DIFFERENCES IN INTEGRATION AND PERSISTENCE BETWEEN BLACK MALES AND

THEIR PEERS AT PREDOMINATELY WHITE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

by

Dion Edward Leonard

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy Higher Education Administration

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ABSTRACT

Over the last several decades there has been much conversation, dialogue, and research around the topic of African American persistence, and more specifically African American male persistence within the higher education sector. Studies have shown that there is a major achievement gap among African American and white males. Studies also show that this persistence gap has been sustained over the course of several years. While there has been much research done on the topic, the researcher specifically addressed the persistence gap of African American men within the predominantly white private Christian higher education community. This particular study addresses how faith-based education within a predominately White Christian institution has either negatively or positively affected the persistence of African American males in their pursuit of higher education. The author conducted research that determines whether there is a difference between the academic integration, social integration, and the intent to persist of African American male students and their peers who are of other ethnic backgrounds within predominately white Christian universities. The researcher employed a non-experimental Casual-Comparative research study, using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in an effort to measure the difference between the independent variables of African American males and all other ethnic backgrounds. The author has encouraged continued research in the area of private Christian education in an effort to ensure equity, equality, and the commitment of African American men. Finally, the researcher used the College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ) as the research instrument in an effort to produce credible results that can be used in educational research, African American male scholarship, and higher education as a whole.

Keywords: Black Male Persistence, Christian Higher Education, Academic Persistence

Dedication

While there are many people who have helped me along the way, I dedicate this manuscript both to my parents and to my beautiful wife. Dino and Priscilla Leonard have served as the foundation of all that I believe and hold true. They taught me that if you are going to have anything in this life, you are going to have to be willing to work hard for it. Their direction, discipline, and dedication both to my life and to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ is the reason that I am the man that I am today. Mom and Dad, thank you for all that you do and everything that you are.

What can I say about my amazing wife, Jennifer Elaine Leonard? She has walked with me throughout this degree from start to finish. She has been patient with the late nights and long days. She has put up with my complaining and the time that I have had to take away from our family in order to ensure that I secured our future. She is my life partner, a pretty cool friend, and an even better companion. Babe, thank you for being there every step of the way and never quitting on me during this journey.

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My success within this program would not have been possible without the kindness of Dr. Adam McClendon, who served as my professor while completing a Master of Theological Studies from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His wisdom and willingness to help with anything that I needed throughout the Ph.D. journey has been necessary and so appreciated. In addition to Dr. McClendon, I must also acknowledge Dr. Eric Lovik and Dr. Rebecca Lunde for serving as my dissertation chair and methodologist. These two individuals are some of the must genuine people I have ever met. Their expertise is unmatched and their desire to see me succeed brings me to tears every time I think about them. Dr. Lovik's constant encouragements through email, and Dr. Lunde's availability throughout the completion of my dissertation made this journey much easier than I thought it would be. I am in their debt and am most grateful to them.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Over the last several decades scholars have sought to understand the academic achievement gap of African American students, and more specifically African American male students within every level of education. Many of these same studies have shown that academic integration has and continues to hold a statically significant relationship with persistence. As a result, this study seeks to explore the differences between academic integration, social integration, and the intent to persist when compared to the persistence of African American males within predominately white Christian institutions. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the historical, social, and theoretical background to the concern of African American male academic persistence and integration.

Background

According to Farmer and Hope (2015), African American male students have the lowest retention rate of any population. These statistics appear to be consistent across the board within higher education and mean that black males are the least likely of all students to finish their degrees (or any academic program for that matter). According to Reid (2013), Black men represent 36 percent of African Americans who attend college, and 4 percent of the United States college population as a whole. Reid further highlights that of all of African Americans who earn bachelor degrees, women hold 66 percent of them (Reid, 2013). Presumably the other 34 percent represent African American men who successfully complete their degrees, meaning 34 percent of the 36 percent of African American males that enroll in college overall. Anumba (2015) echoes many of the findings of Reid and acknowledges that attrition among African American males are higher than any other group at any other academic level. The recent literature shows

that this problem has not only persisted, but has become worse. As such, I suggest that it deserves the attention of institutions across the country.

Historical Context

According to Allen, Jewell, Griffin, and Wolf (2019), the underrepresentation of African Americans within higher education stems from a time early in American history in which racism and segregation prohibited them from attending the same schools as white people. These authors note that segregation resulted in blacks being forced to receive an inferior education at inferior institutions (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2019). One reason for this was and is likely that to whites the idea of blacks becoming educated was a threat to whites' established power. After several centuries of being excluded from white colleges and universities, blacks began to establish their own institutions of higher learning. According to Willie and Cunnigen (1981), most African American students attended historically black institutions because they were not allowed at any other colleges or universities until around the time of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling.

Social Context

Though African Americans are now theoretically free to attend any university or college that they like as long as they are accepted and can afford to go, African Americans still show an apparent lack of social integration, academic integration, and intent to persist within predominately white institutions. Ash, Clark, and June (2017) address how this social issue even affects Christian institutions by evaluating the experience of white administrators who have, according to their research, endured harsh working conditions because they have advocated for antiracist policies. As time progresses, there has not only been an intentional look at African American students within higher education as a whole, but researchers and the general public has

become more interested in noting and assessing the persistence of African American students within Christian higher education. According to Westbrook (2016) there is a racial hierarchy within American Christian higher education and the presence of bias in favor of whites is undeniable. It is interesting to note that both identity and self-efficacy have been mentioned in recent literature as key factors in African American male persistence.

Theoretical Context

Bush and Bush (2013) developed the African American Male Theory (AAMT) in an effort to establish a theoretical background and framework to describe and assess African American males' spiritual, psychological, social, and educational capacity. Critical Race Theory has likewise brought clarity to the underrepresentation of African Americans within higher education. According to Hiraldo (2019), Critical Race Theory (CRT) is designed to push researchers to take a closer look at race and how it effects the equitable education and existence of a diverse population, a population that is not consistent with the white narrative on which America has largely been founded. Scholars have employed CRT to address the lack of equity among the African American community with regard to higher education and education as a whole. Dixson and Anderson (2018) argue that CRT in relation to education denounces the idea that people of color are in some way inferior and white people are in some way superior within the academy. These theories have assisted in shaping the research around the marginalized reality of African Americans throughout history. Scholars have employed the research and used these theories as a springboard to initiate progress in African Americans' educational success. While both of these theories are popular, the researcher will focus on the African American Male Theory as it specifically addresses the plight of Black men in American education.

While the researchers within this background have thoroughly addressed the historical, social, and theoretical issues surrounding the persistence of Black students in completing their degrees in general, Black students within Christian institutions, and Black male students, what is still missing in the literature and what this dissertation seeks to address is the gap in scholarly work that addresses the persistence of Black males within predominately white Christian institutions. Since the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) concluded that in 2017 black men still only made up 11.7 percent of the college population as a whole, it may safely be assumed that the percentage of Black males within predominately white Christian institutions is less even than that small percentage. And that is precisely the problem.

Problem Statement

While Reddie (2003) specifically addressed Christian education within a British context, the researcher highlighted the importance of and need for an African American-centered curriculum within higher education. Reddie tied the need for such curricular to academic integration and to the development of African American identity and self-efficacy. According to Demirci and Teksoz (2017) the self-efficacy that Reddie discusses is crucial to the academic integration needed to ensure academic persistence. Bryan and Williams (2017) broadly addressed the unsuccessful attempts of schools to recruit black men as faculty/teachers and the possibility that the lack of African American men within these roles might contribute to the lack of persistence and low degree completion rates of African American students.

Longman and Anderson (2016) addressed many of the gender issues within Christian education and how those issues affect the persistence of women within the academic community. Hall (2017) discussed how stereotypes and negative perceptions were one of the primary themes that surfaced during his study of the factors that contribute to the lack of educational persistence

among Black and Hispanic men. Schaeper (2019) found that psychological attributes, self-esteem, and the academic learning environment were significant contributors to integration and ultimately persistence. The issues that these scholars have addressed are directly connected to whether or not the student is integrated into not only their program of choice, but also their institution of choice. The problem is that there is a lack of research on the degree to which African American men persist through their degrees at predominately white Christian institutions, and how academic integration, social integration, and their intent to persist affect those rates.

<div align="center">**Purpose Statement**</div>

The purpose of this quantitative, casual-comparative study is to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the academic integration, social integration, and intent to persist of African American males and their peers of other ethnicities. A quantitative research method is used for this study and a casual-comparative research design is employed to determine results. Academic integration, Social Integration, and Intent to Persist serve as the dependent variables. Academic integration is defined by Clark, Middleton, Nguyen, and Zwick (2014) as the student's ability to adapt and grasp the environment, culture, and curriculum of the institution. Social integration is defined by Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) as the tool that measures whether or not students' social and personal networks support their decision to pursue a college degree. Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) also define intent to persist as the degree to which students are happy with the institution that they have chosen, and the confidence that students have in their ability to complete their degree within that institution. African American males and students of all other ethnic backgrounds serve as the independent variables.

The population of this study included males who are in their sophomore and junior year of a four-year bachelor degree program at a predominately white private Christian institution in the southern region of the United States. The sample size for this study was selected based upon a random sampling method.

Significance of the Study

By conducting this study, the researcher will add to the existing body of literature that seeks to remedy the achievement gap between African American students as a whole compared to all other students, and specifically that of African American males. The major contribution that this study hopes to make to the pre-existing knowledge is to delineate the range of effects that academic integration, social integration, and intent to persist have on the persistence of African American men to obtain their Bachelor's degrees. This research will also contribute to the body of knowledge by addressing the lack of achievement among Black men in private Christian institutions. While existing research addresses diversity within Christian higher education, it does not specifically address the relationship between academic integration and African American men within the Christian education context. Park (2014) highlights and admonishes private institutions to take a closer look at their admissions and to reevaluate how they handle African American applications. Park (2014) is very effective in communicating and studying the reality of racial issues and their effect on academic persistence within private higher education; however, she does not address those issues from the particular context of black men. Johnson, Bruch, and Gill (2017) address the reality that financial resources made available to African American students have severely decreased since 2011, and that as a result many Black students are unable to attend or persist with their degrees. That particular study would benefit from further research to identify what in particular is preventing African American students from

graduating. Is it a lack of money? Encouragement? Family support? Of the thousands of students who annually drop out of school, is the majority men or women? This study will break down the disparity in degree completions in private Christian institutions compared to all institutions, and it will specifically address the challenges that African American males encounter, rather than lumping all African Americans together. Finally, Marks, Smith, Madison, and Junior (2017) address degree completion rates among African American men in private educational institutions and determine that they do pretty well in these environments; however, their study does not specifically address African American male persistence in private Christian institutions. According to Wood (2014), academic integration is a significant contributor to African American male persistence or lack thereof. The four studies identified fairly represent the currently available literature on the topic; however, this dissertation study seeks to provide information to fill the current gap in knowledge about reasons for African American males' inability to complete their degree programs at Christian colleges. In light of the reality that the biblical worldview advocates equity for all people and Christianity is based upon the Bible, it is interesting that in many cases that belief does not translate to many Christian institutions of higher education and this lack of equity warrants further research.

Research Questions

RQ1: Do African American male students in a major Christian university have different levels of academic integration when compared to their peers of other ethnic backgrounds?

RQ2: Do African American male students in a major Christian university have different levels of social integration when compared to their peers of other ethnic backgrounds?

RQ3: Do African American male students in a major Christian university have different levels of intent to persist when compared to their peers of other ethnic backgrounds?

Definitions

1. *African American Male Theory* (*AAMT).* This abbreviation stands for African American Male Theory and is defined by Bush and Bush (2013) as a theoretical framework that is designed to communicate the position of African American men within society by taking a closer look at their spiritual, psychological, social, and educational growth and development (Bush & Bush, 2013).

2. *Critical Race Theory* (*CRT.* This abbreviation stands for Critical Race Theory and is defined as a theory that is designed to force research to take a closer look at race and how it affects the equitable education of a diverse population (Hiraldo, 2019).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

An extensive review of recent studies was conducted to identify research that has been done on the topic of African American retention, and more specifically African American male retention within higher education. Chapter 2 of this study will provide an overview and synthesis of the research that was uncovered, and an outline of the themes that were consistent throughout that review. The researcher will use both Tinto's theory of retention (1975), as well as Bush and Bush's African American Male Theory (2013) as a framework for his study. This theoretical framework will reveal a gap in the current literature and provide an opportunity to explore African American male persistence within the Christian higher education system. With that in mind, the researcher will review each theory in an effort to be more effective while weaving them into the fabric of African American male experiences and decisions.

Theoretical Framework

Tinto published his theory of retention in 1975 in an effort to identify the cause of increased dropout rates, as well as the process that leads to dropout among college students. Tinto found that most research addressed the distinctions between the kinds of people that drop out, rather than the process that leads them to leave the academic institution. Research shows that not everyone is dropping out of school for the same reasons, and all students should therefore not be lumped together in one category. Responding to this insight, Tinto sought to highlight the different processes that ultimately lead to students withdrawing from school. Tinto uses Durkheim's theory of suicide to illustrate by analogy what leads to students dropping out of college. Durkheim suggest that a great proportion of individuals who commit suicide do so because they have not been properly integrated into society. Tinto recognizes that colleges create

their own mini society and suggests that one of the main reasons that individuals drop out of college is because they have not been properly integrated into the institution that they attend. Tinto (1975) is clear that dropping out of a particular institution does not mean total absence from academia; it may for example mean transferring to another institution or simply taking a semester off. Regardless of the reason, Tinto believes that properly integrating a student into both the social as well as the academic fabric of the school is crucial for ensuring the persistence of that student.

Much like Durkheim (1961) in his suicide theory, Tinto agrees that there are two forms of integration that are crucial to the persistence of students. First, he mentions moral integration, which has to do with the values and convictions of the student. Second, he notes the importance of sufficient collective affiliation, which refers to the existence or lack of personal interaction with individuals who hold the same values or interests. Typically, students who enter into an institution of higher learning do so with a goal in mind (such as graduation, even if not yet a career goal), and while this goal is most likely established prior to the student's enrollment, the social and academic society of the institution has the power to either strengthen that goal or weaken it over time. Tinto's study is concerned primarily with and speaks directly to the academic environment, and the influence that it has on those who are part of it. Tinto echoes the belief that people are a product of their environment and that environment can prompt them either to disengage from it or to become one with the experience. Studies have shown that institutions have the power through societal interaction to cause students to second guess and even withdraw from their original intentions. Tinto (1975) observes that every student brings with them certain expectations from their particular context. If these expectations are not replaced or merged with the social and academic realities of the institution, the student is more

likely to withdraw and eventually drop out. Tinto (1975) also notes that the difference between voluntary withdrawal and academic dismissal is critical to the evaluation of persistence and dropout. He marks as important that his theory take into consideration the why and not just the who. Finally, Tinto (1975) expresses that the strength of persistence rises and falls on both the educational institution's commitment to the student as well as the student's commitment to the institution.

Much like Tinto, Bush and Bush's African American Male Theory sought to explore the interaction between human beings, matter, concepts, and phenomena; however, the Bushes specifically addressed the ecological relationships that affect African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). Bush and Bush relied heavily upon Bronfenbrenner's (1986, 1989, 2005) ecological systems theory in an effort to draw from well-established African thought and practice. This particular theory examines the way that the inner microsystem and outer microsystem are linked to what the researchers refer to as the subsystem (Bush & Bush, 2013). While the inner microsystem captures a person's biology, personality, perception and beliefs, and the outer microsystem captures the family, peer, neighborhood, and school environments, the subsystem system takes into consideration the African American male interaction with the supernatural or spirit world (Bush & Bush, 2013). All three of these systems are then linked and engage with each other through the mesosystem.

This theory also takes into consideration what is known as the exosystem. The exosystem system is an external system that has the ability to affect the African American male even if they are not the person directly involved in it (Bush & Bush, 2013). An example of this might be a student whose parents makes more money than is allowed to qualify for financial aid, and as a result the student must take out student loans in order to fund their education. This individual

becomes guilty by association, and while they may not be the direct cause of the interaction, they are directly affected because of the relationship.

Bush and Bush's (2013) study also takes into consideration macrosystems, which examine the interaction of the larger culture, laws, and other systems that affect the African American male development. The Bushes also evaluate what they consider chronosystems, which capture patterns and arrangement of events over time. Finally, the study addresses the reality of the unknown as a subsystem. After examining all of these systems, the Bushes conclude that there is an innate uniqueness that distinguishes African American males, and that the continuation of African culture, beliefs, and biology are in many ways responsible for the experiences that black men have had and are having throughout history (Bush & Bush, 2013).

Both Tinto and Bush and Bush sought to establish a process of cause and effect. These researchers developed theories that examine how students and African American male students in particular interact with internal and external systems. Tinto speaks of the interaction between the internal systems of morality and values, in an effort to identify students' interaction with both the institution of higher education (the school) and the system of higher education. Meanwhile, Bush and Bush speak of the interaction between internal systems of biology, personality, beliefs, and perceptions in an effort to identify how these systems affect the African American male's development. Both research teams agree that the outcome of the student, specifically of the African American male, depends on how they interact with the expressed systems. If external systems conflict with internal systems, it is more likely that the student and the African American male will withdraw in an effort to preserve and protect their internal identity and beliefs. If the external systems agree with the internal systems, and are able to merge, then the individual is successfully integrated into the society or institution with which they interact. This

integration has the power to secure their persistence within their degree, the institution, and the

academic environment as a whole. Figure #1 shows the interaction between internal systems and

external systems. As long as these systems interact positively, it is likely that the student will

become integrated into the higher education community. If these systems fail to interact

positively, the student is likely to reject the external system and withdraw from the academic

community.

Figure 1

Systems Venn Diagram
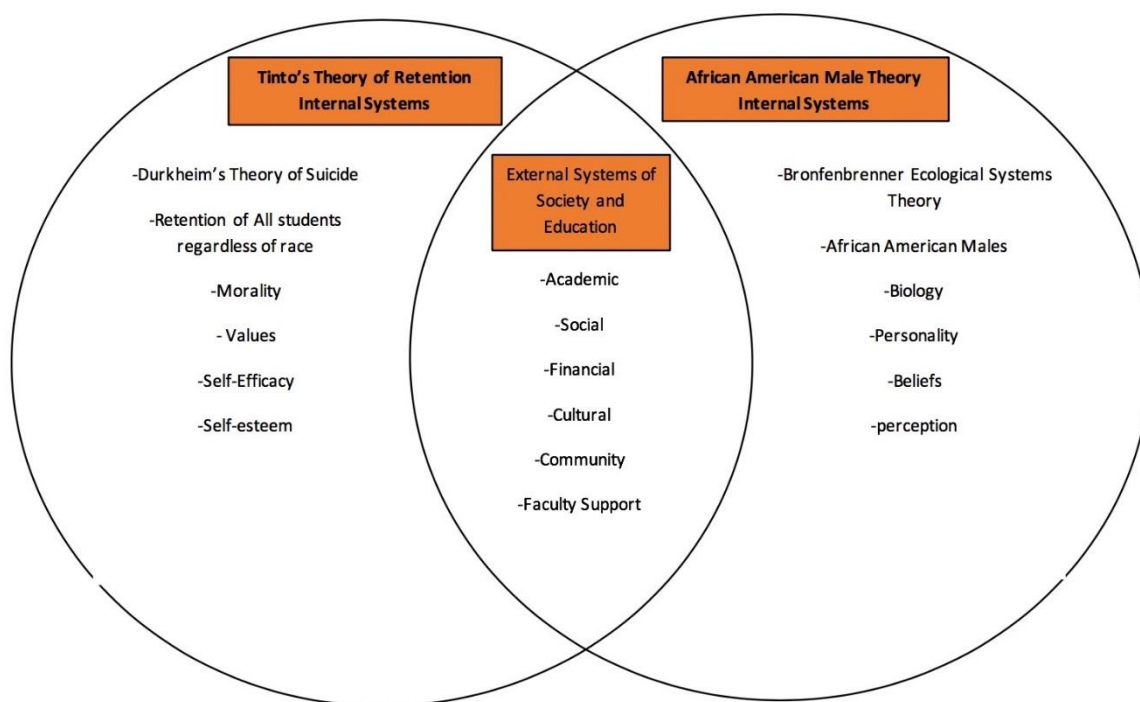
Related Literature

After over 40 years of significant research, Tinto (1975) as well as Bush and Bush (2013)

have been successful in establishing that both the general student population and in particular the

African American male response to internal and external systems are not typically what drives

their persistence, development ,and integration into a micro or macro society. Given that Tinto

(1975) suggested that student persistence through college is determined by their integration into the social and academic system of the institution, and Bush and Bush suggested that the ecological relationship determines whether or not the student rejects or accepts the external system of the institution, then persistence among African American males needs to be evaluated against other factors, specifically the fellowship, family, finances, and faith factors that may or may not be present within the high education community.

Fellowship Factor

In this study, fellowship is defined as the interaction between the student and the social as well as the academic systems of the higher education institution. There are five constructs identified in the literature that are used to define this interaction: identity rejection, faculty/peer relationships, equality, academic performance, and fraternity and social clubs.

Identity Rejection

One of the major concerns expressed within current research is the concern that a systematic structure designed for white men rejects the identity of African American students . According to Bazana and Mogotsi (2017), "Studies have proven that institutional cultures in historically white universities alienate and exclude black students' identities" (p.1). The researchers suggest that most American elite institutions were established during a period in which African Americans and women were not allowed to receive formal education, and therefore were designed exclusively to meet the needs of adult White men. If this is true, then it is obviously a challenge for African American students who enroll into these institutions to expect equality and fairness. Dukakis, Duong, Velasco, and Henderson (2014) build upon this rejection of identity by highlighting some of the inequalities that exist within American Higher Education. It was interesting to note that though the students who participated in this study had

proven their ability and readiness for college level work, and that it was the lack of equity in institutional practices—not these students' ability—that contributed to their withdrawal and complete dropout. Though diversity has increased on American campuses, there has been very little improvement in the integration of culture, community, and curriculum on campus. It is also important to note that the issue of identity rejection is highlighted as a systematic issue, rather than an individual institutional issue, and consequently that equality, and racial bias is not always an issue so much or only at *a particular institution* as it is the design of American education *as a whole.*

The racialization of the US criminal justice system illuminates this matter of racial identity in colleges. In an effort to gain a clearer understanding of the disproportionate numbers of African Americans that are negatively involved in the American criminal justice system, Isom (2016) found that racial socialization is directly connected to racial identity. According to the researcher, racial socialization describes what the student (in this case) has learned within their environment while growing up. Everything from their attitudes to their values and beliefs have been shaped beginning in their early childhood. These (African American) values, belief, and behaviors exist within a society that is racially and morally inconsistent with them. As a result, African Americans reject the societal standards and end up in trouble with the law (Isom, 2016).

If this is true, then African Americans appear to be rejecting a society that was not designed for who they are as a culture and a people. While Isom is talking specifically about criminal justice injustice, the behavior and decisions of African American men within higher education seems to echo her findings. As mentioned earlier in Bazana and Mogotsi (2017), institutional culture and American culture as a whole alienates black identity. If this is true, it could be said that the exclusion of black identity within this country pervades its academic fabric

too, and indeed has from the beginning, making it nearly impossible for African American men to be fully integrated into the macro or micro society and institution unless the school intentionally embraces them, and their full identity and values. If the African American student's identity is not embraced, they are either forced to change who they are or remove themselves all together. Recent studies show that if given a choice, many of them decide to remain true to their identity, even if that means not making through school. Isom's 2016 study suggests that African Americans' refusal to conform is not only hindering their ability to be integrated into the academy, it is also hindering their ability to be integrated into American society as a whole.

Isom (2016) shows that such racial discrimination goes far beyond solely infringing on the rights of African Americans. It infringes on their very identity. Discrimination according to Isom (2016) is not just against what Blacks are allowed *to do*, but against *who they are*. The issue also appears the be that such discrimination (by whites) not only rejects African American identity, it expects and pushes African Americans to take on an identity that is more acceptable to (white) American society. When the African American rejects the replacement identity forced upon them, they appear to be met with unjust and harsh punishments both within society and within the academic world. If Isom's (2016) findings are indeed true, then the lack of retention of African American students within higher education might be attributed to the African American male's inability or unwillingness to become someone that they are not naturally. Granted, the primary focus of this study is criminology and the injustice that African American people face within this country, not their retention at institutions of higher education, nonetheless it highlights their response to identity rejection, and from this we can extrapolate the need for integration within the academic context as well as in society at large.

Harris, Spencer, Kruger, and Irving (2019) sought to evaluate how African American identity is developed and formed. These researchers identify time, place, and experience as the core components that develop one's definition of self. According to them, African American males begin developing their identity as adolescents, and the fact that many of them are growing up in underprivileged environments has either a direct or an indirect effect on how they view themselves and the society around them (Harris, Spenser, Kruger, & Irving, 2019). These researchers further described the practices of parents, media messages, and experiences with discrimination as factors that shape the racial identity of African American males. In other research, the authors appear to address identity from the perspective of adulthood. However, in their 2019 article they clearly mark the development of identity as beginning in adolescence and resulting from young African American males' environment during this critical period.

According to Harris, Spencer, Kruger, and Irving (2019), increased oppression causes African American men to respond differently than other races especially when it comes to the academic environment. The authors suggest that research supports the notion that African American males who are made to feel good about their race are more likely to have higher self-esteem. That self-esteem causes them to excel and have better academic outcomes. They also found that African American students who were proud of their ethnic and racial identity were more likely to graduate high school and move on to college.

The authors continue by suggesting that one of the main reasons that African American men lack a positive outlook on themselves is that the society and culture in which they live does not make them feel good about being African American, and in fact often does the exact opposite. If they are taught not to like being black, then that teaching fosters a dislike of themselves and that dislike effects their integration into the society that will later try to educate

them and determine their success. African American men who overcome the oppression that many of them experience from early on in life have a greater chance of developing a higher self-esteem and a higher level of persistence in life (Harris, Spencer, Kruger, & Irving, 2019).

The researchers also connect identity rejection directly to the behavior of African American males. They suggest that when Black male identity is rejected (say, by those at a college, or more broadly by those in US society), that rejection plays out in their behavior and decision making (Harris, Spencer, Kruger, & Irving, 2019). As adolescents, African American males are already more likely than other US males to have been suspended and expelled from school. It is hardly surprising then that once they become adults they are more likely to reject the society that rejects them, and in some cases, either not pursue a degree at all or simply drop out before completing it. The researchers note that how African Americans males are treated directly affects whether and how they embrace their own identity, and that how they feel about their identity affects their behaviors and decisions, and in turn their academic success or failure.

As a result, there are some serious implications for how African American people have been and continue to be treated within the context of American history. One might reasonably conclude that slavery, segregation, Jim Crow laws, and other events that cast a negative light on the identity of African American people have all had an ill effect not only on the generation that endured the injustice, but the generations that came after them. If America made African Americans feel bad about being African American, then, according to Harris, Spencer, Kruger, and Irving (2019), that level of identity rejection would have had a direct effect on their self-esteem and ultimately would have negatively affected their decision in all spheres including academia. In addition to the clear conclusions of such prior research, it may also reasonably be concluded that African American men and African Americans in general were simply rejecting

the systems and institutions that rejected them. The remedy for this kind of conflict is the universal acceptance of the identity of all people as opposed to the rejection of anyone based upon bias or a sense of racial superiority/inferiority.

Walton (2018) used the African American Male Academic Identity Development Theory to express the reality that positive identity development serves as a motivating factor in the academic achievement of African American males. This theory also confirms that the academic performance of African American males has a direct effect on their identity and self-efficacy. The African American Male Academic Identity Development Theory suggests that the lack of qualified teachers, excessive suspension and expulsion rates, and the excessive placement of African American males in special education has had and continues to have a negative effect on the identity of Black boys.

Assuming that this research conducted by Walton (2018) is accurate, how African American males view themselves has a lot to do with whether or not they enroll in and persist through college e. Identity rejection through the aforementioned lenses has the potential to produce an unhealthy and destructive view of one's self and one's academic identity. If the African American student is more likely to be suspended or expelled, more likely to be assigned teachers who are not qualified, and more likely to be written off as a special needs student, then it is highly likely they will have little confidence in their own academic identity and in the ability of the school to serve them fairly. African American male students who through the actions and bias of the American education system no longer feel qualified or welcomed into predominantly white educational institutions may opt to attend predominantly black institutions whose very purpose is to honor and reinforce African American (male) identity. This affirmation of their

sense of identity could be the reason that some black men prefer to attend institutions where they are in the majority as opposed to the minority.

According to Davis (2015), race has a significant effect on a person's understanding of who they are, especially if they are African American. While socioeconomic status and other components contribute to a person's understanding of self, for the African American human being studies have shown that their race and what they believe about it is crucial to how they see themselves. Davis (2015) goes on to say that African Americans have a greater sense of understanding about their race than others in US society, and consequently tend to be more protective when interacting within racially biased environments and under circumstances where racism is prevalent.

Davis (2015) stresses the point that African Americans who have an understanding of who they are and are proud of their heritage tend to have the capacity to contest and overcome outside perceptions of their race and the biased ways in which they are treated, treatment that studies have shown to be directed toward the African American in general. This pride and confidence often comes from their environment and the sense of value that they receive from their family, community, and other influential relationships during their childhood and young adulthood as their identity develops. If they never develop this strength—this pride and confidence—then they are more likely to avoid environments that are unwelcoming, or they may conform to an identity other than their own in an effort to fit in or to be accepted. In Davis's research he concludes that in order for an African American student to be well equipped for the typically racially unjust academic environment, they need a strong sense of self and to be secure in their identity. In conclusion, the only way to overcome identity rejection within the higher education environment (or society as a whole for that matter)is to ensure that the African

American student's self-perception and price is strong, and that they have clear and realistic expectations of the people around them and of the systems of which they are a part.

Faculty and Peer Relationships

Institutional interaction is crucial to the persistence of any student. That interaction is largely made up of peer and faculty interactions. Proctor, Nasir, Wilson, and Li (2018) used a qualitative study to show that support from faculty, and social engagement with peers were crucial to the persistence of African American students. While many of us may consider a student's interaction with the curriculum as the most important factor for academic success, this study and many like it have shown that social interaction is just as if not more important than academic competence. Tinto's (1975) theory of retention supports this idea and suggest that if students fail to be integrated into the social community of their institution, they are more likely to drop out or transfer to a different institution. Studies have shown that social relationships provide support, encouragement, and even accountability for students of color. While a balance is definitely needed to avoid students neglecting their academics, students clearly need relationships that mimic the family environment that many of them left to attend school. Faculty and peer relationships are also important, being that African American males both as students, faculty, and staff are underrepresented within higher education as a whole.

According to Brooms and Davis (2017), peer support was one of the two primary reasons for African American male persistence, the other being faculty support. In addition, they found that peer mentorship provided students with the confidence needed in order to persist through their degrees. Overall the study reinforced the reality that regardless of the demographics of the institution, black men need the support and mentorship of other black men when assuming the responsibilities and goals of college. If this is true and the research has shown that there is a lack

of both these factors for African American men, then it may be concluded that there is a lack of African American male persistence in part because of the lack of African American male support and mentorship. The researchers highlight that this support is especially important within historically white institutions due to the injustices that not only African American males but the black community as a whole experiences. Yet these relationships must be positive. Studies have found that if students' peer relationships are negative, those students are less likely to succeed or persist through their degrees. Some examples of negative peer relationships include bullying, rejection, and denial.

In addition to peer support, Brooms and Davis (2017) found that faculty support provided Black students with higher levels of confidence when approaching and completing their degrees. While all support helps to improve persistence, the research found that the support from African American faculty specifically was more significant for African American male student persistence particularly in historically white institutions. Studies have shown that Black male students feel more comfortable and accepted when they see faculty of the same race in the academic environment in which they are the minority. African American faculty and staff model appropriate behavior for black male students, and their presence also creates an environment that resembles students' homes and many of the communities in which they have grown up. This interaction with Black faculty has proven to be effective both in and outside of the classroom. While the support of faculty in the classroom setting helps student to adjust to the academic climate, faculty participation in students' social lives has proven to be just as effective in achieving black male persistence. Faculty persons taking a personal and not just an academic interest in their students is critical to the students' success.

More often than not, studies have shown that one of the ways in which both peers and faculty provide support is through programing, whether that be in the form of straight-up support groups, or in the form of non-academic programming such as in student government, sports, clubs, and other extracurricular activities. One such study is particularly noteworthy: that of Brooms, Goodman, and Clark (2015) who measured the efficacy of the Black Men Achievement Program at Midsouth University. The program was designed intentionally to remedy the undeniable and disproportionate number of undergraduate black males who were not persisting through their degrees. The program's main focus was to provide the social, academic, peer, and faculty support that would improve retention among African American male students. Students found the program to be effective in bridging the gap between faculty and peer support, as well as helpful in their overall relationships. The students also mentioned that the program fostered a greater connection between them and the institution. This connection could be the missing link that ensured their persistence.

Brooms, Goodman, and Clark (2015) credited the lack of persistence among African American males to the disappointing experiences that they have had historically within American higher education. Of these experiences, the researcher mentioned racism, oppression, and discrimination, among other issues. According to Brooms, Goodman, and Clark (2015) these distasteful experiences are more prevalent in predominately white institutions and require the implementation of program in order for the support system needed by all students to get better. As long as the integration of students solely focuses on one race, nationality, or cultural context, it may be extremely difficult for students and faculty who do not classify themselves under the selected group to adjust and cope with a climate that rejects who they are and where they come from.

The results of Juang, Ittel, Hoferichter, and Gallarin's (2016) study echoes those of Brooms, Goodman, and Clark (2015). They found that peers support had a significant effect on the decision of African American men to persist through their degrees. In their study, Juang, Ittel, Hoferichter, and Gallarin (2016) outline the importance of what they called *protective factors*. These factors provide African American male students with weapons to defend themselves against the discrimination that they experience within the academic environment. One of the main protective factors, or weapons, that Juang, Ittel, Hoferichter, and Gallarin (2016) identify and discuss is peer support. According to the researchers, by securing the support of their peers, Black male students have a better chance at resisting and overcoming discrimination, racism, bias, and oppression within the academic context. Since it is clear that injustices persist, and have not been erased, those African American males who enter the academic environment more prepared to handle the unfortunate reality of predominantly white institutions are more likely to persist as a result of the protective measures they have, one of these measures being peer support.

Juang, Ittel, Hoferichter, and Gallarin's (2016) suggest that in many cases African American male students in themselves lack the influence or power to invoke change within their academic environment. They need others' support. Being prepared for the environment by having the proper support can provide the student with the leverage that they need in order to be successful and to complete their degrees. If students fail to receive this support, and the institution fails to change by making an effort to integrate them, then African American males will continue to be at high risk for dropping out of school. If this is true, then Juang, Ittel, Hoferichter, and Gallarin's research places a great portion of the responsibility on the support system of the student rather than simply the institution itself.

Fraternities and Social Clubs

In addition to faculty and peer support, recent studies have shown that fraternities and social clubs also contribute to the success and persistence of African American students, and more specifically African American males. These Greek organizations not only provide support and accountability to students, but, say Dancy and Hotchkins (2015), also guidance for African American males as they transition into manhood. This guidance often facilitates maturity in Greek membership that spills over into academic success.

McGuire, Sweet, Scott, McTier, and Ikegwuonu (2020) echo the reality that African American fraternities contribute significantly to the persistence of African American males. According to their study, Black males who participated in Christian fraternities developed a greater since of responsibility and were able to stand up against injustices within the academic environment (McGuire, Sweet, Scott, McTier, & Ikegwuonu, 2020). Not only does their study show that fraternities contribute to persistence, McGuire, Sweet, Scott, McTier, and Ikegwuonu (2020) successfully proved that fraternities contributed to the development, maturity, and leadership abilities of African American as a whole. Studies have shown that these students become more active in the college experience after participating in fraternities, and that they are more likely to become integrated in the institution if their experience within the Greek organization is positive.

McGuire, Sweet, Scott, McTier, and Ikegwuonu (2020) highlight the reality that black students who participate in Greek organizations have tended to take on other leadership roles within the university and participate in other non-academic activities throughout their time at the school or until they graduate. Studies have shown that academic success is only part of the key to ensuring academic persistence. The participation of students in non-academic activities has

proven to be just as or even more important in predicting the persistence of both African American male students and students in general. This 2020 article also reinforces the reality that fraternities help to support and develop African American male identity. The sense of brotherhood within these organizations appears to create a sense of safety, security, and protection from the larger institutional organism, and a sense of belonging. Given that the research has clearly shown the significant oppression, racism, discrimination, identity rejection, and bias to which African American male students are subjected, it appears that membership or participation in social clubs such as fraternities gives African American students the opportunity to escape from the marginalized reality of their institutions and to gain strength from a micro-community of peers within the school environment.

This is especially true of Christian fraternities, it transpires. McGuire, Sweet, Scott, McTier, and Ikegwuonu (2020) suggest that there is an underlying expectation that men portray a level of Christian masculinity within such groups. That masculinity is reinforced by academic achievement, among other things. It appears that within these groups African American men are encouraged, and in some cases strongly pressured, to perform well academically. This encouragement and pressure provide a high level of accountability which these men may otherwise not experience, and this accountability has the potential to secure their persistence more than those who lack accountability altogether. Based upon the inferences made throughout the study, the authors create a theme that suggested in many ways that masculinity is in some way connected to the bond, accountability, and connection that is made within the social fabric of many fraternities. If this is true, then success within school may be seen as successful masculinity. The goal then for African American men would be to become a better man by excelling in their degrees, as opposed to becoming a better student.

Institutional Placement and Academic Performance

Additionally, the research shows that the academic achievements of African American and Latino students are a direct result of their institutional placement. According to Lutz, Bennett, and Wang (2018), placing the right student in the right institution is critical to their academic performance. In their 2018 study, the researchers found that while mismatching student placement did not prevent black or Latino students from graduating, it did affect their academic achievement (Lutz, Bennett, & Wang, 2018). Students whose academic performance is not comparable to the rigor and performance of their peers tend to struggle through the academic experience. In short, placing students in institutions that best match their academic skills is critical to their overall achievement.

The silver lining of the recent studies is that they show that supporting African American males' need for fellowship within the academic and social environment of the institution strongly determines their likely success. Because this is true, the assumption can be made that fellowship is a well-established phenomenon within retention literature.

Family Factor

While most college students end up relocating in an effort to attend school, studies have shown that family support is still a crucial part of African American male persistence. In fact, a great portion of the most recent studies have focused on the fact that parents' participation in the academic success of their student is a major factor in retention success among black men. Jeynes (2016) found that parental involvement was statistically significant for African American students. After performing a meta-analysis of over 42 studies, the research showed that a more subtle involvement of parents as the student ages is more effective; however, involvement at any level has proven to contribute to the success of black learners (Jeynes, 2016). In a 2015 study,

Jeynes engages in an even more narrow search to identify the effects of the father's participation on their African American children's education. While the majority of the research that we have uncovered deals with the family in general, Jeynes' (2016) effort to zero in on the father's participation bridged a large gap within the literature, and helped to clarify the unique effect that each individual parent has on their child's academic success and persistence. Jeynes' 2015 study found that the participation of fathers was statistically significant when measuring students' academic persistence. This is significant for our study because it highlights the need for African American fathers to serve not only as parents but also as role models for their African American students. The presence of the black father is crucial to the retention of black male students.

Plunkett, White, Carter, and Horner (2016) add to Jeynes' (2016) findings by identifying more specific results that show the support of the father is more significant than the support of the mother, especially when it comes to African American male students. This study also showed that the support from both parents directly affect the self-esteem of African American students. Healthy self-esteem can produce the self-effficacy needed to persist through school. If Tinto and Bush and Bush are accurate in their theory, then the research has shown that both the ecological systems of fellowship and family are critical to the integration of African American males within society and higher education. Besides, for many students it is only thanks to their family's financial support that they can afford the degree that they are seeking to receive. Family involvement is not only important for the purposes of accountability and encouragement. Family involvement is necessary to ensure that the student has the requisite funds to pay tuition and to maintain a healthy life while enrolled.

According to Goings (2016), many African American males attend college in an effort not only to make a better life for themselves, but also to create a better life for their families.

Indeed for some students the desire to improve their family's quality of life is the sole reason they are seeking a college degree. If this is true, then the support of the family becomes that much more important to student persistence. Goings (2016) also broaches the unique situation of non-traditional students and specifically students who complete their degrees somewhere other than at brick and mortar schools. Goings (2016) says that non-traditional students lack the support and connection that produces persistence within their degree. For many of these students, the support of their family is the only consistent support that they have. As non-residential students, they have very little involvement with the social organization (if any) of the school, and their relationship with faculty is strained or at least limited due to their distance (Goings, 2016). These conditions become especially difficult for African American males who throughout the literature exhibit a need for the very things to which non-traditional students lack access—such as community, peer and faculty support, and engagement in clubs and extra-curricular activities. Studies have indeed shown that the achievement gap of African American students is more greatly challenged in distance learning or in non-traditional academic settings (Goings, 2016). In such cases, the presence, support, and accountability of family may be the only way that these students can be successful.

Goings (2016) suggests that African American male students seek academic success as a way to defend and discredit the negative stereotypes placed upon them and their families. According to the researcher, studies have shown that, aware of the racist and oppressive outlook that people of other races have of them, African American men have used education as a way to discredit and dismantle those outlooks both for them and their families. Goings' (2016) study suggests that these students are succeeding within the academic world because they have something to prove and a family to protect. If this is true, it explains why most of the research

conducted on the involvement of family within the academic careers of African American men all suggest that the institution has the responsibility to provide programs and other avenues through which the family of the student will feel welcomed into their child's college experience.

While Flowers' (2015) study specifically addresses African American male engineering majors, his findings are consistent with the literature found about African American male students as a whole. Supporting the finding about the importance of African American male identity development, Flowers found that the family of the student has a crucial role in shaping the academic identity of African American males (Flowers, 2015). As discussed previously, the positive identity development of African American males makes them more likely to persist through their degrees and to overcome obstacles involving their race and self-efficacy (Flowers, 2015). Flowers (2015) does not just address the family from a broad perspective. He attributes a significant level of influence to the parents of the student.

According to Flowers (2015), parents appear to be the family members that hold the most influence, and while other members of the family definitely contribute to the student's success, their parents provide most of the support throughout the student's academic career. This support can be seen in the student's academic achievements and their ability to follow through with their degrees. Flowers (2105) listed things like discipline, active fathers, parental love, financial support, and communication as some of the behaviors that the parents of successful black students exhibit throughout their child's youth and throughout their academic careers. This among other studies suggest sthat the role of parents in some cases outweighs any other influence within an African American male's academic career. If this is true, then the participation of parents in the institution is critical to the success of residential as well as non-residential and non-traditional students. While many parents do not hold the credentials to serve

on the faculty or staff of an institution, their presence in the school community and the accountability to which they hold their children could help to improve Black male persistence across the academic spectrum.

If the institution fails to win the support and buy-in of its students' parents, then they have lost a major potential contributor to the persistence of any student and more specifically the African American male. According to the research, it is optimal for there to be a collaboration between the family and the institution in order to ensure the success of its black male students. The absence of exclusion of the family and more specifically the parents due to distance or a lack of intentionality on the part of the school could substantially and negatively affect their success.

Financial Factor

In conducting a review of the related literature, financial need was one of the most important components affecting retention among African American men and low-income families. While Tichavakunda (2017) found that African American students were knowledgeable about financial aid, she also found that having that knowledge was critical for their persistence and retention.

Research has also shown that a high proportion of African American students have come from low income homes and will need financial assistance in order to persist through their degrees. Indeed, financial aid or other financial assistance is the only way that many of these students will ever have the opportunity of pursuing higher education. Cox (2016) found that low income students often experience significant interruption to enrollment and completion, due to the fact that they cannot afford tuition or the other financial responsibilities that go with attending college. These responsibilities have increased in recent years, as a result of changes that have been made and resources that are no longer available. According to Johnson, Bruch,

and Gill (2017), the PLUS loan restrictions placed on undergraduate students in 2011, caused a statistically significant reduction in the amount of aid provided and the number of students enrolling in historically black institutions. If African American students lack the resources to attend or complete their degrees, they are forced to withdraw, or they have no other choice than to extend their expected graduation by reducing the number of courses that they take at a time. Because this is true, a high proportion of the African American male student population will either not attend college at all, or will accumulate a significant amount of debt by the time they finish their degrees.

This reality is shown in a study done by Torres, McKinney, Horn, and Jones in 2018. The study revealed that African American students took out the most loans when compared to other students, and that of the country's 1100 community colleges, 233 have decided to stop offering federal student loan programs in an effort to eliminate the risk of default, and to reduce the debt of students who take out loans without actually finishing their degrees. The students who are facing the financial challenges mentioned above endure a significant amount of stress and if they are not fortunate or careful, their relationship with the education financial system will eventually cause them either to drop out or not enroll at all.

Lim, Hackman, Letkiewicz, and Montalto (2014) address the effects of financial stress in African American students. Their 2014 study revealed that stress among African American men is greater than their counterparts, and that this stress is most likely due to the reality that men underutilize the financial assistance made available to them (Lim, Hackman, Letkiewicz, & Montalto, 2014). In light of the significant effect of finances on the persistence and retention of African American students and men, Zhan, Xiang, and Elliott (2018) explored and encouraged the management of student loan debt in their study. The study revealed that while student loans

have been proven to improve graduation rates, that improvement is only a reality to a certain point, especially for students who do not complete their degrees (Zhan, Xiang, and Elliott, 2018). If African American male students are given the ability and skill to manage their financial debt, it will change the negative relationship between them and the current student financial system. That change has the potential to eliminate stress and to ensure the persistence of black male students.

Adams, Meyers, and Beidas (2016) confirm the findings of the other literature discussed. These authors highlight the reality that the financial stress of students is not always tied to a lack of money, but is rather stress or concern about the return on their investment and whether or not the amount of money being spent is worth the education that is being received and the pay-off for that education in terms of earning potential (Adams, Meyers, & Beides, 2016). This suggests that while having the money to go to school it important, wanting to spend that money on school is a completely different conversation. Studies have shown that many students have opted for alternative routes to education in an effort to save money and to avoid extreme amounts of debt. Studies have also shown that some students are starting to lose faith in the importance of going to college and in fact have set out to prove that college is no longer necessary for success or to obtain a good career. Webber (2016) highlights the reality of the growing lack of faith among students in higher education. He also confirms the reality that students' perception of academic value has a serious effect on their enrollment in institutions of higher learning and their persistence through the degrees that they have chosen. According to Webber's (2016) research, the investment in college is well worth it over the course of a person's life. While other studies show the same results, there still appears to be a growing subset of students that simply does not see the value in it and as a result have opted out of going or at least of finishing their studies.

There is also much debate about which schools provide a quality education. According to Webber, many for-profit institutions are charging a high price for the education that they provide, though there is a great deal of conversation about the value of that education.

According to Salvo, Shelton, and Welch (2019), financial assistance was one of the factors that their study found was responsible for the persistence of African American males students who attending school online. With the number of African American men attending college online growing, the researcher sought to identify factors that influence their decision to do so. Not only did financial assistance improve the persistence of students, it also improved how well they performed within their programs. The 2019 study suggests that when African American males have the financial support they need, they are less stressed and can give more attention to the academic responsibility that is required of them in order for them to be successful throughout their programs. The study also suggests that it may be challenging for Black male student to give their all to their studies when they are forced to worry about paying bills that include tuition.

Salvo, Shelton, and Welch (2019) also suggested that the need for financial assistance in many cases stems from the reality of poverty among the African American community. According to their study and several other studies already discussed, there appear to be a significant number of African American students who come from low income homes and lack the financial resources needed to attend college. If this is true, the mere fact that they cannot pay tuition can be the direct cause of many of them dropping out or taking significant breaks throughout their studies. Salvo, Shelton, and Welch (2019) went on to discuss the possibility that some Black males may be choosing online courses as opposed to the traditional face-to-face instruction because students who attend school online tend to have fewer expenses. These

expenses can otherwise include travel back and forth to campus, housing, food, and other necessary costs that they would not have to incur if they stayed at home with family.

Price and Sheftall (2015) suggest that balancing out the amount of tuition with the amount of needs-based financial aid offered to students will increase the enrollment of African American males. In fact the study offered two different alternatives when conducting their study at Morehouse College, an all-male Historically Black College and University. The two alternatives presented during the study were; (a) low tuition and low financial aid, or (b) high tuition and high aid (Price & Sheftall, 2015). If the tuition remains low and the amount of aid provided to students remain low, then the compensation of aid would balance out the expense of tuition. The same understanding is given in the second option of high tuition with high aid. The overall goal is to ensure that the financial support provided to the students is comparable to the expense that they are taking on. By doing this, the institution lowers the cost that students and their families will be forced to pay out of pocket. Whether the institution chooses plan (a) or plan (b), they will have made attending their school more affordable and as a result may be able to ensure the enrollment and persistence of African American males. In the same vein as several other studies, this study reinforced the finding that financial support or the lack thereof is a crucial component of the decision making process of African American males who enroll and who persist through their degrees. While we all may be able to agree that the expense of higher education in many ways warrants the bill that student must pay to attend, by leveraging the financial support provided to them we can ensure that everyone in this country, regardless of race, national origin, or economic status has the right to a quality education that their families can afford.

Faith Factor

Faith as a factor of academic persistence has become a hot topic in recent years. This increased interest could have something to do with the fact that many African American students have accredited their academic success to a commitment to spirituality and their personal religious beliefs. Indeed, for African American male students, such commitments may contribute significantly to their persistence and retention. One of the ways that spirituality promotes persistence is through institutional acceptance of spiritual diversity, as opposed to just racial diversity. While Barnes, Truong, and Brownell (2017) highlighted the conflict that faith often brings into classrooms, specifically in disciplines such as biology, it encourages the assumption that if the school's rejection of the student's belief causes them to withdraw and drop out, then conversely the acceptance of student faith and belief has the potential to encourage their persistence and completion. Studies show that faith has also played a part in the self-efficacy of African American students. Tolliver and Miller (2018) highlighted the reality that spirituality and religious communities have been the source of social life for many African American males, and as a result contribute significantly to their self-efficacy. These spiritual communities, also known in many cases as churches, synagogues, mosques, or other houses or communities of worship, are often a source of direction and counsel for African American men who are persisting through school. Harris and Wong (2018) found that many African American students prefer to seek counsel from the church, rather than from a counselor within the university or college that they attend. As shown, spirituality, faith, morality, and belief Bush and Bush would consider to be the inner microsystem, the subsystem. The relationship of faith (etc.) to the institution of higher education would be examined by the mesosystem, and would ultimately overlap with Tinto's theory of retention given need to integrate spirituality into the community of the school. Lastly, Dumangane (2017) coined the phrase *faith capital* to describe the faith component to which

many African American men have ascribed their successful completion of college. Thus, faith is not only a part of the personal lives of African American males. In many cases it is an essential aspect of what enables black males to complete their education and reach their other academic goals.

According to McGuire (2018), 90 percent of African American males between the ages of 20 and 26 continue to maintain strong religious and spiritual belief even when entering the college community. These strongly held beliefs have been proven to be a critical part of the identity of these students, and based upon that research this identity determines their integration into the academic institution. McGuire (2018) also pointed out that many of these students used their faith as a way to overcome obstacles throughout their academic careers. As mentioned previously, the oppression, discrimination, bias, and blatant racism that African American men have encountered over the years has caused many of them to lean on their faith as a source of strength and endurance. This source of strength in more cases than not helps them to navigate the world and the classroom. McGuire considers spirituality as a "resilience factor" among African American men. He goes on to describe God as a confidant and a source of strength that gives the student what they need to overcome the challenges they face (McGuire, 2018).

As discussed, the researchers have mentioned and reinforced the reality that spirituality and faith provide African American male students with a sense of hope and purpose as they navigate the unique challenges they encounter on the way to earning their degrees. Activities such as prayer, worship services on campus, and even being a part of a gospel choir at their school gives them a greater sense of belonging and helps them to adjust to the institutional community.

In light of these findings, it would seem beneficial if the academic institution were more committed to incorporating faith into the lived experiences of African American males while at college. This might be done through programing and by providing students with the opportunity to express their beliefs within an accepting and healthy academic environment.

Summary

A literature review was conducted to identify the current research that engages African American student persistence, and more specifically, African American male student persistence within higher education. Factors such as fellowship, family, finance, and faith became the reoccurring themes throughout this review of the related literature. Tinto's (1975) theory of retention, as well as Bush and Bush's (2013) African American Male theory were used in an effort to show how the above factors might be applied as systems that create or reject the relationship between the student and the global or academic society. If the student's relationship with the reviewed systems is positive, it is likely that they will be integrated into the institution that they attend. But if the relationship between the student and the above systems causes the student to reject that system, then it is likely that they will not become integrated into the institutional system and will eventually drop out or withdraw from school. Basically, most students only accept the environments that they feel accept them. If the academic environment is not welcoming of the student's culture, race, customs, or community, there is a stronger possibility that the student will either transfer to another institution or drop out of school altogether. Rockinson-Szapkiw (2019) suggests that if the academic environment conflicts with the family environment, then it can potentially affect a student's ability or will to persist. While Rockinson-Szapkiw's (2019) research specifically addresses doctoral students, the results of her study are in keeping with Tinto's Theory of Retention and the Bushes' African American Male

Theory. Such findings support the need for integration at every academic level, not just the undergraduate level. Rockinson-Szapkiw suggest that not only does the student need to be integrated into the fabric of the institution, but their families are a crucial part of that integration. Many institutions now understand this and have begun implementing services that include the family, not just the student. Some of these programs include daycare for the young children of students, family counseling, and opportunities for family visits and lodging. This shifts the whole understanding of integration, and makes it far more all-encompassing. For centuries many institutions focused on the integration of the student only. However, in order to enroll many students must sacrifice time away from their families and even be across the country in some instances. Consequently it is easier for them to integrate into the academic and social environment of the institution if the institution involves and welcomes their family's participation and by extension supports them too as an integral component of the student's learning and success.

While the related literature admirably addresses faith and spirituality as a system that is effective for African American male retention, the researcher found that personal spirituality and faith are not always translated from the institution to the student or from the student to the institution. Also, it was found that there may be other factors that either directly or indirectly affect the relationship between African American male students' persistence and predominantly white Christian institutions. If not explored, components that aid the integration into the academic communities of African American men specifically will be overlooked and their persistence may continue to lag behind that of other student populations. In light of this gap in the current literature, the researcher found it necessary to investigate the differences between

academic integration, social integration and the intent to persist among African American males and their peers of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

There are multiple approaches and designs that have been used in an effort to quantify and bring clarity to the academic achievement gap of African American males. This researcher however sought to employ a design that communicates the specific differences between African American males and their peers of other ethnic backgrounds within Christian higher education. In this chapter the researcher will discuss the design, research questions, hypotheses, participants, setting where research was conducted, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis in an effort to establish the research protocols and structure.

Design

A non-experimental casual-comparative research design was used in this study to determine the relationship between African American males and their peers who are of other ethnic backgrounds in their ability to persist in their studies to degree completion. Academic Integration, Social Integration, and Intent to Persist served as the dependent variables. Clark, Middleton, Nguyen, and Zwick (2014) define academic integration as the student's ability to adapt to and grasp the environment, culture, and curriculum of the institution. Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) define social integration as the tool that measures whether or not students' social and personal networks support their decision to obtain a college degree. Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) further define intent to persist as the degree to which students are happy with the institution that they have chosen, and the confidence that students have in their ability to complete their degree at that institution. Ethnicity served as the independent variable and was represented in three groups described as Black/African American, White, and All Other ethnic backgrounds. The term All Other ethnic backgrounds includes Hispanic/Latino, American Indian

or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) students of White ethnic background as "a person having origin in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa." The NCES defines as Hispanic/Latino "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race." The NCES defines as American Indian or Alaska Native "a person having origin in any of the original peoples of North and South America who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community attachment." The NCES defines as Asian "a person having origin in any of the original peoples of the far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent, including for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam." The NCES defines as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands." Finally, NCES defines as Black or African American "a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa."

The casual-comparative design was appropriate for this particular study because it facilitates additional knowledge on the impact of academic integration and the academic careers of African American men who attend predominately white Christian institutions. This study also provided a quantifiable evaluation of where these schools are and how far they still have to go in terms of the integration of African American men. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), "Casual-comparative research is a type of non-experimental investigation in which researchers seek to identify cause-and-effect relationships by forming groups of individuals in whom the independent variable is present or absent" (p. 306). Researchers typically prefer this design because the independent variables are broken down and measured in categories and this particular kind of study has proven to be easier to grasp and understand (Gall, Gall, & Borg,

2007). Casual-comparative research allows the researcher to use either one independent and dependent variable or multiple independent and dependent variables within the design.

Finally, this form of research did not allow the researcher to manipulate the variables. Because the researcher could not manipulate/control the Academic Integration, Social Integration, and Intent to Persist of African American male students or their peers who are of different ethnic backgrounds within predominately white Christian institutions, the researcher used analysis of variance or ANOVA to measure the differences.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: Do African American male students in a major university have different levels of academic integration when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds?

RQ2: Do African American male students in a major university have different levels of social integration when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds?

RQ3: Do African American male students in a major university have different levels of intent to persist when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study are:

H$_0$1: There will be no statistically significant difference in the Academic Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire.

Ho2: There will be no statistically significant difference in the Social Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire.

Ho3: There will be no statistically significant difference in the Intent to Persist scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire.

Participants and Setting

The researcher selected participants for this study based upon the research question, the research design, and the required minimum sample size of 81 participants in an effort to produce a medium effect size with a statistical power of .5 and an alpha level of .05 as outlined by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007). According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), this sample size is appropriate when conducting an ANOVA with three groups. The three groups that were considered in this study are Black/African American, White, and All Other ethnic backgrounds. The study included 45 people who are attending the university as residential students, 43 people who are attending the university as online students, 27 people who are first-generation college students, and 61 people who are not first-generation college students. The participants were grouped by ethnicity and there were 15 African American students, 67 White Students, 01 Hispanic/Latino students, 00 American Indian or Alaska Native, 02 Asian, and 00 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Participants were crucial to the validity of this study and served as the statistical sample from which the researcher retrieved results and drew conclusions.

The participants for this casual-comparative study were selected using a random sample of undergraduate Black males and their peers of other ethnic backgrounds who are in their sophomore and junior year of their degrees. These students were all located in one large

Christian university in the southern region of the United States, during the summer semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as of 2018, this university as a whole is made up of 48 percent White students, 15 percent Black/African American students, 5 percent Hispanic/Latino students, 1 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native students, 1 percent Asian students, 0 percent Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students, 2 percent who are two or more races, 26 percent unknown, and 1 percent Non-Resident Aliens. According to IPEDS, the university's first-year retention rate is 82 percent for full-time students and 41 percent for part-time students. The data also shows that of the 15 percent of African Americans that attend the institution, only 24 percent of the African American males graduated. The university is also regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and are evaluated based upon diversity standards. The institution also holds other programmatic accreditation that are evaluated every 4 to 10 years.

The entire sample was chosen from one Christian university. Participants were male students in their sophomore or junior year and were invited to participate as an act of their own will. These participants were selected on the basis of being in their second or third year of school and on their ability to give an account not only of their persistence up to this point, but of their continued persistence throughout the rest of their degree work. Because the university offers a significant portion of degrees online, this study included both residential and distance learning students. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to gather data about students' unique needs and their perception of academic integration. Many of these students were in their early twenties and did not have the responsibility of children or marriage. The participants were introduced to the instrument by an email from the researcher and was provided with a written

description of the study for their personal review. The institution randomly selected students and

sent them the survey invitation to protect the identities of potential participants. This random

sampling method is in keeping with Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007). A deadline was provided, and

the participants received email reminders to ensure that the study was completed on time.

Finally, the setting for the participants was via an online survey platform known as Qualtrics.

None of the faculty, staff, or administration were allowed to participate in the questionnaire, nor

were they allowed to discuss the questionnaire with the participants.

Instrumentation

The instrument that was used for this non-experimental casual-comparative study is

known as the College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ). This is a 34-item questionnaire that was

created by Davidson, Beck, and Milligan in 2009. While the researcher began with 53 items,

through the process of factor analysis 19 items were eliminated leaving 34 items within the

instrument. The questionnaire was created in an effort to remedy the lack of complex and

inaccurate attempts to distinguish between the students who will or will not eventually finish

their degrees (Davidson, Beck, & Milligan, 2009). This instrument allowed the researcher to

detect early signs that a student may or may not finish his degree. This will also enable

administrators of the university not only to monitor those students but to establish the support

needed to remedy their difficulties and prevent them from dropping out. According to Davidson,

Beck, and Milligan (2009) the authors and creators of this instrument define integration much

like Clark, Middleton, Nguyen, and Zwick (2014). The distinction in David, Beck, & Milligan's

(2009) definition is that this particular instrument seeks to evaluate the *change* in a student's

decision to persist (David, Beck, & Milligan, 2009). The developer defines the instrument as "the

way in which students change on the basis of their interactions with the campus environment,

incorporating academic and social experiences into their involvement behavior" (David, Back, & Milligan, 2009, p. 374).

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert-type scale and provided the participants with the sixth option, which is referred to as "non-applicable." For example, one of the questions asks, "How strong is your sense of connectedness with other faculty, students, staff, on this campus?" (David, Beck, & Milligan, 2009). This question may not be applicable to a student who attended the institution either online or via some other form of distance learning. This along with questions around being late to class will likely only apply to students who are actually attending the institution as a residential student, not a distance one. The available responses use language that is applicable to the questions that were asked. The responses of the student were converted based upon a five-point favorability score and were determined by whether their response indicated a positive or negative college experience. This scale was demonstrated through the following rubric (1 = Very Unfavorable, 2 = Somewhat Unfavorable, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Favorable, 5 = Very Favorable).

This particular instrument has been used by researchers in several studies. Ros, Gonzalez, Fuentes, and Martinez (2019) confirmed the validity of this instrument in their study. Pugh, Cramer, Slatyer, and Twigg (2018) also used the College Persistence Questionnaire in a study that looked at ways to remedy the non-completion rate of students who are seeking to become nurses in aboriginal institutions. Other researchers who have used this instrument include Muwonge, Schiefele, Ssenyonga, and Kibedi (2017) in their study that sought to examine the persistence of science teacher trainees. Banyard, Demers, Cohn, Edwards, Moynihan, Walsh, and Ward (2017) also used the College Persistence Questionnaire in an effort to expand the research around the academic outcomes of victimization. In short, this study has been validated and

broadly used within recent literature and research and therefore was considered effective for this study too.

Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) sought to validate and prove the reliability of this instrument by conducting two studies. The first study produced an item pool from four different schools that resulted in six intentionally consistent scales that are directly related to attrition within the existing literature. The second study evaluated the predictive and incremental predictive validity of the CPQ. According to Davidson, Back, and Milligan (2009), this validity was put to the test by providing the questionnaire to a group of freshmen who were in their first semester of college and by employing scale scores to predict whether these students would return for their second year of school. A logistic regression was used to analyze the data and by correctly categorizing 66 percent of the students proved that the results were statistically significant. According to Betts, Shirley, and Kennedy (2017), the internal consistency ranged from alpha 0.63 to 0.82. Given that the instrument has an alpha of 0.81, this instrument was appropriate for evaluating the statistical relationship between the academic integration, social integration, and intent to persist of African American men when compared to their peers of other ethnic backgrounds at predominantly white institutions. This instrument was used to measure both the independent and the dependent variable.

Procedures

After receiving IRB approval and the approval of the institution that the researcher selected for this study, the researcher began contacting the potential participants with the help of the institutional research office. The researcher submitted a Marketing Project request for the institution to randomly select the emails of all African American males and males of other ethnic backgrounds who were in their sophomore and junior year of their undergraduate degrees. The

researcher provided the invitation and link to Marketing, who then emailed the participants to explain what the College Persistence Questionnaire is, as well as to clarify the researcher's expectations for completing the survey.

The researcher also provided the required consent form within the same email per Liberty University IRB guidelines, as well as the link to the Qualtrics platform. As needed, the researcher extended a deadline in which the student would need to complete the consent form and the questionnaire. In an effort to be proactive and to replace any student who did not want to participate, over 5,000 students were selected through random sampling to survey from the selected university. In order to ensure the integrity of the questionnaire and to protect the privacy of the participants, the researcher had the questionnaire administered via the online Qualtrics platform. Qualtrics is the selected institution's approved web-based survey software tool, and it enabled the researcher to create and distribute complex questionnaires and surveys. The researcher was the only person who had access to this software and was responsible for retrieving the results of the questionnaire from the survey software tool selected. The questionnaire and the results were placed and protected on an external hard drive that requires login credentials that only the researcher had access to.

The students were asked to take the questionnaire alone and without assistance. The researcher made sure that there were no disabilities that would prevent the participant from completing the questionnaire alone. The participants were also asked to take their time and answer as honestly and accurately as possible. They were also asked not to discuss the questionnaire with anyone until the research has been completed. The researcher reviewed the data several times to ensure accuracy and that the answers of the participants were transcribed without error or ambiguity. In addition to all of the questions within the CPQ survey, the

researcher also included the following questions; What is your ethnic background? Are you a

residential or online student? What was your gender at birth? Are you a first-generation college

student? What is your class level? What is your age? Table 1 reflects the additional questions and

their answer options.

Table 1

Additional Questions and Answer Options

Additional Questions	Answer Options
What is your ethnic background?	(A) Black (B) White (C) American Indian/Alaskan Native (D) Asian (E) Hispanic/Latino (F) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (G) Two or More Races (H) Race/Ethnicity Unknown (I) Non-Resident Alien
Are you a Residential or Online Student?	(A) Residential (B) Online
What was your Gender at Birth?	(A) Male (B) Female
Are You a First- Generation College Student?	(A) Yes (B) No
What is Your Class Level?	(A) Sophomore (B) Junior
What is your Age?	1–100

After the data was collected, the researcher retrieved the spreadsheet from the Qualtrics software and imported the data into SPSS version 23.

Respondent Bias

  Within this study there was the potential for respondent bias. Participants had the option to take the survey or to decline the opportunity and that choice directly affected the results and data that the researcher was able to gather. This kind of bias is known as self-selection and was completely out of the control of the researcher. This also meant that there may have been students who could have responded but chose not to, and in that case only those who opted to complete the CPQ were be represented. Self-selection is defined by Pathak (2019) as the process by which students choose how they will respond based upon their preference and learning styles (Pathak, 2019). In addition to self-selection, participants could have potentially fabricated their responses by over-reporting their behavior or lack thereof in an effort to present themselves in a more desirable light. For example, students may have reported that they were late for class less than they really were, or they may have reported that they were more likely to complete their degrees at the institution they have selected, when in reality they lacked the resources to continue their degree at their current school. Kelly, Harpel, Fontes, Walters, and Murphy (2017) defined this behavior as social desirability bias and associated it with self-deception (Kelly, Harpel, Fontes, Walters, & Murphy, 2017).

Data Analysis

  Descriptive and inferential analysis were used to explore the ethnic differences between the independent and dependent variables. Descriptive statistics were used to investigate the selected university demographic characteristics through frequencies. Inferential statistics was also used to analyze academic integration, social integration, and institutional commitment through the ANOVA examination. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) highlighted the ANOVA

procedure as appropriate for casual-comparative research and in many cases necessary when in research designs that involve the study of more than two groups (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Student scores on the College Persistence Questionnaire were reported by the researcher, and hypothesis one was tested using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) against the results of the academic integration scale from the CPQ. Hypotheses two and three were also tested using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) against the results of the social integration and the institutional commitment scale from the CPQ. In order to validate this method, a Box and Whisker plot was used for each group and variable in order to identify extreme outliers. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to determine the assumption of normality and a Levene's test of equality of error variance was used to determine the assumption of equal variance. After the assumptions were met, the ANOVA analysis was completed for each null hypothesis. Tukey was also used in all post hoc testing. An alpha level of .05 was used. Table 2 identifies the data analysis components. The effect size was calculated using eta squared (η^2), which is the percentage of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable.

Table 2

Data Analysis Process

Null Hypothesis	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Statistical Procedure
#1	Group 1: African American Sophomore/Junior Males	Academic Integration	ANOVA
	Group 2: White Sophomore/Junior Males		
	Group 3: All Other Ethnicities Sophomore/Junior Males		
#2	Group 1: African American Sophomore/Junior Males	Social Integration	ANOVA
	Group 2: White Sophomore/Junior Males		
	Group 3: All Other Ethnicities Sophomore/Junior Males		
#3	Group 1: African American Sophomore/Junior Males	Intent to Persist	ANOVA
	Group 2: White Sophomore/Junior Males		
	Group 3: All Other Ethnicities Sophomore/Junior Males		

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter reviews the descriptive statistics for the respondents to the College Persistence Questionnaire assumptions, data screening, and results from the analysis methods used. The researcher's desire in this analysis was to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in African American males when compared to their peers as regards their social integration, academic integration, and intent to persist at a major Christian university. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the research questions, hypotheses, descriptive statistics, and results in order to highlight the findings of this research.

Research Questions

RQ1: Do African American male students in a major university have different levels of academic integration when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds?

RQ2: Do African American male students in a major university have different levels of social integration when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds?

RQ3: Do African American male students in a major university have different levels of intent to persist when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds?

Hypotheses

H$_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in the Academic Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire.

Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference in the Social Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire.

Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in the Intent to Persist scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire.

Descriptive Statistics

At the final data pull on November 2, 2020 there were 112 students who responded to the invitation to complete the questionnaire. Twenty-three of those respondents acknowledged consent but subsequently did not answer any survey questions. There was one respondent who answered the ethnic background question but did not answer the other demographic question; however, that respondent proceeded to complete the questionnaire. For the analysis, the researcher focused on the 89 participants who responded to the questions after consent. The sample consisted of 67 (75.3 percent) participants identifying as White, 15 (16.9 percent) identifying as Black, and 7 (7.9 percent) identifying as Other (see Table 3). When determining their ethnicity, students were able to choose Hispanic, Asian, or two or more races; however, these categories combined amounted to 7, so the researcher decided to collapse these categories into Other (see Table 4). In the sample, there are 45 (51.1 percent) residential and 43 (48.9 percent) online students (see Table 5). Also, the sample is made up of 27 (30.7 percent) first generation college students and 61 (69.3 percent) non first-generation students (see Table 6). Sophomores make up 57 (64.8 percent) of the sample, and 31 (35.2 percent) are juniors (see Table 7). The ages of the respondents range from 18 to 62, with a mean of 20.48, a median of 20,

and a standard deviation of 3.15 (see Table 8). The missing cases were excluded from the analysis.

The outcome variables of interest are scores calculated from the College Persistence Questionnaire. There are sub-sections of the questionnaire that represent these three categories: Social Integration, Academic Integration, and Intent to Persist. The scores were calculated by totally the participant responses to the questions in each section. The overall means and standard deviations for Social Integration, Academic Integration, and Intent to Persist are as follows respectively *(m= 20.48, SD = 3.00; m= 24.00, SD = 6.47; m= 8.10, SD = 1.57)*. The means and standard deviations for each outcome variable by ethnic background are shown in Table 10.

Table 3

Frequencies of Ethic Background

	N	%
Black	15	16.9%
White	67	75.3%
Asian	2	2.2%
Hispanic/Latino	1	1.1%
Two or More Races	4	4.5%
Total	89	100%

Table 4

Frequencies of Ethnic Background —Consolidated Version

	N	%
Black	15	16.9%
White	67	75.3%
Other	7	7.9%
Total	89	100%

Table 5

Frequencies of Type of Student

	N	%
Residential	45	51.1%

Online	43	48.9%
Total	88	100%

Table 6

Frequencies of First- Generation Students

	N	%
Yes	27	30.7%
No	61	69.3%
Total	88	100%

Table 7

Frequencies of Class Level

	N	%
Sophomore	57	64.8%
Junior	31	35.2%
Total	88	100%

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Age

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	89	44	18	62	27.13	12.00

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Integration	89	15.00	27.00	20.50	3.10
Academic Integration	87	9.00	37.00	24.00	6.50
Intent to Persist	88	4.00	12.00	8.10	1.60

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variables

		N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval For Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Social Integration	Black	15	19.80	3.30	.85	18.00	21.62	16.00	26.00
	White	67	20.80	3.05	.40	20.04	21.53	15.00	27.00
	Other	7	19.00	2.82	1.10	16.40	21.61	15.00	24.00
	Total	89	20.50	3.10	.32	19.83	21.13	15.00	27.00
Academic Integration	Black	14	22.14	7.04	1.90	18.10	26.21	11.00	33.00
	White	67	24.32	6.20	.75	22.82	25.83	13.00	37.00
	Other	6	24.70	8.70	3.54	15.55	33.80	9.00	35.00
	Total	87	24.00	6.50	.70	22.62	25.40	9.00	37.00
Intent to Persist	Black	15	8.10	1.83	.50	7.05	9.10	4.00	10.00
	White	66	8.20	1.50	.20	7.81	8.54	5.00	12.00
	Other	7	7.42	1.90	.71	5.70	9.20	4.00	9.00
	Total	88	8.10	1.60	.20	7.80	8.43	4.00	12.00

Results

In order to test for mean differences between the dependent variables Social Integration, Academic Integration, and Intent to Persist and the independent variable Ethnic Background, the one-way ANOVA test in SPSS was conducted to address the three null hypotheses. With this model, the mean of an arbitrary number of groups, each of which follows a normal distribution with the same variance, can be compared. The ANOVA test requires that a few assumptions are met: 1) the Assumption of Normality, 2), the Assumption of Equal Variance, and 3) the Assumption that there are No Significant Outliers.

Null Hypothesis One

Null Hypothesis One states, "There is no statistically significant difference in the Academic Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire."

Data Screening

Data screening for data inconsistencies, outliers, and missing data was conducted on the dependent variable Academic Integration. The researcher organized the data on each variable and examined it for inconsistencies, outliers, and missing data. No data errors, outliers, or inconsistencies were identified.

Assumptions

The researcher used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine normality. The null hypothesis of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov is that the data is normally distributed, and the alternative is that at least one point does not come from a specified distribution. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis of the test of normality, indicating that the data was normal, $p < .200$ (see Table 11).

Table 11

Academic Integration Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Academic Integration	.10	86	.20

In order to assess constant variance, Levene's test of equality of error variance was used. The null hypothesis for this test is constant variance and the alternative is non-constant variance. The assumption for equal variance was met ($p =.778$) (see Table 12). The assumption for pooled

variance is checked by assessing the smallest and the largest standard deviation by Ethnic

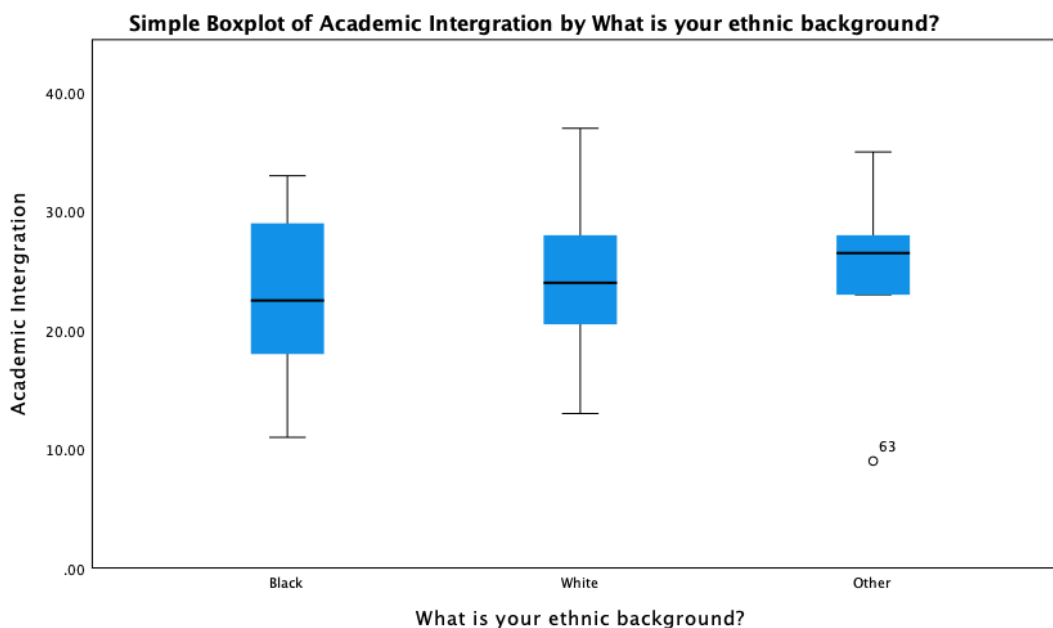Background for each Academic Integration.

Table 12

Academic Integration Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Academic Integration	Based on Mean	.25	2	84	.80

The researcher used the boxplot to assess the assumption of outliers. In the group Other

for Ethnic Background, the boxplot does show one outlier identified as observation 63 (see

Figure 8). Excluding this outlier caused no significant changes to the results by excluding this

outlier, so the decision was made to keep the outlier. Warner (2013) defines an outlier as scores

that are unusual or extreme in relation to the sample distribution; thus, the researcher kept the

outlier.

Figure 8

Academic Integration Boxplot

Simple Boxplot of Academic Intergration by What is your ethnic background?

One-Way ANOVA

In order to test for mean differences between the dependent variable Academic Integration and the independent variable Ethnic Background, a one-way ANOVA test in SPSS was used to address the null hypothesis. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that states that there will be no statistically significant difference in the Academic Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire. There is not enough evidence to say that at least one of the population means are different at a 95 percent confidence rate where $F(2, 84) = .691$, $p > .504$, $\eta^2 = .016$ (see Table 13 and Table 14).

The significance level was set at alpha = 0.05. No additional multiple comparison or adjustment analysis was performed because the researcher did not find a significant difference between groups.

Table 13

Academic Integration ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic Integration	Between Groups	58.20	2	29.10	.70	.50
	Within Groups	3537.82	84	42.11		
	Total	3596.00	86			

Table 14

Academic Integration ANOVA Effect Size

		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Academic Integration	Eta-squared	.01	.00	.10
	Epsilon-squared	-.00	-.02	.10
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	-.00	-.02	.10
	Omega-squared Random-effect	-.00	-.01	.03

Null Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis Two states, "there is no statistically significant difference in the Social

Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to

their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College

Persistence Questionnaire."

Data Screening

Data screening for data inconsistencies, outliers, and missing data was conducted on the

dependent variable Social Integration. The researcher organized the data on each variable and

examined for inconsistencies, outliers, and missing data. No data errors, outliers, or

inconsistencies were identified.

Assumptions

The researcher used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine normality. The

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is a test of normality where the null hypothesis suggests that the data

is normally distributed, and the alternative says that at least one point does not come from a

specified distribution. According to Green and Salkind (2014), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov is

appropriate for testing the normality of distribution. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis

of the test of normality to say that the assumption of normality was not met for the dependent

variable Social Integration, indicating that the data was not normal. Even though the assumption

of normality was not met, the researcher decided to continue with the analysis because according

to Laerd Statistics (n.d.) the ANOVA procedure tolerates violations in normality and can handle

data that may not be normal. $p< .011$(see Table 15).

Table 15

Social Integration Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Social Integration	.11	86	.01

In order to assess constant variance, Levene's test of equality of error variance was used.

The null hypothesis for this test is constant variance and the alternative is non-constant variance.

Warner (2013) defined Levene's test as the test identified by the F ratio. Warner (2013) also

highlighted the fact that this test is used to test the assumption of equal variance. The researcher

failed to reject the null hypothesis to say that the assumption of constant variance has been met

for the variable Social Integration; thus, the assumption was met. $F(2,86)=.443$, $p >.778$ (see

Table 16) .

Table 16

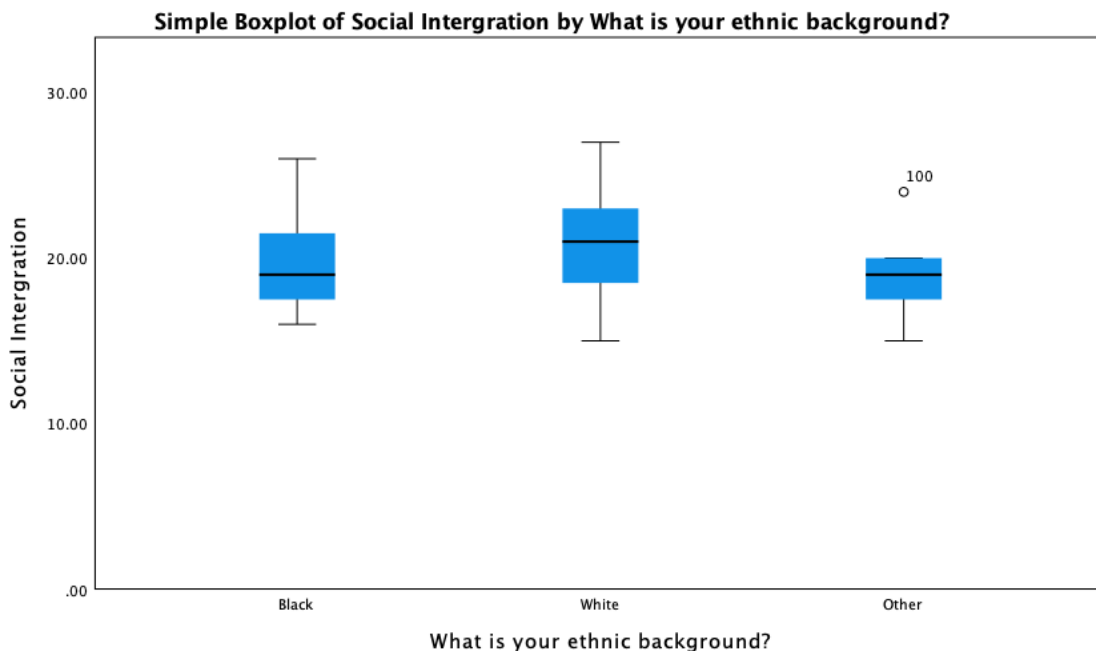*Social Integration Test of Homogeneity of Variances*

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Social Integration	Based on Mean	.44	2	86	.64

The researcher used the boxplot to assess the assumption of outliers. In the other group

the boxplot does show one outlier identified as observation 100 (see Figure 9). However, there

were no outliers more than three standard deviations from the sample mean. Warner (2013) defined an outlier as scores that are unusual, or extreme in relation to the sample distribution; this not being the case here, the researcher kept the outlier.

Figure 9

Social Integration Boxplot

One-Way ANOVA

In order to test for mean differences between the dependent variable Social Integration and the independent variable Ethnic Background, a one-way ANOVA test in SPSS was used to address the null hypothesis. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that states there will be no statistically significant difference in the Social Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire. There is not enough evidence to say that at least one of the population means are different at a 95 percent confidence rate where F (2,86) =1.516, $p >.225$ $\eta^2 = .034$ (see Table 15 and Table 16).

Table 17

Social Integration ANOVA Results

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Integration	Between Groups	28.75	2	14.40	1.51	.22
	Within Groups	815.50	86	9.50		
	Total	844.22	88			

Table 18

Social Integration ANOVA Effect Size

			95% Confidence Interval	
		Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
Social Integration	Eta-squared	.03	.00	.12
	Epsilon-squared	.01	-.02	.10
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	.01	-.02	.10
	Omega-squared Random-effect	.00	-.01	.05

The significance level was set at alpha = 0.05. No additional multiple comparison or adjustment analyses were performed because the researcher did not find a significant difference between the groups.

Null Hypothesis Three

Null Hypothesis Three states, "There is no statistically significant difference in the Intent to Persist scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire."

Data Screening

Data screening for data inconsistencies, outliers, and missing data was conducted on the dependent variable Intent to Persist. The researcher organized the data on each variable and examined for inconsistencies, outliers, and missing data. No data errors or inconsistencies were identified; however, one potentially harmful outlier was found. The analysis was run without this subject to see whether this would affect the results. There were no significant changes to the results by excluding this outlier, so the decision was made to keep the outlier.

Assumptions

The researcher used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine normality. The null hypothesis of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov is that the data is normally distributed, and the alternative is that at least one point does not come from a specified distribution. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis of the test of normality, indicating that the data was not normal. Even though the assumption of normality was not met, the researcher decided to continue with the analysis because according to Laerd Statistics (n.d.) the ANOVA procedure tolerates violations to normality and can handle data that may not be normal. $p < .000$ (see Table 19).

Table 19

Intent to Persist Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Intent to Persist	.23	86	.00

The null hypothesis for Levene's test is constant variance, and the alternative is non-constant variance. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis to say that the assumption of constant variance has been met for the variable Intent to Persist, indicating that the assumption was met, $F(2,85) = .604$, $p > .549$ (see Table 20). The assumption for pooled variance is checked

by assessing the small and the largest standard deviation by Ethnic background for each Intent to
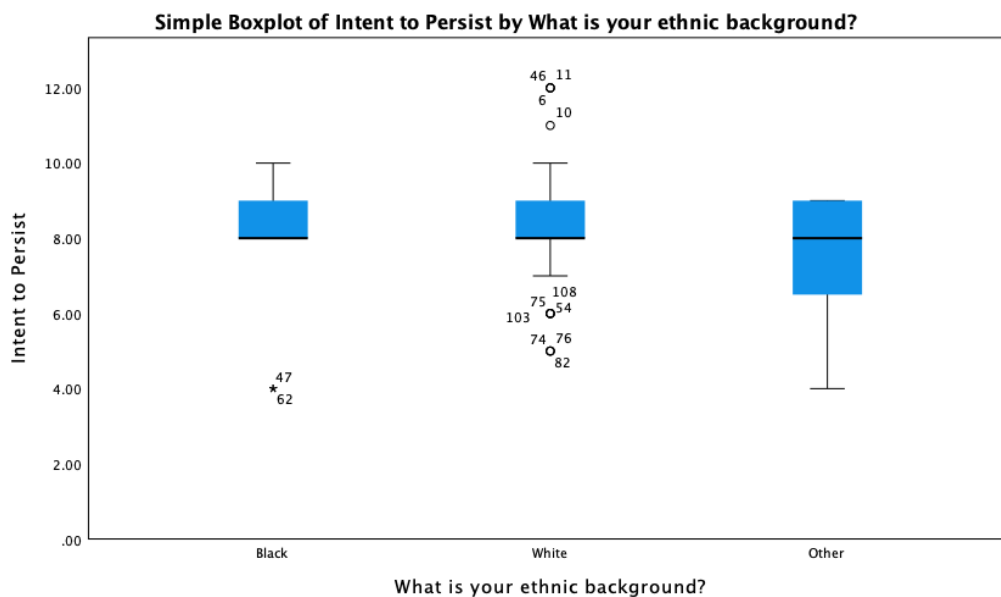
Persist.

Table 20

Intent to Persist Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Intent to Persist	Based on Mean	.60	2	85	.54

The researcher used a boxplot to assess the assumption of outliers. In the group White (for

Ethnic Background)the boxplot does show11 outliers identified as subject (46, 11, 6, 10, 103,

75, 108, 54, 74, 76, and 82) (see Figure 10). However, no outliers were more than three standard

deviations from the sample mean. Warner (2013) defined an outlier as scores that are unusual or

extreme in relation to the sample distribution. In the group Black (for Ethnic Background) there

is one potentially harmful outlier identified as subject 62. The analysis was run without this

subject to see if that affected the results. There were no significant changes to the results by

excluding this outlier, so the decision was made to keep the outlier.

Figure 10

Intent to Persist Boxplot

One-Way ANOVA
=============

One-Way ANOVA

In order to test for mean differences between the dependent variable Intent to Persist and the independent variable Ethnic background, a one-way ANOVA test in SPSS was used to address the null hypothesis. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that states there will be no statistically significant difference in the Intent to Persist scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire. There is not enough evidence to say that at least one of the population means are different at a 95% confidence where F (2,85) =.730, p >.485, η^2 = .017 (see Table 17 and Table 18). The significance level was set at alpha = 0.05. There were no additional multiple comparison or adjustment analysis performed because the researcher did not find a significant difference between groups.

Table 21

Intent to Persist ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intent to Persist	Between Groups	3.61	2	1.80	.73	.50
	Within Groups	210.50	85	2.50		
	Total	214.10	87			

Table 22

Intent to Persist ANOVA Effect Size

		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Intent to Persist	Eta-squared	.01	.00	.087
	Epsilon-squared	-.00	-.02	.066
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	-.00	-.02	.065
	Omega-squared Random-effect	-.00	-.01	.034

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter Five will review the results of the statistical analysis and the implications, as well as limitations of the research. This chapter will also discuss the results of the study in comparison with the existing literature. Finally, the researcher will make further recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to assess the relationship between social integration, academic integration, and intent to persist among African American males and their peers at a predominantly white Christian institution. In this research, the independent variable is Ethnicity consolidated as Black, White, and Other. The dependent variables come from the College Persistence Questionnaire and are calculated as scores from the subscales of the survey for measures of Social Integration, Academic Integration, and Intent to Persist. The researcher's analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference between African American males and their peers at a large Christian university. In fact, the mean scores for African American, White, and Other Ethnicities were fairly similar to say that on average the Academic Integration, Social Integration and Intent to persist as measured by the CPQ are fairly similar for all males at a large Christian university. These findings suggest that African American males may not have trouble with integration and their persistence when it comes to their education at a large Christian university as compared to other males.

Although there seems to be a gap in the literature as regards integration and commitment to the educational journey in comparing the Ethnic Background of the students, this researcher did not find any statistically significant difference between the ethnic groups and the dependent

variables of Academic Integration, Social Integration, and Intent to Persist in males. This may indicate that the literature on integration and persistence pertaining to the African American male is consistent when discussing faith and spirituality as factors of retention. There still may be some undetected challenges when translating these ideas. Since prior research concluded that faith and spirituality play a role in the persistence and integration of the African American male, it is possible that since this is a Christian university population, the integration and persistence of the African American male has been affected in a positive way (Barnes, et al., 2017).

In the post-hoc analyses that were completed, the researcher found that there were some significant relationships between the independent variable ethnicity, some of the other demographic variables (First Generation, Class Level, and Residential), and dependent variables (Social Integration and Academic Integration). Specifically, there are differences in academic integration between residential and online students. Also, there were differences in Social Integration between first-generation students and non-first generation students. Lastly, there was a difference between sophomores and juniors in academic integration.

Null Hypothesis One

Null Hypothesis One states, "There is no statistically significant difference in the Academic Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire." In comparing and contrasting the literature around academic integration and the results of this particular study, the researcher found that the results of this study was in many ways consistent with the literature. Proctor, et al. (2018) highlighted that the support of faculty and staff greatly contributed to the academic persistence of African American male students. In keeping with their findings, the results of this research examined the

relationship between the respondents and the faculty of the institution and found that the academic persistence of African American men within this particularly large Christian institution had much to do with their access to faculty support and help. While within this study the presence of faculty support did not show a significant difference between ethnic backgrounds, it did show a significant difference between residential and online students. These particular findings contribute to the literature in that they show a growing need for faculty support within distance learning environments, more so than in residential learning communities.

In addition to Proctor, et al. (2018), the results of the current research showed that the same students who acknowledged a high level of faculty support also acknowledged a strong confidence in their ability to finish their degrees. This is in keeping with Brooms and Davis (2017), who found that faculty support provided students with better confidence around their academic persistence and success. While their study was conducted in a private institution, this study contributes to their findings in that it directly addresses the academic confidence of black male students and their peers within the Christian higher education sector.

In addition to faculty support, the literature also pointed to the need for proper institutional placement. According to Lutz et al. (2018), African Americans are more likely to succeed when they are placed in the right academic environment and institution. The researcher found that there were consistencies between the literature around institutional placement and this study because the research shows that the institution matched their academic skills and therefore increased their confidence and academic performance. According to the research conducted by Lutz et al. (2018), while students still end up graduating, they only excelled in an environment that matched their skills and ability.

Eller and DiPrete (2018) also highlighted academic resources as another crucial part of

academic persistence. The authors found that students who have more access to academic resources such as tutoring and other forms of assistance are more likely to excel in their work and academic grades. Eller and DiPrete (2018) also suggested that when black students lack the academic support that these resources provide, they are more likely to become lost in the rigor of the academic environment, and while some finish their degrees, they may not have reached their full potential in doing so. According to the authors, these resources should not just be provided once black student get to college. Eller and DiPrete's (2018) research indicated that black student are more likely to enroll in four-year institutions if they received academic resources even prior to enrolling in college. These resources can come from their high school, parents, or other opportunities provided to them through government programs and community education initiatives. These resources not only increase student competence, they also address many of the self-efficacy issues that hinder students from being integrated into the academic environment and from completing their academic degrees.

Null Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis Two states, "There is no statistically significant difference in the Social Integration scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire." Among all of the variables, it appeared that social integration played a role in the persistence of African American male students and their peers regardless of the angle that the researcher took. Everything from student involvement in fraternities and social clubs to the presence of faith-based integration on campus affected the persistence of African American male students and their peers within the existing literature. According to Dancy and Hotchkins (2015), black male student involvement in fraternities and social clubs provides them

with a sense of support and accountability as they navigate academia and adulthood. Being connected to other students who have the same academic goal in mind helped black students to feel a sense of community and reduced their feelings of loneness and isolation. This study is consistent with the literature because it shows the connection between students and their peers as they progress and persist through their degrees.

In addition to social clubs and fraternities, the literature shows that family involvement in the social community of the institution also provided students with a level of integration that increased persistence. According to Jeynes (2016), parental involvement in the academic community is critical to the success of African American males. The presence of parents provides accountability, support, and advocacy for students throughout their academic careers. According to Plunkett et al. (2016), the support and presence of parents within the academic and social community of the institution has a significant effect on the self-esteem of African American students. The self-esteem produced by the presence and participation of parents also created a level of self-efficacy that had the potential to establish their persistence throughout college and whatever degrees they pursued. Goings (2016) highlighted the reality that many African American students attend college to create a better life for their families, and that the presence of their family within the social and academic community served as a continual reminder of why they had enrolled in school in the first place. The literature is in keeping with this study because when participants were asked about their family support within their academic careers, the results show that this support either directly or indirectly effected the participants' commitment to completing their studies.

In addition to family, peer relationships also surfaced within the literature as a very important component of social integration. While social clubs and fraternities are conduits of this

kind of relationship, peer relationships extend far beyond the programs and organizations that are provided through the school. According to Brooms and Davis (2017), peer support was one of the main reasons that African American male students persisted with their studies. While the simple support of peers was strong enough to make an impact, Brooms and Davis (2017) discovered that peer mentorship was also a critical part of the participants' persistence and academic success. Peer mentorship provided students with the opportunity to build relationships that doubled as personal and academic. These relationships help to bridge the gap between academic and social life in a healthy and effective way. Peer mentorship also allowed students to create shared classroom experiences and to develop coaching that would sustain confidence throughout their studies.

Lastly, identity rejection was a major topic within the literature; in this study and in the academic environment of this particular predominantly white Christian institution, however, this was an inconsistent component. Bazana and Mogotsi (2017) highlighted the reality that predominantly white institutions have historically alienated and excluded black student identities as a result of them being established for white men and during a period in which African Americans were not permitted to attend college. According to Harris, et al. (2019) the alienation of African American Identity either causes African American students to compromise who they are by conforming to the white male identity that the institution was created to accommodate and perpetuate, or to rejection the institution as a whole and never complete their degrees. While much of the literature available is consistent with these ideas, the subject institution of this study showed no significant difference in how it treated African American males and their peers of other ethnic backgrounds.

Null Hypothesis Three

Null Hypothesis Three states, "There is no statistically significant difference in the Intent to Persist scores of African American male students in a major university when compared to their peers of either White or All Other ethnic backgrounds, as measured by the College Persistence Questionnaire." The existing literature around intent to persist is woven into much of the other literature that we have already discussed, as is the academic integration and social integration of the student into the institution that they have chosen to attend. Tinto (1975) highlighted the reality that the persistence of African American students has much to do with their integration into the academic and social environment of their school. According to Tinto (1975), whether or not students intend to persist is determined by how well the institution that they attend ensures that it is not simply intentional about diversity, but also intentional about the integration of the culture, faculty, curriculum and every other part of the institution so that it reflects the African American men who will attend for the purpose of gaining an education.

Much like Durkheim's theory of suicide (1961) discussed earlier in Chapter Two, whenever African American students have not been properly integrated into the institution or society of which they are a part, they seek to remove themselves from that institution or society. While for Durkheim this meant suicide, for this study it simply means that the students will be at greater risk of dropping out of school and failing to persist through their degree. This is in keeping with what the researcher has discovered because the overall experience of the participants provided a strong sense of confidence that they would finish their degrees and an equally strong sense of confidence that they would finish their degrees at this institution.

Implications

African American males seem to score similarly on the integration and persistence subscales to their peers, which suggests that there may not be factors present that impact the

males differently on the basis of their ethnic background at a large Christian university. Those who are in leadership at predominantly white institutions can benefit from this research by getting a deeper understanding of how African American males are doing when compared to their peers in terms of academic integration, social integration, and intent to persist. This research can also aid in the development of retention guidelines for African American male students. Lastly, this research especially helps in understanding how well a major university may be doing in creating and fostering an environment in which African American males can easily become integrated and feel connected to their studies and to others.

First-generation students are students who are attending college as the first in their family. A difference in social integration exists between first-generation students and non-first-generation students. This shows the researcher that it may be more difficult for first-generation students to become integrated socially. The mean score for Social Integration for first-generation students is slightly lower than non-first-generation students. This difference may be a result of non-first-generation students having access to family members who have attended college before who can provide advice on how to become socially integrated in that environment.

Residential students seem to become academically integrated differently than online student. This makes sense because there is a different academic dynamic for residential students compared to online students. Students that identify as residential typically would live on campus and/or go to physical classrooms, while students that identify as online students attend classes virtually. The means that academic integration is lower for residential students than for online students, or put differently that the academic integration of online students is on average better than that of residential students.

Class level plays a role in academic integration at a large Christian university, especially since a difference was found between sophomores and juniors. Sophomores or juniors could become more easily academically integrated for a number of reasons. Juniors may feel as if they are now more connected to the university and have had the opportunity to build relationships. The mean score for Academic Integration was lower for sophomores than juniors, which could mean that juniors may feel more academically integrated.

Limitations

The response rate for this research was low. Of the roughly five thousand surveys sent out to students, there were only 89 respondents. Also, the researcher would like to acknowledge that there is a global pandemic going on this year and this could have impacted the responses to the questionnaire. During the global pandemic people have been forced to quarantine and stay at home. Many students have suffered through loss, grief, loneliness, and many other issues that may have made responding to a survey difficult, or simply not their priority at this time. The researcher would also like to recognize that there are many global challenges occurring because of the pandemic, which definitely can impact response to the study. White male students represented 75.3 percent of the sample population and served as the majority within this study. This majority reflects the university population as a whole. However, given that the pandemic is known to affect minorities disproportionately, this also could have affected the responses to the survey. Another limitation of this research is that the sample size of African American males only makes up 15 of the responses, making it difficult to see a significant difference when compared to 67 White males and 7 Others. The sample for this research came from students at a large Christian university. This could have impacted the results as well, because these students may have stronger faith and spiritual connections than the average college student. In addition to

their connection to spirituality, their Christian faith may have contributed to a more academic and socially integrative environment; especially in light of the deep roots that the African Americans culture has to the Christian faith.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was not able to show that the integration and persistence of African American males at a major university differs significantly from that of their peers. Although the goal was to explore this relationship, the researcher is glad to have found that African American males have the propensity to integrate in a way remarkably similar to their peers of other ethnicities. Further research could explore this relationship with more independent variables (precollege academic preparation, socioeconomic status) and build a regression model. Also, the researcher would recommend thinking of ways to increase the response rate of the survey in an effort to increase the sample size of the study. One way to increase the response rate may be to offer gift cards or other incentives to potential participants. This would have helped the researcher to identify potentially significant differences. Further investigation of the College Persistence Questionnaire and the reliability of this questionnaire on measuring integration could be explored. Also, the researcher recommends testing other measures of integration and persistence to see whether the results change. One of the other measures of integration and persistence that could be used is evaluating the same group of students from one semester to the next or even from one year to the next.

One other suggestion for future research is to expand the population from a large Christian university to a public predominantly white institution. This will enable the researcher to extend the results to a broader population and to compare them to those from the students of

the Christian university. Future research could also include multiple institutions instead of just the one that was used for this study.

Lastly, the researcher recommends more follow-up on the post-hoc analysis. There could be greater analysis of the dynamics and differences in the groups. For starters, one could develop a regression model to understand the estimate that quantifies the differences in the relationships. This could help in establishing guidelines for creating integrative environments for students. Future research could also incorporate a qualitative study that allows for interviews with students instead of just the completion of a survey.

While the researcher was not able to detect a statistically significant difference in the integration and persistence of African American males when compared to their peers, there may be other factors that could account for that difference. One of the factors that could account for a statically significant difference is participants who attend the institution online instead of those who are considered residential students. Since there is a gap in the current literature, the researcher deemed it necessary to investigate the differences in this relationship.

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Appendix A: College Persistence Questionnaire

Scale	Question
Academic Integration	How well do you understand the thinking of your instructors when they lecture or ask students to answer questions in class?
Academic Integration	How satisfied are you with the extent of your intellectual growth and interest in ideas since coming here?
Academic Integration	How concerned about your intellectual growth are the faculty here?
Academic Integration	In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of instruction you are receiving here?
Academic Integration	On average across all your courses, how interested are you in the things that are being said during class discussions?
Academic Integration	How much of a connection do you see between what you are learning here and your future career possibilities?
Academic Integration	I believe that many instructors deliberately impose unreasonable requirements on students and enjoy their distress.
Academic Integration	Students differ widely in how much interaction they want to have with faculty. How disappointed are you in the amount of interaction you have?
Social Integration	How much have your interpersonal relationships with other students had an impact on your personal growth, attitudes, and values?
Social Integration	How much have your interpersonal relationships with other students had an impact on your intellectual growth and interest in ideas?
Social Integration	How strong is your sense of connectedness with other faculty, students, and staff on this campus?
Social Integration	How much do you think you have in common with other students here?

Social Integration	When you think about your overall social life here—friendships, college organizations, extracurricular activities, and so on—how satisfied are you with yours?
Social Integration	How many of your closest friends are here in college with you rather than elsewhere, such as at other colleges, at work, or in your hometown?
Social Integration	What is your overall impression of the other students here?
Social Integration	How often do you wear clothing with this college's emblems?
Supportive Services Satisfactions	How satisfied are you with the academic advisement you receive here?
Supportive Services Satisfactions	How well does this institution communicate important information to students such as academic rules, degree requirements, individual course requirements, campus news and events, extracurricular activities, tuition costs, and financial aid and scholarship opportunities?
Supportive Services Satisfactions	How easy is it to get answers to your questions about things related to your education here?
Supportive Services Satisfactions	How much input do you think you can have on matters such as course offerings, rules and regulations, and registration procedures?
Supportive Services Satisfactions	If you have needs that are different from the majority of students here, how well does this university meet those needs?
Supportive Services Satisfactions	How fairly do you think students are handled here?
Degree Commitment	When you think of the people who mean the most to you (friends and family), how disappointed do you think they would be if you quit school?
Degree Commitment	At this moment in time, how certain are you that you will earn a college degree?

Degree Commitment	At this moment in time, how strong would you say your commitment is to earning a college degree, here or elsewhere?
Degree Commitment	How strong is your intention to persist in your pursuit of the degree, here or elsewhere?
Degree Commitment	How supportive is your family of your pursuit of a college degree, in terms of their encouragement and expectations?
Institutional Commitment	How likely is it that you will earn a degree from here?
Institutional Commitment	How confident are you that this is the right university for you?
Institutional Commitment	How likely is it that you will re-enroll here next semester?
Institutional Commitment	How much thought have you given to stopping your education here and perhaps transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons?
Academic Conscientiousness	How often do you miss class for reasons other than illness or participation in school-sponsored activities?
Academic Conscientiousness	How often do you turn in assignments past the due date?
Academic Conscientiousness	I am disinterested in academic work and do as little as possible.