
#10 Father's Education level	Trade or Technical Degree	Don't Know	Don't Know	Middle School	Don't know	Trade or Technical Degree
#11 Mother's Education level	High School Diploma	Don't Know	High school (9th – 12th)	Middle School	High School Diploma	High School (9th – 12th)
#12 1st College Student	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
#13 How did learn about DCC	Family or friends	Family or friends	advertisement	Recruited by College	College Fair	Family or friends
#14 Years Attended College	3 or more years	1yr	3 or more years	3 or more years	1-yr	2-yrs

Table 4-a

Age Demographics of Study Participants
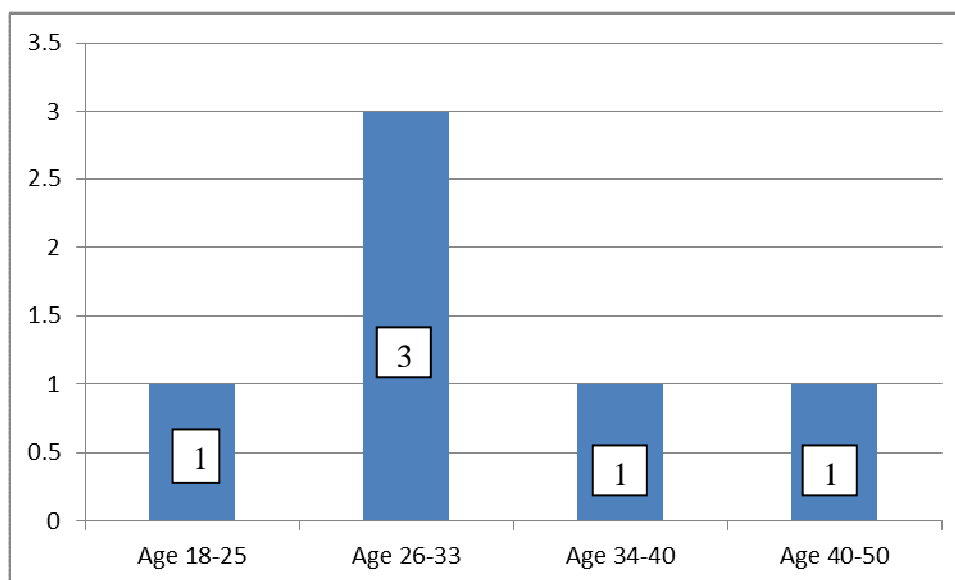
Table 4-b

College Enrollment Level of Study Participants
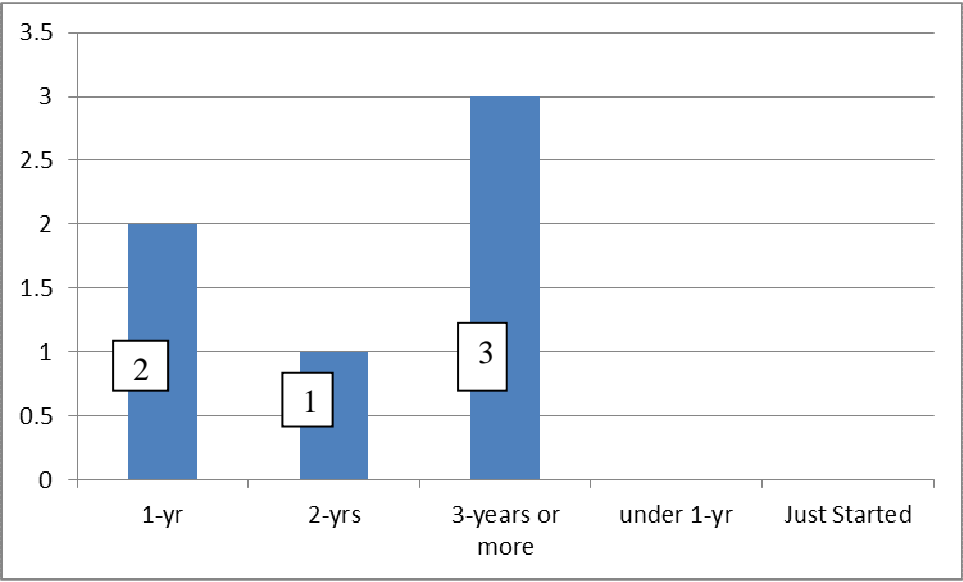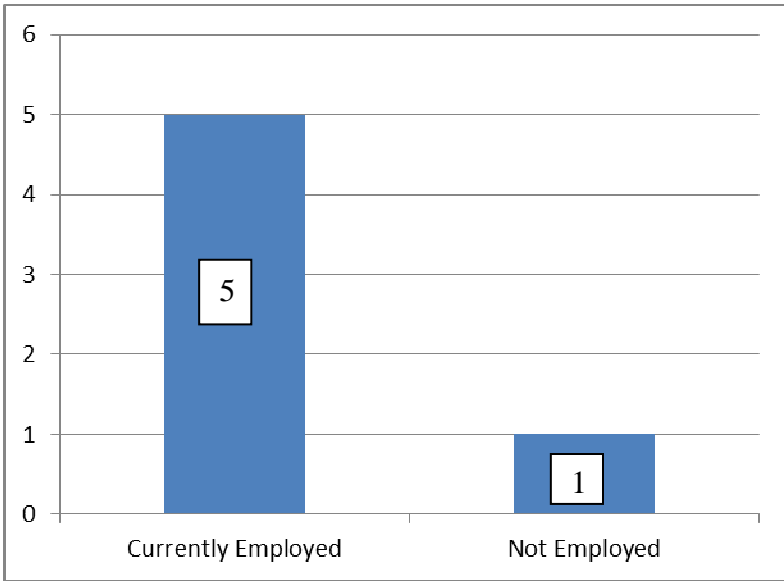

Table 4-c

Employment Status of Participants

Structural Analysis

The Interview Protocol consisted of 21 open-ended questions (see Appendix A).

Participants received a copy of the Interview Protocol questions to follow along as the researcher

read and asked questions. The timeframe for conducting interviews and collecting data for the current study was approximately one and a half hours. Thirty minutes was preparation time to set-up the laptop, read the Consent form (obtain signature and copy), conduct voice recognition for study participants' microphone and use of Dragon Naturally software, and establishing computer connectivity.

Participants were told they could receive a copy of their transcript within two to three days after the interview to allow time for reviewing and finalizing the transcription. Once the participants obtained copies of their transcription, the researcher coded the transcripts immediately afterwards. The timeframe of completion of all interviews were within a two-week period; completion of coding transcripts was approximately two-weeks after the final interview.

According to Van Manen (1990), in hermeneutic phenomenological human science, the interview serves as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material to develop a deeper understanding of a human phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher used the process of hermeneutic research to analyze transcripts and establish a relationship among participant's interviews as it relate to the experience of the phenomena. The work of Huberman and Miles' concept of data analysis was a guiding method to further analyze the data to identify patterns, core themes, and establish a conceptual understanding and discussion of the phenomena experience.

According to Creswell (2005), themes are developed from data obtained to ensure the participant's response address the research questions and form an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon. For the purpose of the current study, the data analysis process related to Creswell's (2005) suggestions: (a) coding the data, (b) creating segmentation, and (c) labeling the text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data. Therefore, the researcher used NVivo

9 to further organize, collect, and interpret the data to find themes continuously repeat throughout the transcripts of all data analyzed.

Response to the Research Questions

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold; first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress in higher education, second was to understand the perceptions of factors influencing African American males' academic achievement in an institution of higher education.

To describe and develop themes obtained from each participant that would addresses the research questions and to form an in-depth understanding for the central phenomenon, the data collection and analysis process involved transcribing participant's responses as it relates to the current study phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) discussed methods used to analyze the data to obtain a description of the experience:

1) Listing and preliminary grouping,

2) Reduction and elimination,

3) Clustering and creating themes of the invariant constituents (core themes)

4) Validation,

5) Constructing an individual textual description of the experience,

6) Constructing an individual structural description of the experience, and

7) Constructing a textual-structural description of the meaning and essence of the experience.

The following are brief introductions and excerpts obtained from transcripts of the participant's responses to the Interview Protocol questions.

Study Participant 1, John: began enrollment in the Automotive Program seeking a certificate in Auto Mechanics. John re-enrolled at DCC the Fall term of 2010 seeking an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Electronic Engineering. John expects to graduate with the advanced degree in summer 2012.

Study Participant 2, Marcus: Begin enrollment in Fall 2010 and expects to complete an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Electronic Engineering in summer 2012. He plans to continue his education beyond a two-year program at a four-year university.

Study Participant 3, David: Began enrollment at a four-year university in the Fall 2008 immediately after high school but stopped enrollment after Spring 2009 because of financial concerns. David re-enrolled at DCC in Fall 2011 and plans to continue his postsecondary education beyond the two-year program.

Study Participant 4, Kevin: Begin enrollment in Spring 2012 in the Automotive Mechanics Program. Plans to continue enrollment in the summer term. This is Kevin first-year experience in postsecondary education.

Study Participant 5, Charles: Begin enrollment in Fall 2011 in the Building and Trades Program. This is Charles first-year experience in college.

Study Participant 6, Martin: Begin enrollment in Fall 2010 in the Electronic and Engineering Program. Martin stopped-out because of financial concerns but plans to complete the Electronics and Engineering Program in summer 2013.

Participants were asked several questions within the Interview Protocol as it relate to each research question. Table 5 lists Interview Protocol questions one through five asked to the study participants as it relates to Research Question 1.

Table 5

Interview Question Outline for Research Question 1

Guiding Questions	Interview Questions
R1: How do African American male students identify academic success?	1. What is your major or program of study? 2. Identify what factors contributed to your academic success. 3. What type of academic challenges have you experienced? 4. How would you describe academic experiences of African American males when they first start community college? 5. Did or do you currently receive academic support services at Danville Community College? If so, what kind of services?

No themes occurred from Interview Protocol question one as it relates to research question 1. Because academic standing and performance levels varied at the time of interview, participant's completing 15 or more credits were considered full-time college student.

Interview Protocol Question 2 – Identify what factors contributed to your academic success?

Participant's program of study varied; however, all participants' curriculum required at least a college degree. Question two addressed academic success by asking African American males to interpret academic success based on their own perception and experiences. Participants interpreted academic success based on his feelings of overcoming academic challenges and not how others viewed their performance levels. The majority of the participants did not compare their academic levels to other student's grades; they based their achievement levels by their accomplishments of passing classes challenging to them.

Recurring themes describing achievement levels among all participants were:

(1) *View of themselves*. Interpreted how the participants judged themselves regardless what others think,

(2) *Motivation*. Interpreted as their inner feelings and willingness to accomplish their academic goals,

(3) *Adjustment*. Interpreted how participants adapted in the academic environment regardless of their race, and

(4) *Race*. Race interpreted within the academic environment as challenging student success but not a barrier of obtaining academic support or assistance.

Recurring themes consistently emerging from question two in relation to academic success was the ability to complete challenging coursework with support and assistance of instructors. College instructors were recurring themes in which the participants described them as motivating factors for encouraging continuous improvement and willingness to assist with academic tasks. Other themes related to academic standing were Honors, Dean, and President List. Placement on the College Honors, Dean, or President List interpreted high achievement levels and being academically successful. Participant David stated, "One of my (academic) goals is to get on the Dean's List then get on the President List and stay there until I graduate. I'll get more scholarships this way and it'll help me when I transfer to another college."

Interview Protocol Question 3 – What type of academic challenges have you experienced?

In relation to Question 3, several themes emerged in relation to academic challenges, (a) ability to stay focused, (b) ability to manage time to complete assignments, (c) ability to commit to academic work, and (d) unavailable resources, such as computer and Internet to complete assignments. Two of the participants mentioned sacrificing social relationships helps keep them

motivated to continue college. Martin mentioned his reluctance to develop personal relationships because of his commitment to college, "basically don't socialize much outside of college to stay focus on my work and not get sidetracked."

Charles mentioned when he made the decision to go to college, he encouraged his girlfriend to enroll in a nursing program so they can work together, stay focused on school, and better themselves. Charles continued to state he and girlfriend spend most of their time studying and supporting each other, "we motivate each other when we think about how much money we are going to be making after we finish." Charles is also working on increasing his grade point average in the summer term so he can receive scholarships in the fall term.

Interview Protocol Question 4 – How would you describe academic experiences of African American males when they first start community college?

In relation to Question 4, several themes reoccurred referencing academic experiences of African American males when they began college, (a) race – as it relates to different experiences among other races, (b) perceptions – as it relates to self-perception, (c) maturity – as it relates to younger African American males to older African American males' perceptions, (d) barrier – as it relates to financial difficulties, and (e) attitude – as it relates to personal reflections and viewpoints. All participants adjusted to Danville Community College immediately after enrollment.

Participants indicated a clear understanding of college expectations and expected challenges in college with academics or personal responsibilities. Several participants believed race played a role in their academic success based on perspectives about the college. John explains the age of the African American males plays a role in perceptions to academic success. According to John:

The older the student, the more mature view he may have on the opportunity of

continuing their education. Younger African American males may not view educational

opportunities as a better way of life; therefore would not put effort in their academics.

Interview Protocol Question 5 – Did or do you currently receive academic support services at

Danville Community College? If so, what kind of services?

In relation to receiving academic support, recurring themes surrounding receipt of

academic support services at Danville Community College were (a) teacher, (b) peers, and (c)

tutoring. Martin described his academic experiences when he first attended college,

. . . right now, I am struggling in math but I know I have to get through it to finish up. I

do not have a problem going to the teacher and asking for help. He (teacher) seems to

wanna see us succeed and better ourselves…

John expressed how college was important to his goals and wished other African American men

would do the same and go to college.

…I have no problem getting use to college. DCC is important to this community and

offer many opportunities for Black students on the campus. It is easy to adjust here and

succeed because of the teachers and support around you.

Charles stated race can be a barrier, especially if you are an African American male in

college, you may not get as much help from the teachers because of how they see you once you

start,

. . . some teachers think you will fail once you walk in the door. So therefore, you have to

prove yourself that you can do just as well as anybody else in the class, especially if it is

majority White in the class. Most black men compare themselves to others anyway. For

me, I come in with the attitude of success and better than anyone else so I do not get

labeled a failure.

Other participants generalized the question as depending on the person and the reason for why he is going to college.

Martin stated his academic influence began during his first semester of college from an instructor's perception about him. According to Martin:

I can tell she did not like me too much. She did not care about how I was doing or

whether or not I needed help. I was determined to prove I was not just an ordinary Black

man coming in her classroom; I had something to prove. It was not until I started in my

(engineering) program that teachers seemed as if they want me to graduate and become

an engineer; they wanted the best from me. It seems like teachers respond to you based

on the way you see yourself, especially if you are black. I have had teachers to show me

respect and give me the extra help I need, and I really did well in their class. One or two

teachers I had that really showed they could care less made me try harder just to show

them they would not make me fail regardless of how they treated me.

Martin continued stating, "it does make a difference when teachers support you and

provide you with the help you need to succeed in class. It may discourage you but it's up to you

to pass or fail when you don't have the extra attention that you need to succeed…" Martin says

the negative depiction of African American males in the (Danville) news makes it hard difficult

to receive respect from other people. According to Martin:

If you come to school dress a certain way you are automatically seen as a thug or

troublemaker. It takes a while for teachers to get to know you before you get their respect

or they become comfortable enough to want to help you.

Kevin continued to describe his relationship with his peers. He explained their views do not affect his academics one way or another; it is their association that makes it easier,

. . . students in the class have their own issues so you are mixed together trying to succeed one way or another. To me, being successful depends on your own personal attitude and not the attitude of another person. I do not want it to seem like a black and white issue but a black man always has something to prove; I know this from when I first started college and know I will have something to prove when I start a career. It is harder for African Americans than it is for Whites or any other race.

Charles credited his academic support to his teachers and the tutoring program offered through his academic advisor. According to Charles:

When I first started here, I had a Back teacher who told me my success depends on my attitude; it was pass or fail/nothing in-between. I thought he was joking until I started struggling in a couple of classes and was on the verge of failing. I blamed the teachers; pretty much blamed everyone else except me. I knew I was not studying like I should and did not ask questions to really understand what the class was all about. My attitude was all wrong in the beginning but it changed when I saw other students doing better than I was. I was never one to ask questions in class or stay after to talk to the teacher. If I needed help; I would try to figure it out on my own or talk to students about how they was able to understand what was going on. I did not connect much with students from another race; my thinking was to stick with my own. But I learned it is an individual's view of themselves that is going to determine if they succeed or not. The teachers can help and even inspire you to do well; but ultimately, it is up to you whether you will finish.

David described his freshman year experience as struggling because more focus on his social life and not of his studies. He stated he tried to overcome academic challenges with the help of friendships with his peers, which allowed him to maintain grades and establish study sessions. David described his ability to establish friendships with other people no matter of their race or gender because of his personality. He could develop good relationships with his instructors. Although his college friends are supportive of his academic goals, his outside friends did not motivate or encourage his academic success,

> …this is how I got in the situation I was in because I hung-out too much and did not put a lot of time in my homework or getting to class on time. I had to get my priorities in check and just leave them (outside friends) alone if I wanted to do well in school. At the same time, I had to think about where my life was going….Who is really helping me through this? …they don't understand how it is in college. You gotta work hard and keep people around you that's looking out for you and can help you when you need it.

The following Table 6 depicts Interview Protocol questions 6 – 13 that were asked to study participants as it relates to Research Question 2.

Table 6

Interview Question Outline for Research Question 2

Research (R) Question	Interview Protocol Question
R2: What types of outside influences impinge on African American male students' view of higher education?	6. Do you have outside priorities other than your education? If so, list.
	7. Considering your outside responsibilities, is it challenging to continue your education?
	8. How encouraging is your family (spouse, children, parents, etc.) of you getting a college degree?
	9. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your gender? Why or why not?
	10. Do you feel your educational experiences are

	different based on your race? Why or why not?
	11. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your financial situation? Why or why not?
	12. Who or what plays an important role in your life that contributes to your educational goals?
	13. Do you feel people are supportive or not supportive of you, as an African American male, completing a college degree?

Interview Protocol Question 6 – 13: Do you have outside priorities other than your education? If so, list.

Questions 6 – 13 in the Research Interview Protocol allowed the researcher to relate individual responses to the overall perspective of the larger group of African American males' challenges they faced in postsecondary education. After interview responses were combined, continuous themes emerged describing influences that impinged on African Americans' perspective of higher education: (a) social concept as how it relate to the perspective of college, (b) personal challenges that hindered enrollment, (c) financial hardships and (d) familial expectations associated with their perspective of higher education.

Two participants indicated they had no familial support while in secondary education. Martin described how his academic development began after graduating from high school, which did not include familial support. Martin stated neither of his parents graduated from a high school, which he believe was the reason education was not important in his household or encouraged by his parents. He continued stating being raised by his mother and "shuffled" among relatives after age 14. Martin's parents were not married; therefore, he was not raised in a two-parent household. His mother mainly raised Martin alone on minimum income and public assistance. According to Martin:

There was always money hardship involved. I was determined at age 16 to go out and get

a job to help my mom and sisters so they would not have to struggle. With a father absent

in the home, it is automatically understood the male in the house has to step-up. Even

though I was moving from house-to-house, I still had to take care of my family.

Martin stated when he was in high school, his counselor did not encourage attending

college, "…matter of fact, I never seen my counselor but maybe once or twice when I was in 9th

or 10th grade to change my schedule. They (counselors) never tried to talk to me about going to

college." Martin stated despite the lack of familial and financial support, he made the decision to

continue his education after becoming laid off from work. He started in a four-year university

seeking a bachelor's degree but later dropped because of health and finances. Martin made the

decision to enroll in community college for a certificate or diploma degree to find a job quickly.

Kevin's interest in postsecondary education emerged from self-motivation to improve his

overall income. Kevin stated he did not have familial or financial support to enroll in college. He

sought that opportunity by going to a college fair and getting information ongoing to college.

One of his options was military but because of his obligations to help raise his children, he

decided to stay in the area and go somewhere locally. Kevin continued stating because he was

raised in a single-parent home, he did not want that type of relationship with his children or have

his children experience not having an active father in the home. Kevin plans to complete an

Associate's degree and seek a higher paying job that would help maintain his household income.

Higher education was not encouraged for any of the participants; their influences

emerged from job-loss or the need to support their family financially. David admitted reluctance

of enrolling in college because of other people perceptions of going to college, but offer

suggestions for others black males to follow, "…do not let other people determine your destiny

in life. You have to figure out your own destiny. People will tell you what you should do but never tell you the best way of doing it that will benefit you and your life. It is true when people say the first impression is a best impression.

David continued to describe his first year's college experience as an African American male,

> When people meet you, they automatically judge you based on your skin color and what you are wearing and what you look like…Black males are already thought to be uneducated and trouble-makers so we have to work even harder and be better to get away from that stereotype. I knew DCC (Danville Community College) have mostly white teachers and white students. So I have to be better and work harder to get ahead and get the same amount of attention as the other students. That is the way life is but these young boys (African American) don't realize that; they think it's like high school and they don't have to work hard to get ahead. That is where the drop-out is; then they come to realize it's much harder for us than it is for anyone else; it is hard anyway around.

David continued to explain challenges with financial responsibilities at home and with his children. According to David:

> When I was laid-off from work, I had to find a couple of jobs to make ends meet. It was hard but I knew I had to do it. Thank God my wife was able to keep her job and support me going back to school. We both know it will pay off in the long run.

Marcus considered financial responsibility as an outside influence that impinged on African American males' view of higher education. He further explained most African American males seek employment immediately after high school or while in high school to help take care of home responsibilities, whether it is family or their own self-reliance. Marcus shared:

Since most African American males are not encouraged to go to college after high school
especially in this area, they automatically think to find a job to take care of their
responsibilities. And most African American males get a job and buy crazy stuff that
doesn't have anything to do with taking care of home. They will spend money on cars
and clothes but not their education. If it is not taught at home when they are young or
encouraged when they are in school, then they're not going to consider going to college
as a better way of life or even think about going to college for a career. If it is not an
immediate way of getting more money; it is not going to be something most black men
are going to do.

Both Kevin and John viewed social perceptions as a major challenge for African
American men enrolling in college. John stated,

Most African American men are not encouraged as a young age from their family or their
schools so they don't see college as an option. It is challenging getting through high
school and go to college after that, it is not likely. You gotta have strong family support
like parents pushing you to go to college or someone in school encouraging you to go to
college. We do not just get the information to go; it is usually someone encouraging us to
go.

Two of the participants considered being academically successful with spousal support or
based on a significant other in their lives. Because of family support, one participant believed
this led to his academic success. Three participants considered being academically successful
because their self-determination exceeded beyond their current financial status.

Four of the six participants identified financial aid as positive indicators influencing their
postsecondary enrollment. Two of the six participants identified family (spousal) support

influence their college enrollment. All participants indicated some type of familial bonds either with children, spouse, or significant other played a role in their postsecondary education. These bonds were express as a significant source of motivational support, responsibility, or stressor influencing or impacting their college enrollment. Four of the six participants indicated children being inspiring factors behind their academic success. One of the six participants indicated his girlfriend was a motivating force behind his academic success.

Student finances were recurring themes for all six students. Each participant indicated financial aid determined whether they persisted in college. Without financial aid, four of the six students indicated they would drop-out and work full-time to support their family. These four students indicated their financial aid disbursement helped pay household bills and other budgeting areas. One participant indicated money was not a pressing factor for continuing his education; he spoke of monetary goals of saving money and establishing a career that would further increase his earnings. One participant spoke of working full-time while attending college to maintain household expenses. Overall, financial support was a recurring influence both outside and inside college that helped participants retain in college.

The following Table 7 depicts Interview Protocol questions 14-21 that were asked to study participants as it relates to Research Question 3.

Table 7

Interview Question Outline for Research Question 3

Research (R) Question	Interview Protocol Questions
R3: What types of factors influence African American male's academic success in a community college?	14. What is your main reason for attending Danville Community College? 15. How many hours per week do you spend studying? Do you feel this is sufficient time based on other demands? 16. Do you feel comfortable asking questions in class? If not, what about meeting with your instructor outside of class time? 17. How different are your college peers versus your outside college friends? 18. Do you feel accepted by your college instructors? What about from the college campus? 19. Do you interact socially on the campus such as with campus activities and programs? Why or why not? 20. What has been the best part of attending Danville Community College? 21. If you were President of Danville Community College, what would be your first priority as the college President?

The pattern of themes that emerged from participants' interviews relating to influences of academic success in community college was (a) instructors, (b) peers, and (c) financial aid. John stated his academic success developed through support from instructors and campus officials. He continued to state how his instructors encouraged him to improve academically. Through support of his instructors, John could overcome his learning disabilities because of a stroke several years ago. According to John,

> After I had my stroke, it was hard for me to focus and stay on the same pace as other students. I love my teachers; they are always willing to work with me and help me when I need it. I felt as though they really cared about my education. One of my teachers' encouraged me to get involved in student activities on campus. The more I became involved on campus, the more I felt a part of the campus. These teachers are willing to go

the extra mile for you if you let them. They literally care about your future and your education. The young generation doesn't understand that; they think it's an extension of high school so they come to class, try to do the work and leave. They don't get involved…

John continued to describe supportive experiences with his college peers,

My classmates and I get along. We all are here to get a good education and start a degree. Most of my classmates in my program are older, more mature, so we are serious about our education and we are always willing to help one another. It is like having a second family because most of us have the same classes together so we know what each other has to do. I sometimes tutor other students in my class when they need it. I made the decision a longtime ago to help as many of my classmates as possible to see them come across that stage when I cross it. We all vow not to leave anyone behind; we all going to graduate together.

Martin said his peers (classmates) supported one another, especially those who enrolled in the same classes. According to Martin,

There are not a whole lot of us (African Americans) in class but we try to help each other out because we know what we have to deal with. There are no women but a few black men. We call each other if one of us misses class; we try to make sure they got the work. Most of us have jobs and family so we know what we have to deal with. Nobody wants to see anyone fail or not make it…

Although the pattern of instructor and peers' support related to academic success among African American males, several participants indicated instructors' negative perceptions was discouraging and distracted them. This distraction kept them from being academically

successful; however, peers and resiliency motivated them to overcome any adversity they believed was in the classroom. "You may get one or two teachers that do not like you because of your skin color; you just have to look past that and remember why you are there," says Charles. "As a Black man, you get use to the stereotype and the prejudice; it is the way it is and not going to change. For me, it makes me a stronger person and wants to show them that they are not going to make me fail; I am just as good as the White or Asian guy in the classroom."

Kevin described how the media depicts African American males in a negative way and feels the public should rejects social media altogether.

> If it does not support African American males in a positive way, why should we continue to feed into the media and not challenge the way it portrays our race if it does not inspire us to be successful…Not only do people see this is the way all Black males act, teachers see this and then act a certain way toward us in the classroom. If I have a teacher that genuinely want to help me and show they are willing to do what they can to help me succeed, I do extremely well. But it does not take the teacher to help me be successful; it is a part of it but it is mainly because I want to be successful. With the constant negative portrayal by the media you have to strive extra hard to be successful.

David continued to share information of his experiences with his college instructors.

> Well at first, I did not take it serious and thought they (teachers) would just help me get through. My whole attitude change after the first semester and seeing my grades was D's and some C's. At one point, I got an Academic Warning for my financial aid that scared me. I knew I was not trying and one thing for sure, I was not going to lose my financial aid when I could do better. It was a wake-up call because I did not want to just get by when my friends were getting on the honors and dean's list.

David stated from this point his attitude and school behavior changed about schoolwork and college experiences. He became involved in study sessions and meeting more with instructors to maintain his grades.

Marcus summed up his academic success experiences as interacting with teachers and fellow classmates. Although he primarily worked alone to maintain his grades, he explains good study habits is the key to being successful.

> I preferred to do all my homework and papers on campus than to go home and complete them. I knew, once I left campus I would not put much time and focus on my work with everything else going on in my life. I tried to make sure once I got home, I would have some time to spend with my kids and work. It's hard trying to maintain it all but you have to stay on track and get the job done. The campus has a computer lab to get everything done, get some help if you need it and be able to send your emails and check emails.

> Everybody doesn't have that type of access to get things done; it's important to have it.

Marcus spoke of benefits African American males could have in college, such as higher paying jobs and connecting with the right people for a better future.

> My first impression about going to college was it was going to take too much of my time and be difficult. I did not realize how much help I could get until I was put in the developmental classes for my math and writing. I try to tell people I know, mostly other black guys that it is not as hard as they think especially if they had some help and know the right people. You have all kinds of help to pass the classes. When you think about a tutor, you think about some old guy making it harder for you to learn the stuff…but it is not the case, I've had people in my class to tutor me and they make it easy to understand. Most of the guys I know (African American males) has this picture about college; it's

mostly for whites and young kids. I try to tell them, we all lost our jobs and it's hard to get another one without some type of degree.

Marcus summed up his response related to academic success as having common practices of good study skills and good relationships with teachers. He mentions hard work and a positive attitude can make a difference and can determine if one is successful in college,

> . . . the difference between success and failure in anything you do is the attitude you have about it. Whether you're black or white, if you are not serious about your education and aren't willing to try to help yourself, the end result will show it. I've never been one to miss class or not take the responsibility of working hard to get things done. Unfortunately I should have done that a long time ago. But I'm glad I'm here and able to better myself to get to that next level. I'll tell anybody that they have to work hard to get good grades. It's not always about the color of their skin or people they know when it comes to learning….there are more opportunities for young people than it was when I was in high school; they just have to get out there are try.

Table 8 outlines the most predominate themes recurring throughout the Interview Protocol questions among all six study participants. The Interview Protocol Questions highlight key information to the perceptions of the six participants as it relates to the purpose of the current study.

Table 8

Predominate Themes from Interview Protocol Questions

Specific Interview Question	Predominant Theme
1. What is your major or program of study?	No predominant theme
2. Identify what factors contributed to your academic success.	Motivation, adjustment, racial background, view of themselves, teacher support, teacher assistance

3. What type of academic challenges have you experienced?	Staying focused, mange time to commit to work, having resources to complete task
4. How would you describe academic experiences of African American males when they first start community college?	College expectations, personal responsibility, personal commitment, attitude towards academics, study habit, teacher support
5. Did or do you currently receive academic support services at Danville Community College? If so, what kind of services?	Teacher support, peer support, tutoring
6. Do you have outside priorities other than your education? If so, list.	Social influences, financial responsibilities, family responsibility, stereotype
7. Considering your outside responsibilities, is it challenging to continue your education?	Overall challenge to manage family and financial responsibility, job-loss, social perceptions, and meet college expectations
8. How encouraging is your family (spouse, children, parents, etc.) of you getting a college degree?	Family support, children support, self-determination,
9. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your gender? Why or why not?	Challenging for African American males, few African American males in college, social perceptions
10. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your race? Why or why not?	Challenging for African American males, teacher perceptions, social perceptions, lack of encouragement, self-resilience
11. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your financial situation? Why or why not?	Access to college based on financial aid; ability to attend because of financial aid; able to retain in college because of financial aid
12. Who or what plays an important role in your life that contributes to your educational goals?	Spouse and children
13. Do you feel people are supportive or not supportive of you, as an African American male, completing a college degree?	Supportive, negative perceptions
14. What is your main reason for attending Danville Community College?	Job-loss, career, better job, higher paying job
15. How many hours per week do you spend studying? Do you feel this is sufficient time based on other demands?	Depends on assignment or test
16. Do you feel comfortable asking questions in class? If not, what about meeting with your instructor outside of class time?	Comfortable asking questions

17. How different are your college peers versus your outside college friends?	College friends like-minded, outside friends have different lifestyles
18. Do you feel accepted by your college instructors? What about from the college campus?	Teachers are supportive
19. Do you interact socially on the campus such as with campus activities and programs? Why or why not?	Clubs, student activities
20. What has been the best part of attending Danville Community College?	Classmates, teachers, self-satisfaction
21. If you were President of Danville Community College, what would be your first priority as the college President?	Student activities for African American (Black) males, African American male teachers

Validity and Reliability

Validity in the study was achieved by selecting research participants, according to the criteria specified for purposeful sampling. According to Patton (2002) purposeful sampling focus, reduce variation, and simplify analysis in a study. Therefore, age, gender, race, credit hours, degree seeking status, and willingness to participate were important factors in the recruitment process. All participants were (a) African American males attending Danville Community College, (b) degree seeking students, (c) full-time enrolled (currently enrolled in 12 or more credit hours), (d) over the age of 18, and (e) signed a consent form indicating their willingness to participate in the study.

Each participant had an opportunity to withdraw from the study through a period of a three-day waiting period before the initial interview. After participants agreed to participate by scheduling an interview, each given copies of their consent form and an opportunity to obtain a copy of their transcripts to verify information obtained and to ensure transcribed data was accurate.

According to Creswell (2005), qualitative researchers must conduct inquiry in a subjective, biased manner to refrain from judgments, perceptions, or notations in the discussion that may influence the participant's responses. Therefore, the researcher conducted a bracketing approach or epoche` to reduce risk of applying own perspectives within the research process and eliminate bias throughout analyzing the data. Procedures used by the researcher for data management, organization, coding, and data analysis ensured realness and increased reliability in the study's findings. According to Yin (2003), the goals of reliability in research is minimizing errors and biases by using multiple procedures of sources to help understand the study's phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four criteria to be considered in pursuit of a trustworthy study: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) conformability. To increase creditability, the researcher conducted a Pilot Study to examine methods used within the Interview Protocol and help identify best practices for the research study's procedures. Once elements from the Pilot Study were identified, the researcher used the process of triangulation to increase credibility. Multiple sources used thoroughly examine the Interview Protocol questions, such as computer applications Dragon Naturally Speaking Home v12 to transcribe the data, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to cross-check the data, and NViVo 9 to identify recurring themes and compare data interview transcriptions to interpret the research findings.

Informed Consent forms were read to participants and copies were issued after signatures,.The Consent form contained information related to confidentiality, participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, research expectations, the researcher's,

Research Chair, and Liberty University's IRB contact information in case participants had questions or concerns regarding the study.

Because the researcher is a college administrator on the campus serving as the research site, increased the possibility of the participants changing behavior because of the researcher's affiliation to the college. Therefore, participants were assured the study was not affiliated with the college campus, their college enrollment, or their academic records would not be affected. The participants were informed their participation was strictly on a voluntarily basis.

The researcher scheduled interviews according to participant's schedule and conducted interviews in a private location away from the campus general population. The interview setting allowed the participants privacy and the interview procedures inspired them to discuss their own perspectives and lived experiences. Participants chose their own pseudonyms to further protect their identity within the study's writings. Throughout the study's interview, the researcher read each Interview Protocol question thoroughly and probed answers as needed to gain a full understanding of the participant's experiences and in-depth knowledge as it related to the study phenomenon. By reading Interview Protocol questions allowed participants to understand the question, answer each question in its entirety and accurately.

The researcher verified answers by recording interviews, dictating voice recording, and using software to download dictated interviews into a document transcription. Participants were allowed to listen to their voice recordings after each interview to confirm transcribed information. After transcribing the interview, transcriptions were printed and given to participants to review for accuracy. The researcher ensured participants data obtained would be kept confidential, and information obtained would not be published or used by Liberty University or the college where the research was conducted.

The current study involved six African American male community college students. Findings obtained from the data collected may allow transferability to Asian or Hispanic populations at Danville Community College or a larger college if the study's procedures were a similar educational environment. According to Misco (2007), transferability and its relations to generalizability of the findings can be conducted if the research approach share the same general rules, data collection and analyzing, and the situation are similar, another investigator should conclude the same results.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold; first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress in higher education, second was to understand the perceptions of factors influencing African American male's academic achievement in an institution of higher education. All the participants in the study indicated their college instructors played an integral part in making a difference in their academic experiences in a positive or negative manner. Race was not as a significant factor relating to college experiences or academic success as motivation and encouragement was from family members, friends, teachers or peers. All participants acknowledged self-perceptions and self-worth influenced their overall college perception.

Other people's views of their college enrollment did not hinder these participants' academic success or college enrollment decisions. However, some participants mentioned negative perceptions of them based on race as it relates to their college experiences made them more resilient to failure and influenced their attitudes of becoming successful, particularly if it were a perception by an instructor of another race. Throughout the interview, participants spoke of self-perceptions and views of their educational experiences. Participants shared how they were

influenced by others and overcame academic challenges by recognizing their own capabilities. They received support from teachers and others from the same academic environment. Few participants spoke of receiving outside (out of college) assistance to motivate and encourage their enrollment. Study participants were more self-driven to succeed and explained their interaction with college peers further advanced their experiences in postsecondary education.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusions based on the current study's findings. Discussions include the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, scope, significance to the study, significance to the study leadership, and the researcher's reflections. The chapter also contains recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was twofold; first, to explore the lived experiences of African American male students concerning factors hindering the academic progress in higher education, second was to understand the perceptions of factors influencing African American males' academic achievement in an institution of higher education. Discussions of lived experiences in this study presented emerging themes that describes and analyze African American male student's own college experiences.

The findings supported and related to the theoretical literature of Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory Model of a person's developmental stage (Phelan, 2009; Boddington, 2009). According to Phelan (2009), self-identity and the perspective of a person's personality affect his interaction among others in a learning environment. Honneth's social theory theorizes a person thrives in a well-established social environment (Stojanov, 2009). The current study interviews and data collected correlates to participants' own perceptions of their college experiences and their academic learning experiences.

Honneth's theory also theorized individuals must mature within their own personal development to interact and adapt to other social environments. After analyzing the phenomenon related to understanding perceptions of factors that influence academic achievement levels, participants shared experiences of academic growth within their college environment. Participants could succeed through interaction among college peers and instructors; however, less with outside friends. College peers encouraged participant's academic growth, which increased interaction on the campus environment.

Retention and persistence among African American males in higher education is of significant importance to college administrators and policy makers to determine recruitment and

retention strategies on community college level. Implications of this study addresses the theory presented in Chapter 2 Literature review as it relates to academic support and social integration in community colleges interpreted by Tinto's Longitudinal Models (1994; 1995).

Tinto's longitudinal model connected influence of persistence and factors supporting student departure within community colleges. Tinto's model of student retention identified factors that support academic and social integration for persistence among students in higher education in general (Tinto, 1995). After conducting a review of literature, limited studies identified factors influencing student's academic success while attending a two-year college. Chapter 5 focuses on findings from the current study's interview protocol regarding factors influencing student's academic success in relation to Tinto's (1988) retention model, Erikson's psychosocial development theory and Honneth's social theory.

The study participants were six African American community college males interviewed from various academic and social backgrounds. The participants described their own experiences at a community college and reflected on their academic challenges whether inside or outside the college that affected their perspective of higher education. The study's conclusions consisted of data collected from participants' interviews, emerging themes, and compared with the study's Chapter 2 literature.

Summary of the Findings

Academic integration was found more present than social integration in participants within this study. Students used the campus facilities and spent more time in their academic environment than in their home lives. Several of the participants established strong study habits to complete academic tasks and homework assignments. Other participants met with classmates to establish study sessions and class meetings to support one another in concern of each of their

academic performances in class. Some students indicated relationships with instructors to complete assignments and get an understanding of class expectations. There were little interaction and connections with tutorial facilities or use of campus tutors for assistance with academic work. Most of the academic interaction on campus was limited to courses within their program or scheduled classes.

Participants indicated little social integration on the college campus that subsequently led to two of the participants to withdraw prior to their reenrollment at the community college. Most of the participants implied involvement on the college campus lead to positive influence and academic success that supported Tinto's (1988) student retention research. The lack of social integration among several participants could support Bean and Metzger's (1988) model of student departure that emphasizes academic and environmental variables as major factors in student retention. Academic factors identified in this research were study habits, advising, and study sessions. Environmental factors were finances, family responsibilities, employment, and other encouragements by friends or peer influences that appeared periodically within the interviews. Not all academic and environmental factors identified contributed to academic success or persistence in higher education. The participants also revealed support from family members and instructors encouraged them in their academic progress.

Findings from the current research study supported the theory that academic integration is an identifiable factor in student retention in higher education. Interviews of the participants also demonstrated academic and social integration plays a key role in minority students' success in higher education. Because most of the participants came from low-income, single parent backgrounds, they struggled in secondary education, and did not have support or guidance to attend higher education. None of the participants indicated involvement in criminal activities or

harsh survival matters which affected or hindered their decision of attending college. The participants indicated interest to attend college was to increase their financial earnings and advance in employment. Three of the six participants reported being displaced workers after long periods of employment, which they found college as a necessary avenue for employment opportunities and a better way of life.

Four of the six participants chose their program of study at the community college based on their employment interest or prior work experience. These participants sought to advance in a career or obtain employment in electrical engineering to increase their household income and further support their family responsibility. Other participant's decision of their choose program of study was advisement from a college counselor or previous work-related experiences. All participants indicated they did not hesitate to enroll in college specifying the decision to enroll in their program of study was a dream of going to college.

Participants received internal academic support from academic advising and assistance from instructors, counselors, and other students. All participants acknowledged awareness of academic support resources available on campus; however, most all of them indicated not using the resources or tutorial services. All participants stated they felt more comfortable receiving assistance from class peers or known students than obtaining academic support from the campus tutorial resources. However, three of the participants indicated they would utilize the campus tutorial services if needed and all stated they were comfortable with asking for help if they needed.

External factors that affected African American male's academic experiences consisted of family responsibilities, employment, and significant others such as girlfriends (relationships). Several participants' spouses supported their college enrollment, which one participant's wife

was enrolled in the same college. These participants didn't experience academic challenges because of the support already received. Their spouses are aware of college expectations and share the same goals of aspiring for a better future. Several participants indicated relationships with girlfriends were challenging because of pressures to spend time and manage the relationship in addition to work responsibilities and academic issues. One participant describes his relationship as a friendship to stay focused.

Participants reported some challenging life experiences throughout college. Two of the six participants stated their lives experiences affected their ability to persist in college but recognize the importance of college persistence to advance in employment opportunities. All participants reflected on their college commitment stating the importance of obtaining a college degree to improve their current living situation. Several participants noted higher educational opportunities were not offered to them during secondary education and see their current opportunity to obtain a college degree valuable and necessary.

All participants experienced some level of racial disparity while enrolled in college either by an instructor or his perceived notion of their academic capabilities. However, all participants stated it was their inner self-determination, level of self-resilience, and self-confidence to withstand any racial challenges for academic success. There were no indication of harsh racial challenges only perceptions based on the campus environment and programs available for African American male participants were aware of. Any adverse experiences were overcome and dealt with among themselves to stay in college. Only two of the six participants perceived themselves as disconnected from the college because of racial perceptions. Other participants believed racial perceptions are common in society in general. It depends on the individual to deal

with racial perceptions in college and overcome any stereotype that may threaten his college success.

Assumptions

To gain insights of African American males' lived experiences related to educational outcomes and their perceptions of higher education, I directly interacted with the study participants, received all forms directly, and interviewed study participants personally for full understanding of their responses and accuracy. After participant's data information and interview transcriptions were obtained, data findings were compared with the literature review to confirm it reflects with the phenomenon studied.

The researcher ensured accuracy of the theoretical foundation without assumptions by thoroughly examining procedures related to the data methods and data coding. The researcher used various methods to cross-examine the data coding and collection process to identify recurring themes among all participants and increase the ability to conclude the phenomenon studied. The researcher followed the study's procedures of identifying research participants to ensure the study's participants represented the population researched and results would be meaningful.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations associated with this study were the timeframe in the recruitment of study participants. The study occurred in the summer semester term in which the enrollment rate was low. Generally, student attendance in the summer term is limited to summer graduates and non-traditional students. According to Danville Community College's Financial Aid Department (DCC Financial Aid Department, over-the-phone interview) financial aid affects student enrollment because student aid is applied during the Fall and Spring term and depends upon

initial acceptance. Students expected to graduate during the summer term may be eligible for

additional financial aid to complete their program of study. Several of the study participants were

summer graduates, which they expected to complete their program of study at the end of the

summer term. The remaining participants enrolled in summer classes offered by their program of

study.

Three delimitations identified in Chapter 3 were, (a) the location of the study, (b) the

targeted population for the study, and (c) the study sample size. The research study occurred on

one community college, Danville Community College during the summer term. Enrollment

headcount during the summer term normally is fewer than Fall and Spring term because students

persists in college during Fall and Spring terms (Danville Community College, Fact Book,

2010). Often students may enroll during the summer term to complete graduation requirements.

The low enrollment count limits recruitment efforts, particularly when targeting African

American males. According to Danville Community College's Fact Book (2010), there is a small

percentage of African American male enrollments, which was a basis for using a small sample

size in this study. Therefore, participants' perceptions and responses may not be transferable to

larger studies.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study exposed themes related to existing research studies regarding

academic development, academic progress, and academic persistence in higher education.

According to Caldwell and Siwatu (2003), academic persistence among African American

students are challenged and continuous marked as a conflict indicator for performance.

Motivation, teacher support, and peer relations were recurring themes for academic development

and academic persistence in higher education. Participants in this study stated peer and teacher

influence helped him progress in his academic studies. Positive responses from teachers influenced their social environment and encouraged persistence in higher education.

Honneth's social theory explains well-established, ethical relations within a social environment enhance personal development and self-identity (Stojanov, 2009). Individuals experiencing non-conflict and engaging environments can adapt within social environment and experience interaction. Participants within this study states peer relations and relationships established with their teachers helped them succeed academically. The current phenomenological study can help higher educational institutions identify factors that encourage academic achievement among African American males in higher education and further develop practices that supports academic achievement among African American males in community colleges.

Significance of the Study to Leadership

Perceptions of African Americans males play an integral role in determining their educational success. This current phenomenological study found the manner that African American males are perceived affects his learning process and motivation to succeed in higher education. Warde (2008) emphasized that parents valuing education and instilling the importance of educational achievement as do other racial groups help their child develop strategies to overcome negative stereotypes.

As Erikson's psychosocial theory posits, a person's developmental stages begins at birth (Wagner, 1993). If they are not reared with self-identity or develop social identity within key stages of their lives, the ability to adapt in a social environment is lost. They may not have a sense of purpose or become inactive in a communal environment. Some participants within this study indicated lack of parental support or guidance within secondary education. Learning and teaching during important years was underdeveloped; however, participants in this study found

ways to adapt in higher education through self-determination, resilience, and establishing their own level of self-worth.

The current study also found teachers helped inspire academic success among African American males and played a key role in his academic development. Although Dee (2006) theorized minority students become academically successful using teachers of their own race, the current study reflects how the overall teacher perception can affect African American male students if their influence is encouraging. Participants within this current study expressed involvement from instructors contributed to his academic success because it showed instructors cared. Instructor's encouragement also increased involvement in class and interaction among class peers.

Media outlets can also affect African American male students in higher education. Participants in this study discussed how the media negatively portrays African American males, which creates bias stereotyping. The negative image cause by the media affects social and academic support from teachers or higher education in general. Masten (1994) discussed resilience research and how protective factors help students adapt to their environment despite adversity. Participants within this research study found ways to adapt in challenges, whether academic or financial, throughout their enrollment to succeed in their coursework. Several participants emphasized social support and self-determination and engagement with teachers were perceived as meaningful to receive better grades and overall have a better academic outcome

My Reflections

As an African American female working in higher education for 11 years and pursuing a doctorate in education, I can only witness academic challenges in higher education. My

perception derives from personal observations and not from African American males perspectives. Although I am from the same culture and live in the same community, it is frustrating to see more African American males on the street corners and prison cells and not succeeding in higher education. It was intriguing to learn from the perspectives of those currently enrolled in college reasons of their interest in higher education and discover why they pursued college.

Statistical data continues to reflect increase gaps among African American males in education in comparison to other minority groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). It is disheartening hearing negative comments about African American males in the media. It interprets negative social views about African American males. Although the United States is in first four years of having an African American male national President, there continues to be an educational gap in higher education among African American males in general.

After interviewing the six African American men attending community college to learn of their perceptions of higher education and factors that led to their academic success; however, wonder if perspectives are similar altogether. This study is among few that seek answers to closing the achievement gap among the minority population within a two-year college. Perhaps viewpoints from other community colleges may differ depending on communities and resources that may be available to help nurture African American male's academic progress.

Finally, hearing directly from African American males about his educational experiences was an overall learning experience. Talking directly with them and hearing of their own personal experiences in higher education helps me understand what they are experiencing to succeed in college. Their voice and opinion matters when developing effective services that would help increase their academic performance and involvement on campus. This current

phenomenological study reflects the voice of several African American male participants as they shared stories of higher educational experiences. I feel honored to have met the participants and hope their story is shared in institutions of higher learning creating avenues for a successful academic experience among all African American males.

Conclusion

Danville Community College reported 58% of its student enrollment in 2010 -2011 was White and 40% were African American. Out of the 40% African American students enrolled, 14% were African American males (Danville Community College Fact-book, 2010). In general, studies show low enrollment in two-year institutions among African American males. Few studies focused on African American male's academic achievement in community colleges and their perceptions of their college experiences.

Throughout Virginia Community College system, African American males are among the lowest percentage enrolled and graduating with associate degrees (Virginia Community College, n. d.). Despite the low enrollment rate among African American males in two-year programs, research studies continue to examine the effects of community college education to determine if the enrollment gap involves academic or social variables (Tinto, 1994; 1995).

After exploring the lived experiences of an African American male community of college students, findings from the current study suggests faculty interaction, peer interaction, and familial support are leading attributes that influence African American male community college students. Outside influences that impinged on African American male community college students concludes as attitudes of others, such as personal relationships and being underprepared in secondary education. Last, African American male students at Danville Community College viewed academic success based on student achievement predictors such as the honors, dean, and

president's list. This type of indicator motivated participants' achievement levels and attitudes toward their own academic performances.

Recommendations for Future Research

Continued research studies on African American community college males help understand factors that influence academic success as well as analyze outside influences that impinge on his view of higher education. This study sought to identify factors that led to academic success in higher education among African American males in hopes to increase college retention, persistence, and establish programs that would target recruitment effort of African American males. The lack of programs targeting African American males in the community college setting linked as an area for improvement and diversifying instructors in male-driven programs would attribute to their academic success and ability to connect with the campus environment. Some of the participants mentioned their instructors cannot relate to their personal needs or do not know how to address their feelings to motivate academic success within the college environment.

Closing Comments

The current qualitative phenomenological study examined personal experiences of African American males in a community college. The participants provided a voice concerning challenges and academic success that may have consist of self-determination, resilience, motivation, and encouragement. Themes emerged from their interviews that may help higher institutions understand their personal experiences and academic challenges to assist them socially, academically, and culturally. The current research study also exposed supportive mechanism that may help this racial group succeed in higher education.

Adaptation within the college environment academic success was not considered a challenge than adapting to the classroom and curriculum. Participants sought academic assistance when needed and could transition into college with self-confidence despite the uncertainty of their learning capabilities. The relationship between the study participants and college campus environment centered their overall perception of how the college viewed them as an individual. Some participants acknowledged engagement in the college campus while others utilized the facilities to complete their academic assignments. Overall, all participants were supportive of the college and saw the college as an advancement opportunity for other African American males.

References

(3/24/2008). Bay state Students Heading to campus unprepared for college work, report says. *Community College Week*. Vol. 20, Issue 15, p4-4, 1/4p.

Abraham, A.A. & Creech, J.D. (2000). Reducing remedial education: What progress are states making? *Educational benchmarks 2000 series*. (ED445588). 19pp.

ACT, Inc. (2010). What works in student retention? Fourth national survey. Four-Year colleges and universities with twenty percent or more black students enrolled. *ACT, Inc*. pp26. (ED515409).

ACT, Inc. (2010). What works in student retention? Fourth national survey. Community colleges with twenty percent or more black students enrolled. *ACT, Inc*. pp26. (ED515407).

Alfassi, M. (2003). Promoting the will and skill of students at academic risk: An evaluation of an instructional design geared to foster achievement, self-efficacy and motivation. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, Vol 30(1).* pp. 28-40.

American Council on Education [ACE] (2005). New report shows parental encouragement to be key factor in college enrollment. April 28, 2005. Washington, DC.

American Political Science Association. (2006). Social Mobilization and Political Development. online article In Karl W. Deutsch, *American Political Science Review*, 1961, Vol. 100/Issue 04, pp678-679, 1p. DOI: 1017/S0003055406312567, Retrieved from http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?decade=2000&jid=PSR&volumeID=10

Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. (2006). *Introduction to research in education*. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth. ISBN: 978-0-534-55537-5.

Ascher, C. (1995). *School programs for African American Males.* New York, NY: Eric Clearing House on Urban Education.

Ashburn, E. (Nov. 2010). Gates's millions: Can big bucks turn students into graduates?.
Education Digest: Essential Readings condensed for Quick Review, v76 n3, p4-9.

Ashburn, E. (2007 April 27). Two-year college leaders discuss achievement gaps and
accountability. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(34), A46.

Ashworth, P. (November/December 1999). 'Bracketing' in phenomenology: renouncing
assumptions in heating about student cheating. *International Journal of Qualitative
Studies in Education (QSE),* Vol. 12, Issue 6, p707, 15p/ (AN 2623888).

Astin, A.W. (1999). Student Involvement: A development theory of higher education. Journal of
College Student Development, 40(5), 518-529.

Astin, A.W. (1985). *Achieving academic excellence*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A.W. (1977, 1985). *Theory of Involvement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A.W. (1977). *Four critical years*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Auerbach, C.F. & Silverstein, L.B. (2003). Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and
analysis. *Psychology*, ix, 202 p., 24cm. New York: New York University Press. ISBN:
0814706940.

Austin, A., & Economic Policy, I. (2010). Graduate employment gap: Students of color losing
ground. EPI Briefing Paper #282. *Economic Policy Institute*.

Bailey, T., Calcagno, J. C., Jenkins, D., Kienzl, G. & Leinbach, T. (February 2005). The effects
of institutional factors on the success of community college students. Columbia
University, NY: Community College Research Center, Number 24. ISSN 1526-2049.

Bailey, J.A. (2004). A classification of Black-American self-esteem. *Journal of the National
Medication Association,* 96(2), 24-28.

Baker, M.J. (Summer 2007).Cross-Cultural mentoring in institutional contexts. *Negro Educational Review*, v58, n 1-2, p85-103. (EJ777567).

Basemen, J.K. (1989). Afro-American students and academic achievement. Black students. *Psychological Issues and Achievement*. San Diego, CA: Crowing Press.

Battle, S. F. (2002). African American males at a crossroad. *Journal of Health & Social Policy*, 15(2), 81-91.

Baumeister, R.F., Campbell, J.D., Krieger, J.L., & Vows, K.D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *American Psychological Society*, 4(1), 2-6.

Bean, J., & Eaton, S.B. (2002). The psychology underlying successful retention practices. *Journal of College Student Retention,* 3(1), 73-89.

Bean, J., & Eaton, S.B. (2000). A psychological model of college student retention. In M. Braxton (Ed). *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 48-61). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Bean, J.P. & Metzner, B.S. (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional student attrition. *Review of Educational Research*, 55, 485-540.

Bedny, G., & Karwowski, W. (2004). Activity theory as a basis for the study of work. *Ergonomics*, 47(2), 134-153.

Bell, E.E. (2010). *Educating African American males*. Online Submission. (ED514552). 22pp.

Bembenutty, H. (March 2011). Meaningful and maladaptive homework practices: The role of self-efficacy and self-regulation. (Report). *Journal of Advanced Academics*. Online Magazine, Retrieved from http://business.highbeam.com/435253/article-1G1-257676978/meaningful-and-maladaptive-homework-practices-role

Bettinger, Eric. (2004). Is the finish line in sight? Financial aid's impact on retention and graduation. In Hoxby, C. (Ed.), *College Choices: The Economics of Which College, When College, and How to Pay For It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boddington, E. (3 July 2009). Cognitive process of development in children. Online Submission. Ipswich, MA.

Booker, K.C. (2006 April/May). School belonging and the African American adolescent: What do we know the where should we go?. *The High School Journal*, pp. 1-7. The University of North Carolina Press.

Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In defense of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(1), pp. 59-74.

Brieschke, P. (1997). Race (inter)views: From the classroom to public discourse. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(1), 85-99, 14pp.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brown, C. (2006). The impact of campus activities on African American college men. In M.J. Cuyjet (Ed.). *African American men in college* (pp. 47-67). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, C., Barner, J., Bohman, T. & Richards, K. (2009). A multivariate test of an expanded Andersen health care utilization model for complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use in African Americans. *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine*, Vol. 15 Issue 8, p911-919, 9p.

Burks, S.A. & Barrett, T.G. (2009). Student characteristics and activity choices of college freshmen and their intent to persist in religiously affiliated institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, Vol. 8, Issue 5, p351-392, 42p.

Burnett, S. (2008 June 16). Moving up. Colleges seeing the biggest increases in associate degree production share their secrets. *Community College Week*. Fairfax, VA: Autumn Publishing Enterprises, Inc. ISSN 1041-5726. Retrieved from http://www.ccweek.com/

Cabrera, A. F., Nora, A., & Castañeda, M. B. (1993). College persistence: Structural equations modeling test of an integrated model of student retention. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 64(2), 123-139.

Cabrera, A.F., Nora, A., Terenzini, P.T., Pascarella, E., & Hagedorn, L.S. (1999). Campus racial climate and the adjustment of students to college: A comparison between white students and African American students. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 70(2), 134-160.

Cabrera, A. F., Stampen, J. O. & Hansen, W. L. (1990). Exploring the effects of ability to pay on persistence in college. *The Review of Higher Education*, 13(3), 303-36.

Calcagno, J.C., Jenkins, D., Leinbach, T., & Kienzl, G. (August 2006). Is student-right-to-know all you should know? An analysis of community college graduation rates. *Research in Higher Education*, Vol. 47, No. 5, DOI: 10.1007/s11162-005-9005-0.

Calder, A., & Ashbaugh, E.L. (2005). Transfer of learning through gender and ethnicity. *AIP Conference Proceedings*, Vol. 790, Issue 1, p39-41, 3p.

Caldwell, L., & Siwatu, K. (2003). Promoting academic persistence in African American and Latino high school students. The Educational Navigation Skills Seminar. *High School Journal*, 87(1), 30-38.

California Department of Education. (2011). Dataquest, Data & Statistics Reports. Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/.

Carson, L.R. (September 2009). "I am because we are:" Collectivism as a foundational characteristics of African American college student identity and academic achievement.

Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, v12 n3 p327-344.
(EJ853456).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Data & Statistics Reports. Retrieved from
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/other.htm.

Choy, S. P. (2002). *Access & persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on
students*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Clemetson, L. (1999 June 7). Trying to close the achievement gap. *Newsweek*, Vol. 133 (23), p.
36. Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com.

Cohen, J. (1997). Poverty: Talk, identity, and action. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(1), pp71-92, 21pp.

Cohen, A. & Brawer, F. (2003). *The American community college*, 4th Ed. San Francisco, CA:
Jossey-Bass.

College Board (2006a). *Trends in college pricing*. New York: Sandy Baum and Kathleen Payea.

College Board (2006b) *Trends in Student Aid*. New York: Sandy Baum and Kathleen Payea.

CollegeBoard. (1999). *Reaching the top: A report of the national task force on minority high
achievement*. New York: Author. (ED 435 765).

Crabtree B.F. & Miller, W.L. (n.d.). *Doing qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA:
Sage.

Credle, J. O., & Dean, G. J. (1991). A Comprehensive Model for Enhancing Black Student
Retention in Higher Education. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*,
19(4), 158-165.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:
Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research designs: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross, W.E., Jr. (1995). *The psychology of nigrescence: Revising the Cross model*. In J.G. Ponterotto, J.M. Casas, L.A. Suzuki, & C.M. Alexander (Eds). *Handbook of multicultural counseling*. (pp. 93-122). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross, W.E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of black: Diversity in African American identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cross, W.E., Jr. (1978). *The Thomas and Cross models of psychological nigrescence: A review*. Journal of Black Psychology, 5, 13-31.

Cross, W.E., Jr. (1971). The Negro-to-Black conversion experience. *Black World*, 20(9), 13-27.

Cross, W.E. Jr. & Vandiver, B.J. (2001). *Nigrescence theory and measurement: Introducing the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS)*. In J.G. Ponterotto, J.M. Casas, L.A. Suzuki, & C.M. Alexander (Eds.). *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 93-122). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cunia, E. (2005). Behavioral learning theory. *Institute for Learning: Principles of Instruction and Learning*. Online Access, Retrieved from, http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/ifl/index.php/resources/principles_of_learning.

Cuyjet, M.J. (2006). African American men in college. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cuyjet, M.J. (1997). African American men on college campuses: Their needs and their perceptions. *New Directions for Student Services*, (80), 5-16.

Cuyjet, M.J. (1997). Helping African American men succeed in college. *New Directions for Student Services*, No. 80. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Czaja R., & Blair, J. (2005). *Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.

D'Andrea, M. (1995). Addressing the Developmental Needs of Urban, African American Youth: A Preventive Intervention. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 23(1), 57-64.

Daire, A. P., LaMothe, S., & Fuller, D. P. (2007). Differences between Black/African American and White college students regarding influences on high school completion, college Attendance, and career choice. *Career Development Quarterly*, 55(3), 275-279.

Danville Community College webpage. Retrieved from, www.dcc.vccs.edu.

Davis, D.J. (Fall/Winter 2007). Access to academe: The importance of mentoring to black students. *Negro Educational Review*. Vol. 58, Issue ¾, p217-231.

Davis, J.E. (1994). College in black and white. Campus environment and academic achievement of African American males. *Journal of Negro Education*, 63 (4), 620-633.

Davis, R.D. (2004). *Black students' perceptions: The complexity of persistence to graduation at an American university*. New York: Peter Lang.

Deci, E.L., & Ryan., R.M. (1991). A motional approach to self. *Perspectives on Motivation*, 38, 237-288.

Dee, T.S. (2006). Teachers, race, and student achievement in a randomized experiment. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86(1), 195-210.

Delgado, R. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.

Denbo, S.J., & Beaulieu, L.M. (2002). *Improving schools for African American students.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

DesJardins, S.L., Ahlburg, D.A., McCall, B.P. (2002). Simulating the longitudinal effects of changes in financial aid on student departure from college. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 37 (3), 653-679.

DeSousa, D.J. (2001). Reexamining the educational pipeline for African American students. In L. Jones (Ed.). *Retaining African Americans in higher education: Challenging paradigms for retaining students, faculty and administrators*, (pp. 21-44). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B.F. (2006 March 28). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40: 314-321. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x.

Digest of Education Statistics. (2005). Postsecondary education. Retrieved July 2011 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_206.asp.

Donnor, J. K., & Shockley, K. G. (2010). Leaving us behind: A political economic interpretation of NCLB and the miseducation of African American males. *Educational Foundations*, 24(3/4), 43-54.

Dotterer, A. M., McHale, S. M., & Crouter, A. C. (2009). Sociocultural factors and school engagement among African American youth: The roles of racial discrimination, racial socialization, and ethnic identity. *Applied Developmental Science*, 13(2), 61-73.

Dougherty, K.J. (1994). *Contradictory college: The conflicting origins, impacts, and futures of the community college*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Dynarski, S. (2000). Hope for whom? Financial aid for the middle class and its impact on college attendance. *National Tax Journal*, 53(3), 629–661.

Edman, J.L., & Brazil, B. (September 2009). Perceptions of campus climate, academic efficacy and academic success among community college students: An ethnic comparison. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal*, v12, n3, p371-383. New York, NY: Springer. ISSN-1381-2890.

Edwards, A. (2005). Let's get beyond community and practice: the many meanings of learning by participating. *Curriculum Journal*, 16(1), 49-65.

Elmaci, F. (2006). The role of social support on depression and adjustment levels of adolescents having broken and unbroken families. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 6(2), 421-431.

Enger, J.M. (1993). At-risk adolescent Black males: Findings for internal/external locus of control, self-esteem and parental verbal interaction. Paper presented at the meeting of the South MidSouth. *Educational Research Association*, New Orleans, LA.

England, D.C. (1994). *Evaluation of developmental programs*. (ED377915). 82pp.

Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., and A. Buchner. (May 2007). G*power 3: a flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39(2): 175-91. Retrieved from, http://www.psycho.uni-duesseldorf.de/aap/projects/gpower/how_to_use_gpower.html

Finkelstein, N., & Fong, A. (January 2008). Course-taking patterns and preparation for postsecondary education in California's public university systems among minority youth. *Issues & Answers*. West Regional Education Labatory at WestEd. Rel 2008, No. 035. 415.615.3171. Retrieved from,

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2008035.pdf

Fisher, C.T. (July 2009). Bracketing in qualitative research: Conceptual and practical matters. *Psychotherapy Research*, Vol. 19, Issue 4/5, p583-590, 8p. DOI 10.1080/10503300902798375.

Fordham, S. (1992). Cultural inversion and black children's school performance. *American Anthropological Association*, Washington, DC.

Fortier, M.S., Vallerand, R.J. & Guay, F. (1995) Academic motivation and school performance: Toward a structural model. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 20, 257-274.

Foster, K.M. (2004 December). Coming to terms: a discussion of John Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory of minority academic achievement. *Intercultural Education*, Vol. 15 (4). pp. 369-384.

Frankel, R.M. & Devers, K.J. (2000a). Qualitative research: a consumer's guide. *Education for Health*, 13, 113-123.

Frankel, R.M. & Devers, K.J. (2000b). Study design in qualitative research-1: developing research questions and assessing research needs. *Education for Health*, 13, 251-261.

Fry, R. (2003). *Hispanic youth dropping out of U.S. schools: Measuring the challenge*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

Fry, R. & Lowell, B. L. (2002). *Work or study: Different fortunes of U.S. Latino generations*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. (ED 465 849).

Gall, J.P., Gall, M.D. & Borg, W.R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction*. 7th ed. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gall, M.D., Borg, W.R., & Gall, J.P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gardenshire-Crooks, A., Collado, H., & Martin, K. (2010). *Terms of engagement: Men of color discuss their experiences in community college*. (ED508982). MDRC. 95pp.

Gay, L. R. (1996). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application*. Upper Saddle River, NJ:

Gayles, J. (Summer 2006). Carrying it for the whole race: Achievement, race and meaning among five high achieving African American men. *Journal of African American Studies*, Vol 10(1), pp.19-32.

Genitty-Gentle, C. (2009). Best practice program for low-income African American students transitioning from middle to high school. *Children & Schools. National Association of Social Workers*. pp. 109-117.

Gertner, J. (2006). Forgive us our student debts. *The New York Times*. June 11, 2006. Accessed from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/11/magazine/11loans.html?pagewanted=4&fta=y

Goetz, J.P. & LeCompet, M.D. (1984). *Ethnology and qualitative design in educational research*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Health.

Goldrick-Rab & Shaw (2005). Racial and ethnic differences in the impact of work-first policies on college access. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 27(4), 291-307.

Gordon, K. A., (1995). The self-concept and motivational patterns of resilient African American high school students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 21, 239-255.

Gray, M.J., Ondaatje, E.H., & Zakaras, L. (1999). *Combining service and learning in higher education: Summary Report*. Santa Monica CA: Rand Education.

Greene, T.G., Marti, C.N., & McClenney, K. (Sept-Oct 2008). The effort-outcome gap: Differences for African American and Hispanic community college students in student engagement and academic achievement. *Journal of Higher Education*, v79, n5, p513-539.

Griffin, C.M. (2010). *Retention and graduation of Hispanics in American community colleges*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 232 pages. Retrieved from ProQuest database. (AAT 3413932).

Harper, S.R. & Carini, R.M., Bridges, B.K., and Hayek, J.C. (2004). Gender differences in student engagement among African American undergraduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(3), 271-282.

Harper, S.R. & Quaye, S.J. (2007). Student organizations as venues for Black identity expression and development among African American male student leaders. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(2), 127-144.

Harris III, F., Palmer, R.T., & Struve, L.E. (Winter 2011). "Cool Posing" on campus: A qualitative study masculinities and gender expression among black men at a private research institution. *Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 80, Issue 1, p47-62, 16p.

Hastings, J. (1999). *Applying theory to practice: Incorporating principles of student development to quality student services in California Community Colleges*.

Henfield, M.S., Moore III, J.L., & Wood, C. (Summer 2008). Inside and outside gifted education programming: Hidden challenges for African American students. *Exceptional Children*. Vol. 74, Issue 4, p433-450, 18p.

Hennessy, S., Deaney, R., & Ruthven, K. (2005). Emerging teacher strategies for mediating
'Technology-integrated Instructional Conversations': a socio-cultural perspective.
Curriculum Journal, *16*(3), 265-292.

Herndon, M.k., & Hirt, J.B. (March 2004). Black students and their families: What leads to
success in college. *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp.489-513. Retrieved from
www.cccco.edu/systemsOffice/Divisions/TechResearchInfo/ResearchandPlanning/Abstra
ctsof Research/tabid/298/Default.aspx.

Heyns, B., & Hilton, T. (1982). The cognitive tests for high school and beyond: An assessment.
Sociology of Education, 55(2/3), 89-102.

Hiles, D.R. (1999). *Paradigms lost-Paradigms regained*. Paper presented to 18th International
Human Science Conference, July 26-29, Sheffield, UK. Retrieved October 2011, from
http://psy.dmu.ac.uk/drhiles/papers.htm.

Hiles, D.R. (2002). *Narrative and heuristic approaches to transpersonal research and practice*.
Paper presented to the Centre for Counseling and Psychotherapy Education, London,
England. Retrieved October 2011, from http://psy.dmu.ac.uk/drhiles/papers.htm.

Holt, K.C. (n.d.). A rationale for creating African American immersion schools. *Educational
Leadership*.

Hossler, D., Hu, S., & Schmit, J. (1999). Predicting student sensitivity to tuition and financial
aid. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 29(1): 17–31.

Hrabowski, F.A. III, Maton, K.I., & Greif, G.L. (1998). *Beating the odds: Raising academically
successful African American males*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hughes, R.L. (Spring 2010). Engaging African American males for educational success. *Gifted
Child Today*, v33 (n2), p55-60.

Hull, G. (1997). Research with words: Qualitative inquiry." *Focus on Basics*, 1(A). Boston, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. (ED 415 385). Retrieved from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fob/1997/hull.htm.

Husserl, E. (1970). The idea of phenomenology. *The Hague*. The Netherlands: Nijhoff.

Hurtado, S., Laird, T., Perorazio, T. (2003). The transition to college for low-income students: The impact of the Gates Millennium Scholars program. *Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education*, University of Michigan.

Hurtado, S., Saenz, V.B., Dar, L. (2006). *Low-income students of color in higher education and the Gates Millennium Scholars*. Report for Gates Foundation.

Janes, S. (1997). *Experiences of African American baccalaureate nursing students examined through the lenses of Tinto's student retention theory and Astin's student involvement theory ASHE annual meeting paper*. (ED415817). 28 pp.

Jones, D.R. (August 2007). The urban agenda. *New York Amsterdam News*, Vol. 98, Issue 33, p5-5, 1/3p.

Jorgensen, S., Ferraro, V., Fichten, C., Havel, A. (June 2009). *Predicting college retention and dropout: Sex and disability*. Online Submission. ED505873.

Kane, T. J. (1999). *The Price of Admission: Rethinking How Americans Pay for College*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Kingsbury, A. (2007 November 19). More proof that mentors matter. U.*S. News & World Report*, Vol. 143, Issue 18, p59-59, 1p.

Knapp, L.G., Kelly-Reid, J.E., & Whitmore, R.W. (2006). *Enrollment in postsecondary institutions, fall 2004; graduation rates, 1998 and 2001 cohorts; and financial statistics,*

fiscal year 2004. (No. 2006-155)**.** Washington, DC: National Center for Education

Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Knesting, K. & Waldron, N. (2006). Willing to play the game: How at-risk students persist in

school. *Psychology in the Schools*, Vol. 43(5). pp. 599-611.

Konecki, K. T. (2008). Triangulation and dealing with the realness of qualitative research.

Qualitative Sociology Review, Vol IV Issue 3. Retrieved October 2011 from

http://www.qualitativesociologyreview. Org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

Lau, K.L. (2009). Grade differences in reading motivation among Hong Kong primary and

secondary students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 79(4), 713-733(21).

Lee, J. (2010). Tripartite growth trajectories of reading and math achievement. Tracking national

academic progress at primary, middle and high school levels. *American Educational

Research Journal*, 47(4), 800-832.

Leedy, P.D. (1997). *Practical research. Planning and design*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ:

Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Leslie, L., & Brinkman, P. (1987). Student price response in higher education. *Journal of Higher

Education*, 58, 181–204.

Lester, S. (1999). Introduction to phenomenological research. *Stan Lester Developments*. Online

Article, Retrieved from, http://www.devmts.demon.co.uk/resmethy.htm.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1986). *But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in

naturalistic evaluation*. In D.D. Williams (Ed.), *Naturalistic evaluation* (pp. 73 – 74). San

Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Livingston, J. N., & Nahimana, C. (2006). Problem Child or Problem Context: An Ecological Approach to Young Black Males. *Reclaiming Children & Youth*, 14(4), 209-214. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Long, B.T. (2008). *What is known about the impact of financial aid? Implications for Policy*. National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR) Working Paper.

The Lumina Foundation. (n.d.). *Achieving the dream: Community college count*. Retrieved August 2011, from http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/Jan2005/AtD.html.

Maddox, R.S., & Solorzano, D.G. (2002). Using critical race theory, Paulo Freire's problem-posing method, and case study research to confront race and racism in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), p66-84, 18pp.

Maduekwe, A., & Adeosun, O. (2010). Parental involvement in children's literacy development in Nigeria: Empirical findings and improvement strategies. *US-China Foreign Language*, 8(4), 29-38.

Martin, A.J. (2004 December). *Sc*hool motivation of boys and girls: Differences of degree, differences of kind, or both? *Australian Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 56(3). pp. 133-136.

Martin, D., Martin, M., Gibson, S., & Wilkins, J. (2007). Increasing prosocial behavior and academic achievement among adolescent African American males. *Adolescence*. 42(168), 689-698.

Martinez, R.O., & Dukes, R.L. (1997). The effects of ethnic identity, ethnicity, and gender on adolescent well-being. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 26, 503-516.

Marts, E.J., Eun-Kyoung, O.L., McRoy, R., & McCroske, J. (Mar/Apr. 2008). Point of engagement: Reducing disproportionality and improving child and family outcomes. *Child Welfare*, Vol. 87, Issue 2, p335-358, 24p.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2007). *Report of the task force on the education of Maryland's African American males.* (ED509088). 65pp.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2006). *Task force on the education of Maryland's African American males*. (ED496696). 73pp.

Maryland State Higher Education Commission, Annapolis (1996). A *study of remedial education at Maryland public campuses*. (ED404971). 61pp.

Massachusets Department of Education and Board of Higher Education. (June 2008). Ready for 21st century success. The New Promise of Public Education. *The Patrick Administration Education Action Agenda*. Online access. http://www.mass.gov/portal/jobs-education/higher-education/.

Masten, A. S. (1994). *Resilience in individual development: Successful adaptation despite risk and adversity*. In Wang, M. C. and Gordon, G. W. (Eds.) *Educational resilience in inner-city America*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

McCarter, S. (2009). Legal and extralegal factors affecting minority overrepresentation in Virginia's Juvenile Justice System: A mixed-method study. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 26(6), 533-544.

McKinney, L. (2010). Assessment: Laying the foundation for effective evaluation of a community college retention program. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34(4), pp299-317.

McMillian, M. (2003). Is no child left behind 'wise schooling' for African American male students?. *High School Journal*, 87(2), 25-33.

Merriam, S.B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merrill.Hausmann, L., Schofield, J., & Woods, R. (2007). Sense of belonging as a predictor of intentions to persist among African American and White first-year college students. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(7), 803-839.

Meyer, K.A., Bruwelheide, J., & Poulin, R. (October 2009). Why they stayed: Near-perfect retention in an online certification program in library media. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, v13 n3, p129-145.

Midgette, T. E., & Glenn, E. (1993). Africa-American Male Academies: A Positive View. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 21(2), 69-78.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1984). Qua*litative data analysis: A source book of new methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. (1990). *In-depth interviewing: Researching people*. Hong Kong: Longman Cheshire Pty Limited.

Mitchell, D.E., Wirt, F.M., Marshall, C., & United States. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (1986) *Alternative state policy mechanism for pursing educational quality, equity, efficiency, and choice goals*. Microform: Final Report/Douglas E. Mitchell, Frederick M. Wirt, Catherine Marshall, Office of Educational Research and Improvement: Washington, DC.

Misco, T. (2007). The frustrations of reader generalizability and grounded theory: Alternative considerations for transferability. *Journal of Research Practice*, 3(1), Article M10.

Mistry, R. S., Vandewater, E. A., Huston, A. C., & McLoyd, V. C. (2002). Economic Well-Being and Children's Social Adjustment: The Role of Family Process in an Ethnically Diverse Low-Income Sample. *Child Development*, 73(3), 935.

Moore, J. L. III, Flowers, L.A., Guion, L.A., Zhang,Y., & Staten, D.L. (2004). Improving the experiences of non-persistent African American males in engineering programs: Implications for success. *National Association of Student Affairs Professionals Journal*, 7, 105-120.

Moore, K.A., Guzman, L., Hair, E., Lippman, L., & Garrett, S. (2004). *Parent-teen relationships and interactions: Far more positive than not.* (Research Brief, Publication No. 2004-25). Washington, DC.

Morgan, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Oxford: Routledge.

Mosby, D., Esters, L., Robinson, M., Beckles, W. (2006). *The Sankofa Initiative Promoting student success for African American males in community college: A preliminary discussion*. Retrieved October 2011from http://www.morgan.edu/Sankofa/index.asp.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007) Snyder, T.D., Dillow, S.A., and Hoffman, C.M. (2007). *Digest of Education Statistics 2006* (NCES 2007-017). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Beginning postsecondary student longitudinal study*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *The conduction of education. Contexts of postsecondary education. Characteristics of postsecondary students*. U.S. Department of

Education. Retrieved September 2011from

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2003/section3/indicator19.asp.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *Fall enrollment survey, 2000-2001 and completion survey, 1999-2000. Digest of education statistics, 2001, based on integrated postsecondary education data system*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *Student background and institutional differences in reasons for early departure, 1996–98*. Postsecondary Education Descriptive Analysis Reports. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. NCES 2003–153.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *Dropout rates in the United States: 2000* (NCES 2002-114). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ED 460 174).

National Center for Education Statistics. (1996). *Beginning postsecondary student longitudinal study*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Nevada Department of Education. Instruction, Research, and Evaluation Services. Online Access. Retrieved from, http://www.doe.nv.gov/

Newman, B.M., Myers, M.C., Newman, P.R., Lohman, B.J., & Smith, V.L. (Spring 2000). The transition to high school for academically promising, urban, low-income African American youth. *Adolescence*, Vol 35(137). San Diego, CA: Libra Publishers, Inc.

Noguera, P. A. (2009). *The Achievement Gap: Public Education in Crisis*. New Labor Forum (Murphy Institute), 18(2), 60-69.

Noguera, P.A. & Akom, A. (Summer 2000). The opportunity gap. *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol 24(3), p.86-87, 2p.

Nora, A., & Alberto, C. (1996). The role of perceptions of prejudice and discrimination on the adjustment of minority students to college. *Journal of Higher Education*, 67(2), 119-148.

Nora, A., & Rendon, L.I. (1998). *Quantitative outcomes of student progress*. Report prepared for the Ford Foundation. New York: Ford Foundation.

Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste: the American system in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: Academic Press.

Ogbu, J. (1982). Cultural discontinuities and schooling. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 13(4), 290–307.

Ogbu, J. (1983). Minority status and schooling in plural societies. *Comparative Education Review*, 27(2), 168–190.

Ogbu, J. (1983). Schooling in the inner city. *Society*, 21(1), 75–79.

Ogbu, J. (1985) Cultural-ecological influences on minority education. *Language Arts*, 62(8), 860–869.

Ogbu, J. (1990). Literacy and schooling in subordinate cultures: the case of black Americans. In K. Lomotry (Ed.) *Going to school: the African American experience*. Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, pp. 113–131.

Ogbu, J. (1990) Minority education in comparative perspective. *Journal of Negro Education*, 59(1), 45–57.

Ogbu, J. (1990) Minority status and literacy in comparative perspective, *Daedalus*, 11(2), 141–168.

Ogbu, J. (1990). Understanding cultural diversity: summary comments. *Education and Urban Society*, 22(4), 425–429.

Ogbu, J. (1991). Minority coping responses and school experience. *Journal of Psychohistory*, 18(4), 433–456.

Ogbu, J. (1992). Adaptation to minority status and impact on school success. *Theory into Practice*, 31(4), 287–295.

Ogbu, J. (1992). Understanding cultural diversity and learning. *Educational Researcher,* 21(8), 5–14.

Ogbu, J. (1992). Understanding cultural differences and school learning. *Education Researcher*, 16(4), 7–11.

Ogbu, J. (1995) Cultural problems in minority education: their interpretations and consequences: Part One: theoretical background. *The Urban Review*, 27(3), 189–205.

Ogbu, J. (1995) Cultural problems in minority education: their interpretations and Consequences: Part two: case studies. *The Urban Review*, 27(4), 271–297.

Ogbu, J. (1999). Beyond language: ebonics, proper English, and identity in a Black-American speech community. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(2), 147–184.

Ogbu, J. (2002) Cultural amplifiers of intelligence: IQ and minority status in cross-cultural perspective. In J. Fisk (Ed.) *Race and intelligence separating science from myth*. Mahwah: NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ogbu, J. (2003). *Black students in an affluent suburb: a study of academic disengagement* Mahwah: NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ogletree, C. (2004). All too deliberate. In J. Anderson & D.N. Byrne (Eds.). *The unfinished agenda of Brown V. Board of Education*, (pp45-60). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Owens, D., Lacey, K., Rawls, G., & Holbert- Quince, J. (2010). First-Generation African American Male College Students: Implications for Career Counselors. *Career Development Quarterly*, 58(4), 291-300.

Pascarelli, E.T. & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. 2nd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, L. McEwen, M., Rendon, L., Howard-Hamilton, M. (2007, January 1). Critical race perspectives on theory in student affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*. ERIC, Ipswich, MA.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3rd ed). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Perrakis, A. (2008). Factors promoting academic success among African American and White male community college students. *Gendered Perspectives on Community College*, 142, 15-23.

Perry, J. (2004). *Perspective: Wearing skips*. New York Amsterdam News, 95(23), 13.

Peterson-Lewis, S., & Bratton, L. M. (2004). Perceptions of "Acting Black" Among African American Teens: Implications of Racial Dramaturgy for Academic and Social Achievement. *Urban Review*, 36(2), 81-100.

Phelan, J. (2009). Activities of daily living and controls from within. *Reclaiming Children and Youth,* 17(4), 46-51.

Phillippe, K.A., & Patton, M. (2000). National profile of community colleges: Trends and statistics (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: *Community College Press*, American Association of Community Colleges.

Phinney, J.S. (1995). Ethnic identity and self-esteem. A review and integration. In A.M. Padilla (Ed.), *Hispanic psychology: critical issues in theory and research*, pp. 57-70. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Phinney, J. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7, 156-176.

Phinney, J.S. (1991). Ethnic identity and self-esteem: A review and integration. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences,* 13, 193-208.

Phinney, J.S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 9, 34-49.

Phinney, J.S., & Alipuria, L.L. (1990). Ethnic identity in college students from four ethnic groups. *Journal of Adolescence*, 13, 171-183.

Phinney, J.S., Cantu, C.L., & Kurtz, D.A. (1997). Ethnic and American identity as predictors of self-esteem among African American, Latino, and White adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 26(2), 165-185.

Pinney, J.S., & Chavira, V. (1995). Parental ethnic socialization and adolescent coping with problems related to ethnicity. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 5, 31-53.

Phinney, J., & Ong, A. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(3), 271-281.

Price, D.V. (2004). Defining the gaps: Access and success at America's community colleges. Keeping America's Promise. *A Joint Publication of Education Commission of the States*

and League for Innovation in the Community College. Denver: Education Commission of the States.

Polite, V., & David, J.E. (Eds). (1999). *African American males in school and society: Practices and policies for effective education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Pope, M.L. (2006). Meeting the challenges to African American men at community colleges. In M.J.Cuyjet (Ed), *African American men in college* (pp. 210-236). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

QSR International. (n.d.) NVivo 9. Retrieved from QSR International website, http://www.qsrinternational.com/#tab_you

Radovcic, A. EdD. (2010). Factors impacting persistence for African American and Latino community college students. *Loyola Marymount University*, 121 pages. (AAT 3432891).

Rappaport, N. (2002). Can advising lead to meaningful relationships?. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2002(93), 109-125.

Reid, L., & Radhakrishnan, P. (2003). Race Matters: The relation between race and general campus climate. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 9, 263-275.

Roach, R. (2001 May 10). Where are the Black men on campus. *Black Issues in Higher Education*. Retrieved September 2011 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_6_18/ai_75561775.

Roach, R. (2000 Aug 3). Remediation reform. *Black Issues in Higher Education,* v17, n12, p16-18, 20, 22, 24-25.

Roberts, L. (2009). *A case study of community college students' perceptions regarding faculty's practice of online course delivery: Virginia Community College*. East Tennessee State University, 125 p. ISBN: 9781109455182.

Roberts, R.E., Phinney, J.S., Masse, L.C., Chen, Y.R., Roberts, C.R., & Romero, A. (1999). The

    structure of ethnic identity of young adolescents from diverse ethnocultural groups.

    Journal of Early Adolescence, 19, 301-322.

Rosenbaum, J. E., Deil-Amen, R., & Person, A.E. (2006). *After admission: From college access*

    to college success. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 267 pp. ISBN 9780871547071.

St. John, E.P. (2002). Social class and college costs: Examining the financial nexus between

    college choice and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(2), 189-236.

St. John, E.P. (1989). The influence of student aid on persistence. *Journal of Student Financial*

    Aid, 19(3), 52-68.

St. John, E.P., Hu, S., Simmons, A., Carter, D.F., Weber, J. (2004). What difference does it

    make? The influence of college major field on persistence by African American and

    White Students. *Research in Higher Education*, 45 (3), May 2004.

Serpell, Z., Hayling, C.C., Stevenson, H., & Kern, L. (2009). Cultural considerations in the

    development of school-based interventions for African American adolescent boys with

    emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Negro Education*, 78(3), 321-332.

Scherer, M. (1992). School snapshot: Focus on African American culture. *Educational*

    Leadership, pp. 17-19.

Schlesinger, R. (2005 September). Better myself: Motivation of African Americans to participate

    in correctional education. *The Journal of Correctional Education,* 56(3). pp. 228-252.

Schmidt, P. (March 2009). Colleges seek key to success of Black men in the classroom.

    Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review, v74 n7 p4-9.

    (EJ857667).

Schofield, J.W. (2002). Increasing generalizability of qualitative research. In A.M. Huberman & B.M. Miles (EdS.), *the qualitative researcher's companion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schuerger, J.M. Adolescent personality questionnaire. *Institute for Personality and Ability Testing*, Inc. (IPAT). Retrieved from

http://www.ipat.com/assessment_tools/Pages/default.aspx

Scully, C. (1984).*Black students in higher education*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Seidman, A. (2005). *College student retention: Formula for student success*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Shuler, S. (1991). Music, at-risk students, and the missing piece. *Music Educators Journal*, 78(3), 21.

Singell, L.D. (2004). Come and stay a while: Does financial aid effect retention conditioned on enrollment at a large public university?. *Economics of Education Review*, 23, 459–471.

Solberg, V.S.H., Carlstrom, A.H., Howard, K.A.S., Jones, J.F. (2007 June). Classifying at-risk high school youth: The influence of exposure to community violence and protective factors on academic and health outcomes. *National Career Development Association*, Career Development Quarterly, Vol. 55, pp. 313-327.

Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate. The experiences of African American college students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 69, 60-73.

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. (2010). Access & Equity...Diversity in higher education. South Carolina access & equity statewide program, fiscal year 2009-2010. *South Carolina Commission on Higher Education*, 44pp.

Spencer, M.B., (1979). *Conceiving the self*. New York: Basic books.

Spradlin, L.K., Welsh, L.A., & Hinson, S.L. (n.d.). Exploring African American academic

achievement: Ogbu and Brookover perspectives. *Journal of African American Men*.

Stanley, C.A. & Slattery, P. (2003). Who reveals what to whom? Critical reflections on

conducting qualitative inquiry as an interdisciplinary, biracial, male/female research

team. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(5), pp705-728, 23pp.

Stewart, E. B. (2007). Individual and school structural effects on African American high school

students' academic achievement. *The High School Journal*. The University of North

Carolina Press.

Stewart, P. (2007). Who is Kin? Family Definition and African American Families. *Journal of

Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 15(2/3).

Stoecker (1991). Evaluating and rethinking the case study. *Sociological Review*, Vol. 39(1), pp.

88-112.

Stojanov, K. (2009). Overcoming social pathologies in education: On the concept of respect in

R.S. Peters and Axel Honneth. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(161-172).

Strayhorn, T. L. (Summer 2010). The role of schools, families, and psychological variables on

math achievement of black high school students. *High School Journal*, Vol. 93 (4), p177-

194, 18p.

Strayhorn, T.L. (Winter 2008). The role of supportive relationships in facilitating African

American males' success in college. *Journal (NASPA) National Association of Student

Personnel Administrators*, Inc. Vol. 45, Issue 1, p26-48, 23p.

Strayhorn, T.L. & DeVita, J.M. (March 2010). African American male's student engagement: a comparison of good practices by institutional type. *Journal of African American Studies*, Vol. 14(1), p87-105, 19p.

Strayhorn, T.L., Saddler T. (December 2009). Gender differences in the influence of faculty-student mentoring relationships on satisfaction with college among African Americans. *Journal of African American Studies,* Vol. 13 Issue 4, p476-493, 18p, 3 charts. DOI: 10. 1007/s12111-008-9082-1; (AN 44820451).

Swain, C. M. (2006). An Inside Look at Education and Poverty. *Academic Questions*, 19(2), 47-53.

Thompson, D.P. (March 1990). From "it easy" to "it is easy". *Clearing House*, Vol 63(7), p. 314-317, 4p.

Thorkildsen, T., & Nicholls, J. (1991). Students' critiques as motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 26(3/4), 347.

Tillman, L.C. (2002). Culturally sensitive research approaches: An African American perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 31(9), 3-12, 9p.

Tillman, L.C. (2006). Researching and writing from an African American perspective: Reflective notes on three research studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(3), pp265-287, 22p.

Tinto, V. (2004). Linking learning and leaving. In J.M. Braxton (Ed.). *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 81-94). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Tinto, V. (1998). Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence seriously. *Review of Higher Education*, 21(2): 167-177.U.S. Census Bureau. (2003). *School enrollment: 2000*. (C2KBR-26). Washington, DC: Author.

Tinto, V. (1997). Colleges as communities: Exploring the education character of student persistence. *Journal of Higher Education*. 68(6): 599-623.

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition. (2nd Ed.), *The University of Chicago Press*, Chicago.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45, 89-125.

Tinto, V., & Goodsell, A. (1993). Freshman interest groups and the first year experience: Constructing student communities in a large university. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the *College Reading and Learning Association*. Kansas City, MO.

Tinto, V., & Love, A. G. (1995). A Longitudinal Study of Learning Communities at LaGuardia Community College. *Office of Education Research and Improvement*, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 380178)

Tinto, V., & Russo, P. (1994). Coordinated studies programs: Their effect on student involvement at a community college. *Community College Review*, 22(2): 16-25.

Topper, A., & Achieving the Dream, I. c. (September/October 2009). Late stop-outs. *Data notes*. Volume 4, Number 5, Online Submission.

U.S. Census Bureau (2008). *Current Population Survey 1994 and 2004,* Tables 10, 12, 14.

U.S. Census Bureau (2005). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements. Table F-6. Regions--Families (All Races) by Median and Mean Income: 1953 to 2004*. http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/f06ar.html (accessed 2-14-07).

U.S. Department of Education. Data & Statistics Reports. Retrieved from www.Ed.gov.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2011). Resources. Retrieved from

http://www.justice.gov/publications/resources.html

U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2011). Retrieved from

http://www.bls.gov/bls/newsrels.htm#OEUS

Vandiver, B.J. (2001). Psychological nigrescence revisited: Introduction and overview. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 29, 165-173.

Vandiver, B.J., Cross, W.E.Jr., Fhagen-Smith, P.E., Worrell, F.C., Swim, J., & Caldwell, L. (2000). The Cross Racial Identity Scale. Unpublished scale.

Vandiver, B.J., & Fhagen-Smith, P., (1998). A *validation of the Rosenberg and Collective Self-Esteem Scales with African American students*. Unpublished manuscript, The Pennsylvania State University.

Vandiver, B.J., Fhagen-Smith, P.E., Cokley, K., Cross, W.E., Jr., & Worrell, F.C. (2001) Cross' nigrescence model: From theory to scale to theory. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 29, 174-200.

Van Manren, M. (1990). Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy. Ontario, Canada: The University of Western Ontario.

Van Teijlingen, E.R., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. [online]. Social Research Updates. Retrieved October 2011, from http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU35.html.

Vaughan, G.B. (2006). The community college story. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

Veenstra, C.P. (2009). A strategy for improving freshman college retention. *Journal for Quality & Participation*, Vol. 31, Issue 4, p19-23, 5p.

Virginia Community Colleges: Where Opportunity Begins. Retrieved from,

http://www.vccs.edu/Students/MasterCourseFile/tabid/110/Default.aspx

Virginia Department of Education School, School Division, and State Report Cards webpage. Retrieved from,

https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/report.do?division=108&schoolName=All

Vygotsky, L. Thought and Language. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986.

Wagner, K. (August 1983). Insomnia and psychosocial crisis: Two studies of Erikson's developmental theory. *Journal of consulting and Clinical Psychology*, v51 (n4). p 595-603.

Wakefield, W.D., & Fajardo, G. (2004 April 13). Discrimination at school: Latino and African American male high school student's experiences. Online Submission Paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Publication Date, 2005-04-13.ISBN: N/A

Warde, B. (2008). Staying the Course: Narratives of African American Males Who Have Completed a Baccalaureate Degree. *Journal of African American Studies*, 12(1), 59-72.

Warner, C.B., & Phelps, R.E. (2008). The relationship between motivational orientation & educational aspirations in urban, African American youth. *Institute for School Improvement, Missouri State University*. ISSN-1937-0814. Retrieved from, http://www.isi.missouristate.edu.

Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board. Policy and Research Reports. *College Readiness*. Online Access, Retrieved from,

http://www.hecb.wa.gov/PublicationsLibrary/PolicyResearch

Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, Olympia. (2001). (ED472460). 38pp.

Weisstein, E. W. (n.d.). *Pearson's Skewness Coefficients*. MathWorld: A Wolfran Web

    Resource. Retrieved from,

    http://mathworld.wolfram.com/PearsonsSkewnessCoefficients.html.

Wetzel, J., O'Toole, D., Peterson, S. (1999). Factors affecting student retention probabilities.

    Journal of Economics and Finance. 23 (1). 45-55.

White, L.S. (1998). Am I black enuf fo ya? Black study diversity: Issues of identity and

    community. In K. Freeman (Ed), *African American Culture and Heritage in Higher*

    Education Research and Practice. (pp. 93-119). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Wiersma, W. (1995). *Research methods in education: An introduction*. (6th ed). Boston: Allyn

    and Bacon.

Woolf, S. H., Jones, R. M., Johnson, R. E., Phillips Jr, R. L., Oliver, M., Bazemore, A., &

    Vichare, A. (2010). Avertable Deaths Associated With Household Income in Virginia.

    American Journal of Public Health, 100(4), 750-755.

Worrell, F., & Gardner-Kitt., D. (2006). The relationship between racial and ethnic identity in

    black adolescents: The cross racial identity scale and the multigroup ethnic identity

    measure. *Identity*, 6(4), pp. 293-315.

Wyatt, S.K. (Summer 2006). The relationship between racial identity attitudes and interpersonal

    development of African American college peer mentors. *Western Journal of Black*

    Studies, Vol. 30 Issue 3, p171-180, 10p. AN 37134803).

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:

    Sage.

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is your major or program of study?

2. Identify what factors contributed to your academic success.

3. What type of academic challenges have you experienced?

4. How would you describe academic experiences of African American males when they first start community college?

5. Did or do you currently receive academic support services at Danville Community College? If so, what kind of services?

6. Do you have outside priorities other than your education? If so, list.

7. Considering your outside responsibilities, is it challenging to continue your education?

8. How encouraging is your family (spouse, children, parents, etc.) of you getting a college degree?

9. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your gender? Why or why not?

10. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your race? Why or why not?

11. Do you feel your educational experiences are different based on your financial situation? Why or why not?

12. Who or what plays an important role in your life that contributes to your educational goals?

13. Do you feel people are supportive or not supportive of you, as an African American male, completing a college degree?

14. What is your main reason for attending Danville Community College?

15. How many hours per week do you spend studying? Do you feel this is sufficient time based on other demands?

16. Do you feel comfortable asking questions in class? If not, what about meeting with your instructor outside of class time?

17. How different are your college peers versus your outside college friends?

18. Do you feel accepted by your college instructors? What about from the college campus?

19. Do you interact socially on the campus such as with campus activities and programs? Why or why not?

20. What has been the best part of attending Danville Community College?

21. If you were President of Danville Community College, what would be your first priority as the college President?

APPENDIX B. STUDY INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Hello Danville Community College Students,

My name is Robin M. Dabney, Doctoral student at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, under the direction of Professor Sharon Michaels-Chadwell in the Education Department at Liberty University. I am currently working on a dissertation entitled "*An Exploration of African American Male Community College Students' Experiences Concerning Their Successful Postsecondary Enrollment.*" This study seeks to understand experiences of African American men on a community college campus and effects leading towards academic success within their enrollment.

I would like to invite you to participate in a very important study that will allow an opportunity of expressing your views and perspectives in higher education as an African American male college student. With your help, educators and higher institutional administrators could use your information to improve ongoing services targeting your population and perhaps implement other services that will enhance educational experiences of all students. Upon your agreement to participate, we will establish an appropriate date and time to conduct an informal interview. The interview shouldn't take longer than an hour and a half of your time. The location will be established upon your agreement to participate in a private and confidential manner. Permission will be obtained to audio tape the interview for accuracy in obtaining in-depth interview information and to effectively transcribe the interview. Additional information of this process will be explained during an initial meeting. Please note there will not be any audio recordings without your knowledge or permission. Additionally data from interviews and meetings used in the study will be kept confidential and secured in a locked area. Participant's names or any identifying information will not be used at any time within the research. All data will be destroyed three years after the collection process and completion of the study analyses.

Please be aware that your participation in the study is solely voluntarily; participation would not have any impact on your current enrollment or academic standing at the college. Participants' names and personal identifying information will be kept anonymous and answers kept confidential. Participants may receive a copy of the study results and any transcribed data upon their request. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time throughout their participation without penalty or adverse actions against them.

If you are interested in participating by sharing your college experiences, please email or contact me to schedule an interview. If you have any additional questions or concerns related to the study, feel free to contact me as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Robin M. Dabney, rmdabney@liberty.edu, 434-797-8478

APPENDIX C. EMAIL INVITATION TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Dear Danville Community College Student,

I hope this email finds you doing well in your academic studies. I am Robin Dabney, Doctoral Student at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA. I am writing to ask your permission to participate in a research study for my dissertation entitled, "An Exploration of African American Male Community College Students' Experiences Concerning Their Successful Postsecondary Enrollment."

The purpose of this study is to analyze academic and enrollment experiences of African American community college males. Information shared will help educators and researchers identify potential problems or strategize improvements to ensure academic success of these students. Not only will your experience help researchers, it will also help college administrators implement support programs that will help retain current African American male students and recruit potential African American male students.

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please contact me to schedule an appointment for an interview. The interview process will take approximately one-hour to complete on a date, time, and location that is convenient for you. The interview and your interest to participate in the study will remain confidential. Any personal information obtained to complete the study will remain anonymous. Please know your participation in the study will not affect your college enrollment or academic standing. Participation will be completed on a voluntary basis. You may withdraw at any time.

I hope you will afford me the opportunity of learning from your community college experiences to complete my dissertation study. I will be hosting an informational session regarding my research to interested students at Danville Community College campus on (DATE). I strongly encourage any student interested in hearing more information or who may be interested in participating to attend this session. The informational session is designed to provide more insightful information on the research and allow an opportunity for questions and concerns to be addressed. Please be aware that this invitation is also open to campus administrators and staff to learn of this informative research in an effort to understand how to best serve you on this campus.

Feel free to email me or call me at the contact information below. I look forward to your response.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Robin M. Dabney

434.797.8478

rmdabney@liberty.edu

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

*An Exploration of African American Male Community College Students' Experiences
Concerning Their Successful Postsecondary Enrollment*

You are invited to be in a research study to understand lived experiences of African American men on a community college campus and effects leading towards academic success within their college enrollment. You were selected as a possible participant because you were identified as a full-time African American male student 18 years or older enrolled at Danville Community College. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Robin M. Dabney, Principle Investigator, Department of Education, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand academic challenges or college-experiences from the perspective of African American male community college students to adequately serve their needs in a successful manner. Exploring experiences directly through the eyes of African American male community college students may help lead to advancement in higher education opportunities and target practices that may lead to retention, persistence, and attainment in higher education.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Participants will be asked to complete a demographic survey questionnaire with information related to parents' education level, household information, and other information on your education attainment. After completion of the questionnaire, participants will be contacted either by email or phone based on their contact preference to schedule an interview to complete the study. The researcher will explain the overall process and restate expectations prior to conducting the interview to ensure full understanding of the study and address concerns before the process begins. During the interview, the researcher will ask specific questions related to academic enrollment experiences, trustworthiness of people, involvements on their campus and social environment, and other academic related information while transcribing answers.

Interview transcriptions will be compiling into an overall research summary. No real names will be used within the study; therefore, participants will be asked to assign their own pseudonym (or false name) to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The interview should take approximately one-hour to complete and will be recorded using an audio recorder to ensure conversation and information is transcribed thoroughly in its entirety.

The interview will be held in a private location, away from the campus's general population. No other participants will be involved during the interview process; it will be conducted individually.

Risks of being in the Study:

Risks to participating in this research study may be discomfort from using personal information and overall confidentiality of providing information related to college experiences while currently enrolled on the college campus where the research is conducted. With this concern,

participants will have the opportunity at any time to withdraw from the study. The researcher reassures involvement in the study will have no bearing on academic records or college enrollment and that their involvement is purely voluntary. Participants will be informed records obtained in this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant.

Benefits of being in the Study:

The benefits to participation in this study would include helping researchers and educators understand factors that play an important role in influencing academic success among African American men in higher education. Through this understanding, the development of new or improved academic programs can be established to help with the success of future students. Other elements could be identified that would help college administrators improve the success rates of African American males as well as retention and recruitment strategies. Other benefits may be additional funding to support the establishment of programs that target African American and other minority students on community college campuses.

Compensation:

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

All information obtained within the study from participants will be used solely by the researcher and kept in a secured location that does not allow public access. Data collected within this study will remain confidential and used for the sole purpose of the study.

Interview transcription obtained from audio recordings will be transcribed and transferred onto no more than two CD's, which will be kept in a locked file for the required three years. Information of the stored area will only be disclosed to Liberty University's IRB and campus-based IRB. To protect participant's real names, the researcher will continue using the assigned pseudonyms to protect the identity and related information associated with participants throughout the study.

After the completion of the research study, the researcher will permanently dispose of all primary records related to the study. Destruction methods consist of discarding all data storage items such as CDs and documentation that may allow the possibility of reconstructing information related to the study. Documentation of the data destruction and information destroyed will be logged and maintained indefinitely.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or with Danville Community College. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Robin M. Dabney. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at 434-797-8478 or email rmdabney@liberty.edu or you may contact the Research Advisor, Dr. Sharon Michael-Chadwell,

Department of Education, Liberty University at 210-241-2512 or email
sdmichaelchadwell@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1582, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Consent to Record (please read and check authorizing usage of voice recording).

☐ I give my permission for Robin Dabney, Doctoral Candidate from Liberty University, to audiotape, record, or otherwise reproduce my voice for the purpose of her Interview with me.

Statement of Consent:
I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E. DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Please indicate the answer that best describe you.

1. What is your age range? ☐ 18 – 25 ☐ 26 – 33 ☐34 – 40 ☐40 – 50 ☐ over 50
    ☐ Choose not to answer

2. Are you a U.S. citizen? ☐ Yes ☐ No if no, have you established
    legal U.S. residency? ☐ Yes ☐ No if no, why not?_____

3. Are you: ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Check your ethnicity. ☐ African American ☐ Black ☐ Haitian
    ☐ Native-American ☐African ☐ Other:_____

5. Is English your native language? ☐ Yes ☐ No if no, what is your native language?____

6. Do you live with: ☐ one-parent ☐ both parents ☐ Spouse ☐ Children ☐ Relative☐
    Alone ☐ Other_____

7. Are you the sole provider for your household? ☐ Yes ☐ No if no, how many adults provide
    for your household? (List number of adults supporting household) _____

8. Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you attending college and employed? ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

9. Annual Household Level (combined income of all adults in household): ☐ $10,000 or less
    ☐ $10,000 – $20,000 ☐ $20,000 – $40,000 ☐ $40,000 – $60,000 ☐ $60,000 - $80,000
    ☐ $80,000 - $100,000 ☐ over $100,000 ☐ choose not to answer

10. Father highest educational level: ☐ middle school (6th – 8th grade) ☐ high school (9th – 12th
    grade) ☐ high school diploma ☐ Trade or Technical School degree (certificate or trade
    diploma) ☐ 2-year college degree-Associate Degree ☐ 4-yr degree-Bachelor Degree
    ☐ Master's degree or Professional Degree ☐ Doctorate degree ☐ don't know

11. Mother highest educational level: ☐ middle school (6th – 8th grade) ☐ high school (9th – 12th
    grade) ☐ high school diploma ☐ Trade or Technical School degree (certificate or trade
    diploma) ☐ 2-year college degree-Associate Degree ☐ 4-yr degree-Bachelor Degree
    ☐ Master's degree or Professional Degree ☐ Doctorate degree ☐ don't know

12. Are you the first person in your immediate family to attend college? ☐ Yes ☐ No if not,
    who within your family has a college degree or attending college? _____

13. How did you learn of Danville Community College? ☐ advertisement/brochures ☐
    recruited by a campus official ☐ work-related ☐ family or friends attend(ed) ☐ other
    (indicate if other) _____

14. How many years have you attended as of today? ☐ 1-year ☐ 2-years ☐3-years or more ☐
    under 1-year (if under 1-year, how many semesters?) ☐ just started

Thank you for completing this survey. Your information will be kept confidential.

APPENDIX F. PSEUDONYM CODE AND CONTACT SUMMARY FORM

Pseudonym Code:_____

Salient Points in contact with themes and codes assigned.

Type of Contact:_____

Place: _____

Date Coded:_____

****

Number of years/semester attending college: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Age Range: _____ Highest Educational Level: _____

Specialized area of career studies: _____ Campus Activeness: _____

Family Support:_____ Educational Support:_____

Financial Support: _____ Study Habits: _____

The following are important points from the contact. Salient points are numbered in order with page number on which salient point appeared during the contact. There will be themes invented where no existing ones appear and they will have an asterisk. Additional comments may also be included in parenthesis of themes.

Page #	Salient Point(s)	Theme/Aspect

Note: Source: Adapted from Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX G: INVITATIONAL FLYER TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Request for Participation in a Research Study

Date:	[current date]
Request:	**Seeking African American Male College Student Volunteers**

Hello Danville Community College Students!

I'm Robin Dabney, Doctoral Student at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. I'm seeking volunteers to participate in a research study entitled, "***An Exploration of African American Male Community College Students' Experiences Concerning Their Successful Postsecondary Enrollment***".

To be eligible to participate, the following apply: must be male; African American or Black decent; enrolled full-time (12-credit hours or more) at Danville Community College; 18-yrs or older; and willing to sign an informed consent form acknowledging your willingness to participate.

If you are interested in participating and would like more information regarding participation, pleases contact me at (434) 797-8478, Monday – Friday, 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. or email, rdabney@dcc.vccs.edu.

Robin M. Dabney

APPENDIX H: DEBRIEF STATEMENT---INTERVIEW SCRIPT AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCRIPT

<u>Initial Interview Script</u>

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. My name is Robin M. Dabney, Doctoral student at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, under the direction of Professor Sharon Michael-Chadwell in the Education Department at Liberty University. I am currently working on a dissertation entitled "*An Exploration of African American Male Community College Students' Experiences Concerning Their Successful Postsecondary Enrollment*." This study seeks to understand experiences of African American men on a community college campus and effects leading towards academic success within their enrollment.

Your participation in this study is important. It allows an opportunity for expressing your views and perspectives of higher education as an African American male college student. With your help, educators and higher institutional administrators could use your information to improve ongoing services targeting your population and perhaps implement other services that will enhance educational experiences for all students.

Upon your agreement to participate, we will establish an appropriate date and time to conduct an informal interview. The interview shouldn't take longer than an hour and a half of your time. The location will be established upon your agreement to participate in a private and confidential manner. Permission will be obtained to audio tape the interview for accuracy in obtaining in-depth interview information and to effectively transcribe the interview. Please know there will not be any audio recordings without your knowledge or permission. All data from interviews and meetings used in the study will be kept confidential and secured in a locked area. Your name or any identifying information will not be used at any time within the research. All data will be destroyed three years after the collection process and completion of the study analyses.

Please be aware, your participation in the study is voluntary; participation would not have any impact on your current enrollment or academic standing at the college. All participants' names and personal identifying information will be kept anonymous and answers kept confidential. You may receive a copy of the study results and any transcribed data upon your request. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time throughout your participation without penalty or adverse actions against you.

If you are interested in participating by sharing your college experiences, complete the consent form (PASS OUT THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM). I will now read the Informed Consent Form (READ INFORMED CONSENT FORM OUTLOUD). If you need additional time to review the Informed Consent Form, you may take it with you and contact me with your response. Remember, participation is voluntarily and confidential. If you agree to the information listed on the Informed Consent Form and agree to participate, please sign, date, and return the Informed Consent Form. You will receive a copy of the Informed Consent Form.

The purpose of the Demographic Survey Form (PASS OUT THE DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY FORM to those who have signed and returned Informed Consent Form) is to collect data that examines your eligibility criteria and qualification and determine if you meet eligibility to participate. If you do not fit into any category listed on the Demographic Survey Form, please do not complete. You will receive your original Informed Consent Form and depart from the area

without penalty or further judgments. If you meet eligibility criteria on the Demographic Survey Form, please complete the form and return before departing the area.

Please thoroughly complete all sections of the Demographic Survey and ask any questions or concerns that are unclear or you do not understand. You may leave areas blank if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions or statements. Please take your time.

After you complete the survey, please place it in the box near the exit door. Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. I will be in contact with you to schedule the final interview based on your schedule and convenience.

If you have any additional questions or concerns related to the study, feel free to contact me as well.

_ · · _ · · _ _ · · _ _ · · _ _ _ · · _ _ _ · · _ _ _ · · _ _ _ · _ · _ · _ · · _ _ · · _ _ · · _

Individual Interview Script

Thank you for participating in this data collection process. The purpose of this data collection is to collect data that examines your views and perspectives on higher education as an African American male college student. Before interviewing, please read your signed informed consent form to ensure you understand what is being requested as a participant in this study. Please be aware, with your permission, this interview will be recorded for accuracy. If you do not wish to have this interview recorded, please state the information now before any proceedings.

(TAPE RECORDER PRESENT…BEGINS)

You may end the interview at any time. You will be asked 21 questions related to your higher educational experiences and perceptions. Please answer the questions based on your perceptions. If you desire, a transcript of the interview will be provided for you to check for accuracy after the interview process.