

A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PERCEIVED SELF-
EFFICACY AS IT RELATES TO PERSISTENCE FOR FIRST-GENERATION
BLACK COLLEGE MEN IN TEXAS

by

Cleveland Earl Brown Sr.

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

2021

A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PERCEIVED SELF-
EFFICACY AS IT RELATES TO PERSISTENCE FOR FIRST-GENERATION
BLACK COLLEGE MEN IN TEXAS

by Cleveland Earl Brown Sr.

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

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2021

APPROVED BY:

Shante' Moore Austin, PhD, Committee Chair

David T. Vacchi, PhD, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men at two public and one private Christian institution of higher education in the state of Texas. The theory that guided this study was Bandura's self-efficacy as it provided the theoretical framework. Tinto's student integration model was used in this research to analyze Tinto's concept of academic and social integration relevant to first-generation Black college men's persistence. Four research questions were used in this study to describe the participants' perceived self-efficacy, persistence, and family influences as well as perceived experiences with faculty and peer students relevant to their academic success in higher education in Texas. Quantitative studies have focused on the historical academic achievement gap for minority students in higher education (Spangler & Slate, 2014). However, there was limited research giving a voice to Black men in college and their perceived self-efficacy as it relates to college persistence in Texas. A purposeful sampling method was used to identify 10 first-generation Black senior college men for this study. The data collection approach in this study included semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups. The qualitative data analysis procedures employed Moustakas' modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen's method. Findings indicated that perceived self-efficacy relevant to the persistence of the participants in higher education in Texas was aligned with existing research. Four themes and patterns emerged: self-efficacy, family relationships, community obligations, and campus relationships.

Keywords: persistence, self-efficacy, first-generation, achievement gap, Black men, Black students, transcendental phenomenology

Copyright Page

© 2021 Cleveland Earl Brown Sr.

All rights reserved.

Dedication

I dedicate this research to my instrumental wife, Shemitia, and our wonderful sons, Cleveland Jr. and Jacob. I thank God for giving me such a wonderful and caring family. Without their support, I would not have continued my educational journey from the White House to the field of education. This dissertation journey is also dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Channie Harris, and my deceased great-grandparents, Charlie and Ellen Brown. Their persistent hard work ethic taught me how to endure through childhood poverty and segregation on my uncommon journey literally from the Outhouse to the White House.

Acknowledgments

Above all, it is most important to acknowledge the biblical worldview within John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). I now recognize the vital role of Providence throughout my uncommon educational journey. The focus of my research aligns with the message of James 1:3: “because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). The foundation of my marginal educational path began with illiteracy, poverty, and fatherlessness in a segregated rural environment in North Carolina during the 1960s. It extended through a segregated elementary school, desegregated middle school, and a dysfunctional high school until my awareness of the difference “between theories and facts” (Greene, 1995, p. 165) through undergraduate enrollment at Chaminade University in Honolulu at age 25.

I also want to acknowledge the most crucial roles of my Chair, Dr. Shante’ Austin, and committee member, Dr. David Vacchi. I thank God for answering my prayers with a patient and genuinely committed committee to assist me through the most challenging period of my educational journey. The final leg of my journey to earn a doctorate from Liberty University at age 60 was indeed the fulfillment of the message within James 1:12:” Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011).

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	3
Copyright Page.....	4
Dedication.....	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Tables	12
List of Abbreviations	13
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	14
Overview.....	14
Background.....	14
Historical.....	15
Social.....	16
Theoretical	18
Situation to Self.....	19
Problem Statement.....	22
Purpose Statement.....	24
Significance of the Study	24
Research Questions.....	26
Research Question 1	26
Research Question 2	26
Research Question 3	27
Research Question 4	27
Definitions.....	28

Summary	28
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	30
Overview	30
Theoretical Framework	31
Tinto's Student Integration Model	33
Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory	35
Related Literature	37
Black College Men	39
First-Generation College Students	42
Learning Environment	44
Faculty	46
Socioeconomic	48
Texas	50
Persistence	52
Self-Efficacy	55
Education Intervention	57
Summary	61
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	64
Overview	64
Design	64
Research Questions	67
Setting	67
Participants	68

Procedures.....	70
The Researcher's Role.....	70
Data Collection	72
Interviews.....	72
Journal Prompts	74
Focus Groups	75
Data Analysis	77
Trustworthiness.....	79
Credibility	80
Dependability and Confirmability	80
Transferability.....	80
Ethical Considerations	81
Summary	82
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....	83
Overview.....	83
Participants.....	83
DeShawn.....	85
Andre.....	85
Jamal	86
Jalen	87
Darius.....	88
Hakeem	89
Darnell.....	89

	10
Treyvon	90
Terrell.....	91
Tyrone.....	92
Results.....	92
Theme Development.....	93
Research Question Responses.....	105
Summary.....	108
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	109
Overview.....	109
Summary of Findings.....	110
Discussion.....	111
Empirical Discussion	112
Theoretical Discussion.....	117
Implications.....	118
Theoretical Implications	118
Empirical Implications.....	119
Practical Implications.....	120
Delimitations and Limitations.....	121
Recommendations for Future Research	123
Summary.....	125
REFERENCES	127
APPENDICES	140
Appendix A: Consent Form.....	140

Appendix B: Recruitment Survey	142
Appendix C: Individual Interview Questions	143
Appendix D: Focus Group Questions	144
Appendix E: Writing Prompt Questions	145
Appendix F: IRB Approval.....	146

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics	69
Table 2. Table of Themes	94

List of Abbreviations

Big Texas College (BTC, pseudonym)

Black Male Initiative (BMI)

First-Generation College Students (FGCS)

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Historical Black College and University (HBCU)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

Predominately White Institution (PWI)

Southern Texas College (STC, pseudonym)

Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB)

Texas Christian Bible Institute (TCBI, pseudonym)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of Chapter One is to describe the framework used in this qualitative research study. This chapter provides an introduction to the central phenomenon in this study, which focused on examining perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas. The first section in this chapter focuses on providing the background of literature relevant to the historical, social, and theoretical aspects that align with perceived self-efficacy and persistence rates of first-generation Black college men. A personal explanation is provided in the next section, situation to self, describing the researcher's experiences from early childhood exposure to marginal learning in a segregated elementary school, which motivated and influenced the selection of this research. Chapter One also provides a comprehensive description of the problem statement, purpose statement, and significance of the study centered on perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men. The next section in this chapter outlines the four research questions which were derived from the problem and purpose statements. Each research question was designed to examine varying aspects of the phenomenon identified in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The final two sections in this chapter provide definitions for terms listed in the research and a summary of the primary problem and purpose statements for this study.

Background

The central phenomenon in this study was relevant to perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. For this study, self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). The term persistence was described in this study as students' actions to continue their efforts through

difficulties to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). The term first-generation was defined in this study as a participant whose parents never enrolled or attended post-secondary education (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Redford & Hoyer, 2017). Researchers have found mixed results regarding persistence as it relates to retention in higher education relevant to the social status background and academic abilities; however, higher-quality institutions of higher education produced the highest graduate rates (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Morales (2014) indicated that a large volume of quantitative regression analysis research was previously conducted to determine potential factors impacting educational equality and graduation rates for minority students in higher education.

Similarly, researchers revealed that quantitative research design was the best method to analyze the historical academic achievement gap for minority students with variables such as lower socioeconomic status and marginal learning (Berkowitz et al., 2016). Despite the wealth of statistical data and information acquired through quantitative research, there were limited empirical findings of perceived knowledge and awareness relevant to the phenomenon in this study. On the other hand, the qualitative research method was a better approach to provide a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions, which was critical to developing themes and patterns relevant to the phenomenon of this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Historical

Efforts to develop a unifying educational strategy to address equality requirements imposed in the Supreme Court landmark decision in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* lacked measurable success (Alexander & Alexander, 2017; Liebowitz, 2018). Moreover, the implementation of a national educational strategy with such instruments as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act produced limited results to address the historical academic achievement gap

in public education (Oliva & Gordon, 2013; Parkay et al., 2014). The overall goal of the NCLB Act was to establish uniform standards and policies across the nation regarding enhancing student learning outcomes from standardized testing received different implementation from state to state (Wong et al., 2018). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that although Black college students will increase enrollment by 26% by 2022, only 39% of Black students compared with 56% of White students will receive their degrees within six years from institutions of higher education (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014). Limited changes were produced in higher education to influence the essential relationships between faculty and minority students associated with persistence and attrition (Morales, 2014). A review of the literature revealed that policy and programs related to the social-class achievement gap in higher education over the last half-century statues "reproduce and widen, rather than close" that gap (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 943).

Social

Literature in this study suggested different learning experiences exist in higher education due partly to ethnic minority students' level of academic preparation and lack of relationships with faculty (McCoy et al., 2015; Morales, 2014). There was limited literature regarding qualitative research relevant to the first-generation Black college students, as it related to research at 4-year institutions of higher education. However, research that focused on social-class and academic achievement of first-generation college students (FGCS) in higher education revealed lower grades and attrition rates in relationship with first-generation minority students (Stephens et al., 2014). The educational intervention proposed in the literature review of this study focused mainly on recommendations for developing self-efficacy with active assistance from faculty and educational leadership in higher education (Holland, 2015; Morales, 2014).

Therefore, the qualitative research method was selected to provide an in-depth analysis of different aspects related to self-efficacy and persistence for first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas. The transcendental phenomenological approach is a qualitative research design that allows researchers to use intuition and imagination to develop an accurate awareness of the participants' perceived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Moustakas (1994), transcendental phenomenology “is a scientific study of the appearance of things, of phenomena just as we see them and as they appear to us in consciousness” (p. 49). The transcendental approach gave a voice to first-generation Black college men in higher education in Texas (Moustakas, 1994). The use of the transcendental method provided an in-depth examination that developed textural and structural descriptions as well as themes and patterns from the qualitative data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015).

FGCS continue to receive lower grades and record higher attrition rates than college students with at least one parent with a 4-year degree (Stephens et al., 2014). This study focused on the state of Texas, which previously experienced significant minority student enrollment in higher education before the 2003 state policy to deregulate tuition in public colleges and universities (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). According to Flores and Shepherd (2014), evaluation of the impact on minority students' enrollment in higher education after the deregulation of tuition in Texas had mixed results. Research suggested statewide tuition discounts and adjustment to financial aid prevented an overall decrease in minority students' enrollment after the deregulation of tuitions (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). In contrast, the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board reported that between 2003 and 2009, tuition rates at public institutions of higher education in the state of Texas had increased by 72% (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). There were

mixed results concerning the long-term impact of federal aid application procedures, such as the Pell Grant process for first-generation students (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). However, there were significant concerns about the potential negative impact on the modern underrepresentation of minority and low socioeconomic students at public research institutions in Texas (Flores & Shepherd, 2014).

Theoretical

Two seminal studies and models were used in this study to establish the theoretical framework to address the phenomenon relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence (Bandura, 1977; Tinto, 1993). Tinto's (1993) student integration model helped guide an analysis of perceived persistence consideration in higher education. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory served as the primary guide in this study as it relates to the participants' perceived internal belief in their ability. Social capital consideration can also be relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence factors for first-generation Black college men. However, lower socioeconomic factors are not always directly influenced by self-efficacy and persistence in minority students (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2011). Research has determined the lack of social capital relationships with institutional agents can significantly impact academic preparation for minority students in higher education (Holland, 2015). Although literature relative to social capital was not the theoretical framework of this research, social capital concepts and principles were included in this study (Holland, 2015). While there were research studies on various aspects of the central phenomenon in this study, a gap exists in the literature of perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men at 4-year institutions of higher education in Texas.

Situation to Self

The foundation of my philosophy of education and the motivation for conducting this research regarding perceived self-efficacy and persistence was influenced by my early childhood exposure to illiteracy and poverty. I was raised by a single illiterate parent in poverty with three half-brothers in a rural town in North Carolina. Despite federal policy and the legal termination of racial segregation in public schools across the United States as mandated in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* landmark Supreme Court decision, I was mandated to attend a segregated elementary school in North Carolina until 1971. Unfortunately, I developed a long-term feeling of inferiority regarding my overall learning ability because of such personal experience with illiteracy and marginal teaching. The further lack of effective relationships with teachers in my learning environment at a desegregated middle school, as well as marginalized teaching in high school, harmed future aspirations for higher education. Morales (2014) indicated that such relationships with teachers, which are often limited for modern minority students play a significant role in the retention and persistence of minorities in higher education.

As a former at-risk and first-generation Black male college student, I have personally experienced the tremendous educational challenges involved with a potential unifying strategy to eliminate the historical academic achievement gap in public higher education (Liebowitz, 2018; Mickelson, 2015; Stephens et al., 2014). I acknowledge biblical providence as invaluable for my educational development. Providence was the primary source that allowed me to break the legacy of marginalized education at the age of 25 through undergraduate enrollment at Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii. I was on active military duty with the United States Navy and later employed with the United States Treasury Department during my undergraduate studies at California State University in Hayward, California. I gained a well-informed

appreciation of realistic time management for future research during my initial graduate studies while working full-time in the Intelligence Community of the Department of Homeland Security. Eventually, I learned to embrace the experiences gained on my uncommon educational journey.

In reflection, I was surprised at how the lack of external encouragement and lack of relationships with teachers developed such a long-term internal misconception of my academic abilities. I had allowed a negative opinion from a middle school teacher to influence my perceived academic self-efficacy for over 15 years. This incident occurred during the first year of desegregation when I was in the fifth grade in middle school in 1971. I had been significantly impacted by that verbal evaluation, which was associated with the negative historical stereotypes for Black boys until I enrolled in higher education in 1986 (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Likewise, as a non-traditional first-generation student in undergraduate and graduate studies, I gained experiences that motivated this research. I am aware of the influence of my professional career with the federal government. It has also contributed to the enhancement of my current perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education. As a retired supervisory federal criminal investigator, I appreciate rigorous standards that manifest professional integrity and credibility.

I retired from the federal government in 2015. I moved to Texas in 2016, where I completed a student internship at a private Christian academy to receive my master's degree from Liberty University. Subsequently, I taught 11th- and 12th-grade boys for 1 year through a youth ministry at that local church. This gave me a recent observation of the continued marginalized learning experienced by the minority student population in the state of Texas. These last observations prompted reflections of my childhood experiences and educational

challenges, which reaffirmed my Christian philosophy of education to seek modern awareness through students' learning outcomes in higher education (Guttek, 2011).

A mixture of philosophical assumptions influenced the research design in this study. I was motivated by an axiological philosophical assumption based on the acknowledgment that biases are invaluable aspects of this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that personal biases must be appropriately addressed through such measures as bracketing to enhance trustworthiness in the findings of the research. The axiological approach makes allowance for the researcher's values and biases in a qualitative study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I acknowledge my background, experiences, and biases can influence the interpretation of the participants' perceived lived experiences relevant to the phenomenon in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

I selected the transcendental phenomenology research design to reduce personal biases from the research of the central phenomenon in this study (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the use of a transcendental phenomenology approach is an excellent research method to examine perceptions for the production of textural and structural descriptions. I selected the use of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model to address the application of Tinto's concept of academic and social integration relevant to persistence for first-generation Black college men. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory provided the theoretical framework for guiding this study related to describing perceived self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men at three institutions of higher education in the state of Texas. My overall educational journey provided firsthand experiences of the need for pertinent research to describe critical relationships between educators and minorities in higher education relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence (Bandura, 1977, 1997; McCallum, 2020; Morales, 2014; Tinto, 1993).

An ontological assumption aligns with my concepts of reality. It helped design research questions in this study to determine the participants' perceived views of "how things really work" in the "real" world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). I acknowledged that my reality of self-efficacy and persistence in higher education may differ from the participants' perceived reality of lived experiences in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The transcendental phenomenology approach aligned with my worldview that focused on a subjective method to determine an in-depth analysis of the central phenomenon in this research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Rockinson-Szapkiw & Spaulding, 2014). Modern qualitative research, such as the phenomenological approach, is "grounded in constructivism" (Alexander, 2006, p. 205) and used in educational research to obtain knowledge of participants' perceived reality. Therefore, a constructivism paradigm was used in this study to guide research related to the participants' perceived experiences relevant to self-efficacy and persistence in higher education in the state of Texas (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Problem Statement

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Aud et al., 2013), although Black college students will increase enrollment in higher education by 26% through the school year 2020, only 39% of Black college students will complete their college degrees within six years. In contrast, during that same period, White and Asian students will only increase their attendance by 7%, but with a 56% completion rate for White students and Asian students (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014). Consequently, the problem is that while research reports a 4-year college degree is a potential pathway to a higher socioeconomic status, the historical academic achievement gap for minorities continues in higher education (Stephens et al., 2014). Also, 40% of Black students did not persist and dropped out of their 2-year public community college in

comparison with 27% of White students that dropped out of community colleges who started their studies in 2012 (Kena et al., 2016). According to McFarland et al. (2019), the overall status dropout rate for all youth in the nation from age 16 to 24 years old declined from 9.7% to 5.4% between 2006 and 2017; however, the status dropout rate for Black youth declined to 6.5% during that same period. In contrast, during that same period, the status dropout rate for White youth declined to 4.3%, and Asian youth declined to 2.1%.

Several factors are influencing Black college students' persistence rates, such as family structure, relationship, and support, as well as family conflicts related to actual attendance in higher education (Brooks, 2015). Nevertheless, the scope of this study focused on analyzing perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. Modern research suggests FGCS received lower grades and have higher attrition rates than students with at least one parent that achieved a 4-year degree from an institution of higher education (Stephens et al., 2014). This research was focused on the state of Texas, where overall enrollment for minority students has experienced a decline since statewide deregulation of tuitions rate in all public institutions of higher education (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). The statewide deregulation policy regarding tuition rates in Texas subsequently impacted financial aid and potentially influenced the decline of minority students (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Consequently, the identified problem in this study relates to the lack of qualitative research available to provide an in-depth awareness of perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men. The central phenomenon in this study was addressed through research at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and Predominantly White Institution (PWI) as well as a private Christian institution in the state of Texas.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men attendance at both an HBCU and a PWI as well as a private Christian institution in Texas. For this study, self-efficacy was generally defined as an individual belief in one's innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). Similarly, persistence was defined as an individual student's continual effort to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975). Therefore, two theories, Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model, were used to construct a comprehensive theoretical framework to help guide the research in this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to provide a specific voice for describing perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men in 4-year higher institutions in Texas. Previous research focused on phenomena associated with the historical academic achievement gap for minority students in higher education with focuses such as self-efficacy, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement (Houle, 2014). Researchers have conducted a wide range of studies on numerous factors related to attrition and persistence rates of first-generation minority students in higher education (Demetriou, et al., 2017; Gibbons, et al., 2019; Grace-Odeleye & Santiago, 2019; Hébert, 2018; Holland, 2019; Pratt et al., 2019; Swanbrow Becker et al., 2017). However, the goal to establish a unifying educational strategy to achieve mandates for equality in public education addressed in the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision has seen marginal results (Alexander & Alexander, 2017; Essex, 2016; Liebowitz, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). Moreover, initiatives such as NCLB focused on

reducing the historical, educational achievement problems with a national strategy that was replaced at the federal level (Essex, 2016; Kubiszyn & Borich, 2013). Limited changes have occurred in modern public higher education, and faculty continue to lack effective relationships with minority students (Morales, 2014).

Similarly, researchers examined several effective educational intervention models at the higher education level in the state of Texas that was designed to improve first-year college student academic preparation (Booth et al., 2014). Unfortunately, the state-funded 2-year research study did not focus on minority students. Other research studies in Texas provided a limited analysis of attrition and persistence rates of minority students, and research concentrated mainly at the public community college levels (Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014). The significance of this study was to provide educational stakeholders at 4-year higher education institutions with effective textual and structural descriptive research relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence of first-generation Black college men. Prayerfully those education officials will be better informed with a modern assessment and more prepared to develop effective programs to build a diverse student population with improved retention rates through proficient leadership in higher education in Texas (Toutkoushian & Paulsen, 2016). Educational stakeholders and policy makers can improve learning outcome and effectiveness with a modern awareness of potential research findings relevant to the improvement of the reported nationwide 39% graduation rates for Black college students in comparison with 56% for White students within six years in higher education (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014).

The focus of this study aligned with a biblical worldview. For instance, persistence, as it relates to retention in higher education, is similar to the reference in the Bible for the concepts of perseverance. James 1:12, Isaiah 41:10, and Luke 11:8 each describe varying awareness that

innate strength to overcome challenges during one's life comes from God. Similarly, an example of low self-efficacy is seen in King Saul's grandson when Mephibosheth bowed and said to King David, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" (*New International Version*, 1978/2011, 2 Samuel 9:8). Fortunately, there are many positive examples of self-efficacy from a biblical worldview, such as the message within Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me" (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017). In essence, this research is created within the message of 1 Corinthians 9:23: "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001).

Research Questions

The following questions were derived from the problem and purpose statements relevant to describe factors of the central phenomenon in this study:

Research Question 1

How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their self-efficacy?

This research question regarding perceived self-efficacy guided the overall focus and theoretical framework of the study (Bandura, 1977). This first question sought a deeper understanding of first-generation Black college men's innate abilities to accomplish their goals in higher education and modern society (Bandura, 1977, 1993; Hébert, 2018).

Research Question 2

Why do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges believe they have persisted in college?

This second question provided a focus for participants to evaluate their innate abilities concerning academic achievement through any difficulties experienced at higher education in

Texas. Research has shown that in addition to relationships with faculty, Black college students' academic self-concept plays a significant role in learning outcomes and retention in higher education (Franklin et al., 2017). This question sought to provide useful awareness for educational stakeholders related to potential influences for first-generation Black students' academic achievement at two public and private Christian institutions in Texas (Hébert, 2018; Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014).

Research Question 3

How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors describe their family influences on academic success in higher education?

Similarly, educational stakeholders can benefit from modern qualitative descriptions of first-generation Black college men's perceptions of their family influence on academic achievement (Moustakas, 1994). This question was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the perceived assessment of Black college men as it relates to family influences on their persistence in higher education in Texas (Brooks, 2015; Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014).

Research Question 4

How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe faculty and peer student influences on their academic success in higher education?

This final research question was designed to address the application of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model's concept of academic and social integration relevancy to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. Research has shown that minority students often lack effective relationships with faculty in higher education (Morales, 2014). Participants' shared experiences and perceptions of relationships with faculty and peer students

may provide essential data for education officials in Texas.

Definitions

1. *First-generation College Student* – The National Center for Education Statistics defined first-generation college students (FGCS) as undergraduate college students whose parents never enrolled in higher education (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Redford & Hoyer, 2017).
2. *Institutional Agent* – An individual within an organization that has the authority to provide resources within higher education (Stanton-Salazar, 2011).
3. *Persistence* – is defined in this study as students’ actions to continue their efforts through difficulty to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975).
4. *Phenomenology* – is “the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26).
5. *Self-efficacy* – is defined as an individual’s belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977).
6. *Transcendental Phenomenology* – “is a scientific study of the appearance of things, of phenomena just as we see them and as they appear to us in consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 49).
7. *Unitary* – when a school system achieves required critique to eliminate the dual system of their educational learning environment (Liebowitz, 2018).

Summary

Chapter One provided an introduction to the framework of this transcendental phenomenological qualitative research. This qualitative research study aimed to explore the phenomenon of self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education of first-generation

Black college men in Texas. The research focused on describing perceived self-efficacy and persistence of first-generation Black college men was important because the historical achievement gap for minority students in higher education has continued to expand over the last half-century (Stephens et al., 2014). This chapter provided an outline of the qualitative approach selected to guide a comprehensive examination of the background, problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, definitions, and significance of the study sections in this study. The foundation for personal philosophy of education and motivation for this research topic was discussed in the “Situation to Self” section of this chapter. Chapter One concluded with the descriptions of four research questions designed to derive critical data to help develop themes and patterns to describe perceived self-efficacy further as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in higher education in Texas.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The National Center for Education Statistics indicated that by 2022 White and Asian students would increase college attendance by 7%, while Black students will increase attendance by 26% during that same period. However, Aud et al. (2013) also predicted that 39% of Black students in comparison with 56% of White students will receive their degrees from institutions of higher education within six years (Morales, 2014). Despite agreement that obtaining a 4-year college degree is the best route to a higher socioeconomic reality, first-generation college students receive lower grades and have higher attrition rates than students with at least one parent with a 4-year degree in the United States (Hines et al., 2019; Stephens et al., 2014).

Literature indicated that a slight decrease in minority students' enrollment occurred at public institutions of higher education in the state of Texas after the state implemented a deregulation of tuition policy in 2003 (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Subsequent adjustments to the financial aid program prevented more statewide decreases in Black students' enrollments in higher education in Texas (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). The deregulation policies gave officials the authority to increase academic tuition at public institutions without safeguards to the long-term impact on the underrepresentation of minority students at research universities in Texas (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Educational stakeholders and policy makers also failed to develop a unifying strategy that addresses the historical academic achievement gap for minority students in higher education at both the state and national level (Booth et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2014). However, researchers and educators developed several modern educational interventions, such as the difference-education panels which support positive influence on academic achievement (Booth et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2014).

The literature review in this chapter was constructed to examine a mixture of empirical research relevant to minority students' persistence in higher education. The primary focus of this review of literature centers on describing perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence of first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas. The first section in this review focuses on explanation of two theories selected for the theoretical framework of the study. A robust theoretical framework is presented in this review through the works of Bandura's (1977, 1993, 1997) self-efficacy theory. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model was used in this study to evaluate application of the concept of academic and social integration relevant to persistence for first-generation Black college men. The second section in this review provides analysis of related literature with a wide range of relevant research such as self-efficacy, self-affirmation, and academic resilience. Analyses in the second section are related to examining the limited amount of research focused on perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college students at 4-year institutions in Texas. The final section in this chapter provides a summary of this review of literature with the overall objective to highlight gaps related to the central phenomenon in this study, validating the focus of this research at 4-year institutions of higher education in the state of Texas.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical orientation provided a "general explanation as to what the researchers hoped to find in a study or a lens through which to view the needs of participants, and communities in a study" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 328). Creation of specific theoretical constructs to guide explanation of the phenomenon in this literature review was essential to exploring potential overall unifying strategic goals (Gall et al., 2007). Numerous seminal studies relevant to the central phenomenon in this study about self-efficacy and persistence of first-

generation Black college men in higher education were reviewed and considered for the overall theoretical framework. For example, the adapting model for transitions, resilience theories, integration of family and family life course theories were some of the theoretical frameworks considered within this literature review. Each of those theories provides different constructs and consideration of knowledge of the phenomenon and important lenses to view participants in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gall et al., 2007).

However, the two theorists selected for the theoretical framework of this study provided a comprehensive explanation to address the central phenomenon through areas in alignments with perceived self-efficacy, persistence, attrition, and learning environments (Bandura, 1977, 1993, 1997; Tinto, 1975, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2006, 2017). Constructs developed from Bandura's (1977) theory were appropriate to provide a historical understanding of the academic achievement of minority students in institutions of higher education. In addition, Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model represented potential application of principles such as commitments from academic and social integration as relevant to persistence of first-generation Black college men. The literature review was consistent with modern research showing that first-generation college students experience lower grades and lower graduation rates in higher education across the nation (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014; Stephens et al., 2014). This study is a limited research with a narrow focus on first-generation Black college men in Texas. Furthermore, the research focus was on perceived self-efficacy as it related to persistence of the participants in this study. Therefore, the theoretical frameworks established in this study were merely constructed on perceived self-efficacy and persistence influences relevant to college students in higher education (Bandura, 1977; Tinto, 1975, 1993).

Tinto's Student Integration Model

Principles aligned with persistence and retention in higher education are established in Tinto's (1993) student integration model. Tinto (1975) created his theoretical framework to provide a model because previous research had failed to define awareness and constructs related to the phenomenon of retention in higher education. This theoretical framework helped establish invaluable standards to measure varying reasons for students' voluntary withdrawal from higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). The overall theoretical framework helped enhance modern awareness of data related to persistence as well as research for learning outcomes, attrition, and retention rates at institution of higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2006, 2017). Modern research related to these phenomena concerning retention and persistence may impact the historical academic achievement gap for minority students. Therefore, data from this study can be crucial for educational stakeholders and policy makers to understand potential weaknesses in their programs in the state of Texas. Hopefully, educational stakeholders can efficiently manage evidence-based information necessary for modern strategies to influence persistence and attrition rates for minority students attending their institutions of higher education (Nilson, 2016; Toutkoushian & Paulsen, 2016). The framework of the student integration model was analyzed for alignment in this study to first-generation Black college participants' perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in the state of Texas. The attrition rate for Black students in higher education is 61%, which is 17% greater than the 44% attrition rate for Whites students' graduation within six years' attendance (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014).

In addition to students' self-efficacy, Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model indicated that academic and social integration factors are essential to developing relationships that can influence students' persistence in higher education. Tinto's (1975, 1993, 1997, 1999,

2006, 2017) concepts about the important value that interactions with faculty and peers have on retention within the learning environment at institutions of higher education are similar to the findings of several modern studies in this review of literature. Social isolation and lack of institutional agents were revealed to have a significant negative impact on minority students' retention and graduation rates within institutions of higher education (Bormon et al., 2016; Brooms, 2018b; Dortch, 2016; Flores & Shepherd, 2014; McCallum, 2020; Morales, 2014; Moss & Slate, 2014). Similarly, concepts of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model may align with perceived self-efficacy, socioeconomic status, and the lack of positive networks which are critical for motivation and accountability (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Flores & Park, 2015). The theoretical student integration model created by Tinto (1975, 1993) seeks to address failures in higher education to accurately understand students' temporary and permanent reasons for withdrawal from education. Awareness of the lack of relationships and social connections with faculty and peer-groups related to students' voluntary withdrawal from higher education is germane to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theoretical framework guiding this study.

The selection of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model provided an opportunity to analyze academic and social systems in relationship with the historical understanding and framework with minority students' reasons for leaving institutions of higher education. There are numerous reasons for college students to drop out of higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Tinto (1997, 1999, 2006, 2017) suggested that students' background, characteristics, and personal attributes also influence their integration into academic relationships, which are essential to develop positive expectations and commitments to a particular institution. It was important to understanding the modern status and condition of minority students regarding their overall expectation of and commitment to higher education. Research indicates that students' family

background and characteristics have a significant impact on their retention in higher education (Holland, 2019; Houle, 2014). Such findings on academic success related to the influences and value attributed to learning environments within the core of family characteristics were important reasons for the selection of this model, which helped guide the research concerning persistence of first-generation Black college men in Texas.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

The next theory used to help build a theoretical framework in this literature review came from the work of Bandura (1977) and his self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy theory provided a comprehensive explanation for the development and behavioral changes related to psychological and cognitive learning (Bandura, 1977, 1993). There are four sources of treatment used to measure efficacy expectations: performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal in alignment with constructs of the phenomenon in this study (Bandura, 1977). The performance accomplishment aspect used in evaluation of minority students' overall academic achievement levels in higher education provided a greater level of observations in comparison with the other three sources of treatment as evident in the frameworks of several studies used in this review (Bandura, 1977; Dortch, 2016; Stephens et al., 2014).

Bandura's (1977) concept of vicarious experience is relevant with constructs such as the Black doctoral student participants' internal beliefs in their academic self-efficacy examined in the phenomenological literature in this review titled *The Strength from Within* (Dortch, 2016). Innovations and methods to improve minority students' self-efficacy and self-affirmation were used in other studies in this review that emphasized positive results concerning internal awareness from academic achievement in higher education (Bormon et al., 2016; Brooms,

2018a). The concept of self-efficacy with a definition aligned with an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish a goal is the principle focus in this review (Bandura, 1977). Principles of social cognitive and behavior development were also seamless theories related to factors influencing persistence and attrition rates for minority college students (Bandura, 1977, 1993). According to Bandura (1993) perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development also influences faculties' beliefs in their attributes and contribution to the learning environment in their classrooms and overall learning outcomes of their student populations.

However, the overall theoretical framework for this literature review is constructed to address perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence, not merely behavioral self-control of first-generation Black college men in Texas (Bandura, 1977, 1993, 1997). Social capital, empowerment, and experiences with academic rigor are cited and noted in this review as challenging factors for first-generation minority high school students' preparation and persistence in higher education (Holland, 2015; Reddick et al., 2017). The scope of the theoretical framework for this study does not focus on lower socioeconomic backgrounds of minority students but aligns more with perceived self-efficacy of students in higher education (Bandura, 1977). Some literature selected for this review references lower socioeconomic background and a connection with urban communities in relationship with learning outcomes of minority students; however, such existence does not mean factors are relevant to the phenomenon in this study (Brooms, 2018a; Holland, 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Therefore, the theoretical framework of this research was limited to principles related to self-efficacy and the student integration model (Bandura, 1977; Tinto, 1975, 1993). The theoretical framework was constructed around a narrow focus to describe perceived self-efficacy as it relates to overall

persistence for participants of this study, aligned with the goal to provide useful data for education officials (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Related Literature

Efforts to develop a national educational strategy to address equality issues in public education mentioned in the Supreme Court's landmark decision in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* have resulted in limited success across the nation (Alexander & Alexander, 2017; Liebowitz, 2018). The implementation of a national educational strategy with instruments such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has produced marginal results to address the historical academic achievement gap for minorities in public schools. The NCLB legislation was one of the most massive federal educational programs in modern history, which was in alignment with equality in public education for all students across the nation (Billings et al., 2018). However, the overall goal of the NCLB to establish uniform standards and policies across the country to enhance student learning outcomes from standardized testing received varying implementation at the state level (Wong et al., 2018). Unintended consequences related to influence and accountability from different analyses of the NCLB also significantly impacted the behavior of school administrators and other school officials' overall control of financial funding for relevant learning outcome services at the state level (Billings et al., 2018). Similarly, requirements for accountability through measurable improvement of student's proficiency within two years as assessed by the annual Adequate Yearly Progress determined federal funding allotments when schools and districts could not adopt necessary exemptions (Billings et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2018).

In contrast, literature revealed that the state of Texas had implemented similar educational principles which later served as the foundation for creation of the NCLB. During

former Governor George W. Bush's term in office, Texas had measurable educational success with increases of high-stakes testing achievement from 57% in 1994 to 78% in 2000 (Deming et al., 2016). Therefore, former President G. W. Bush was able to convince the United States Congress to enact the NCLB Act in 2002 as the federal educational framework to provide accountability in public education across the nation, based on previous success in the state of Texas (Deming et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2018). Although the state of Texas experienced an increase in students' overall success with high-stakes testing, research indicated that accountability pressure influenced education officials to implement some less costly and questionable actions to increase test scores (Deming et al., 2016).

In addition, the financial crisis of 2007 influenced key education officials and stakeholders across the nation and in the state of Texas regarding reduction of academic programs within their modern budgetary cuts which had a direct impact on minority students' underrepresentation in higher education (Hodges et al., 2019). In contrast to the financial resources for education, research indicates that significant improvement in learning outcomes are possible with effective faculty and student relationships in higher education (Morales, 2014). Furthermore, minimum changes were identified in higher education that influence essential relationships between faculty and minority students associated with persistence and attrition factors (Morales, 2014). A review of the literature reveals that policy and programs in higher education over the last half-century have "reproduced and widened, rather than closed" (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 943) the social-class achievement gap.

There were numerous quantitative studies analyzing aspects of the central historical phenomenon in this study concerning perceived self-efficacy of first-generation minority students in higher education. However, there was limited qualitative research addressing the

specific focus on understanding perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. The themes that arose in this review of literature related to varying descriptions of self-efficacy for minority students in higher education. Those inconsistent descriptions are included in this review of first-generation Black students in particular with their perception of factors influencing their persistence rates in higher education (Flores & Park, 2015; Flores & Shepherd, 2014; Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014). Specific literature focuses primarily on the perceptions and experiences of Black college students' overall academic achievement related to preparation, stereotypes, and potential achievement in higher education (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Research revealed evidence and findings which indicate faculty involvement represents significant influence on minority students' academic resilience and persistence in higher education (McCallum, 2020; Morales, 2014). However, limited studies were discovered in the review that address national or state standards that created frameworks for critical relationships between faculty and first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas. Therefore, this research sought to add awareness and knowledge to the gaps in qualitative descriptions of shared experiences of first-generation Black college men and their perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in the state of Texas.

Black College Men

The primary focus of this study centers on developing an in-depth analysis of the perceived self-efficacy and persistence of Black college men. A brief focus on high school preparation of Black students is necessary to offer potential insight into their persistence and attrition in higher education. Overall dropout rates for Black high school students decreased from 11.5% in 2006 to 6.5% in 2017 (McFarland et al., 2019). Furthermore, the high school dropout

rate for Black boys was higher at 8.0% in comparison with 4.9% for Black females (McFarland et al., 2019). Holland (2015) suggested that the lack of positive relationships between minority high school students and high school counselors had a significant negative impact on minority students' aspiration for college. Existence of positive relationships with institutional agents such as high school counselors as well as faculty in higher education was determined as essential for minority students' success in college (Holland, 2015; Loeb & Hurd, 2019; Morales, 2014).

Research indicated that many education officials acknowledge and recognize that low-income, first-generation, and minority students are at risk for dropping out of higher education in comparison with traditional college students (Goings, 2018; Hines et al., 2019; Holland, 2019; Jones, 2019; Loeb & Hurd, 2019). Therefore, the roles of high school and college counselors are crucial for Black college men's preparation and navigation of the often complex financial and enrollment procedures into modern higher education across the nation as well as in the state of Texas (Holland, 2015; Tello & Lonn, 2017).

Brooms (2018b) reports that several educational stakeholders had implemented programs such as the Black Male Initiative (BMI), which was introduced within the past 15 years to increase Black college student retention and graduation rates across the nation. Research exists regarding the topic of modern innovation aimed at addressing the historical issues of Black college men; however, limited information and research on this topic existed in the state of Texas. This research was important because of that lack of modern empirical research on Black college men in Texas. Furthermore, narrowing the research to first-generation Black college men provided an even greater awareness and opportunity for education officials to obtain valuable analyses of the specific voices of this underrepresented student population. Addressing the learning outcomes of first-generation Black college men in higher education in Texas was also

necessary because of the 2003 policy of statewide deregulation of tuition in all public institutions of higher education in the state of Texas (Flores & Shepherd, 2014).

A review of the literature revealed several different links between Black college students and social-class achievement elements relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence consideration (Stephens et al., 2014). Limited focus in this literature review was given to the areas of the social class achievement gap. Although considerations related to social class factors are important and relevant for modern knowledge of the central phenomenon in this study, the focus is directed towards examining areas that education officials and policy makers can quickly address with such measures as additional training and allocation of resources. Goings (2018) stated there was limited research on nontraditional Black college men. According to Goings (2018), "There is a tremendous opportunity for universities to recruit the almost 70% of Black men who have not finished college back to school" (p. 158). Based on a review of the literature, over the past half-century, institutions of higher education have continued policies and programs that "reproduce and widen, rather than close" (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 943) the condition known as the social class achievement gap. In addition to recruiting nontraditional Black college men back to campuses, the difference-education intervention model provides education officials a potential strategy to close the social class achievement gap through helping first-generation college students access college resources (Goings, 2018; Stephens et al., 2018).

More studies on Black college students' attendance at community colleges were available in comparison with research covering academic achievement of Black college students at 4-year institutions (Jones, 2019; Spangler & Slate, 2014). Family structure, relationship, and support each has some impact on Black college students' experiences and success in higher education (Brooks, 2015). A panel of upperclass student participants who attended an HBCU indicated

their academic persistence and collegiate experiences were impacted because of their attendance in higher education. The findings suggested that changes in family relationships resulted in participants attending higher education (Brooks, 2015). Those conflicts as a result of higher education attendance affected relationships and later impacted the minority students' retention and graduation rates (Brooks, 2015). There was limited modern literature on the current status of educational interventions designed to enhance self-efficacy and persistence of Black college students in the state of Texas.

First-Generation College Students

The National Center for Education Statistics defined first-generation college students (FGCS) as undergraduate college students whose parents never enrolled in higher education (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Research indicates that 89% of low income FGCS do not complete and finish their degree programs within six years of their enrollment into college (Alvarado et al., 2017). FGCS often experience challenges through their learning environment before entering college. Therefore, FGCS often lack accurate academic preparation and receive limited support and guidance from their parents regarding higher education. Alvarado et al. (2017) indicated that FGCS lack awareness and knowledge of skills needed to successfully manage routine issues related to the role of a college student. The lack of preparation for college is a result of numerous factors often outside of the regular knowledge and experiences of the family structure, including the lack of positive formal guidance in high school (Hines et al., 2019). According to Holland (2015, 2019) first-generation minority high school students and high school counselors often lack trust in each other, which significantly impacts the level of critical college information and assistance the minority students receive from the counselors. A review of the literature suggests that higher education institutions often have limited Parent Relations

Offices to help parents of FGCS (C. E. Harper et al., 2020). Therefore, FGCS continue to receive lower grades and record higher attrition rates in comparison with students with at least one parent with a 4-year degree (Stephens et al., 2014).

Despite the large amount of data gained through quantitative research mentioned in Chapter One of this study, there is minimum literature to provide a clear picture of the national educational strategy to increase first-generation enrollment into higher education (Aud et al., 2013; Stephens et al., 2014). Similarly, there was limited information regarding a state-level education strategy as well. Stephens et al.'s (2014) research was relevant in relationship to the analysis of social class and the academic achievement gap in FGCS at institutions of higher education. Researchers used a panel with senior college students to provide first-year, FGCS invaluable peer-based perspectives in the difference-education model (Stephens et al., 2014). Positive results and learning outcomes from that one-year study suggest potential academic performance improvement for first-generation minority students (Stephens et al., 2014). The research indicated the FGCS participants had "lower grades and dropped out at higher rates than students who have at least one parent with a 4-year degree" (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 943). Participants from this study were motivated with the model, as indicated in this statement: "People with backgrounds 'like me' can succeed" (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 946). However, the research did not focus on minority students.

There was an opportunity for minority students to improve their self-affirmation with an instrument based on values affirmation writing which produced positive results for students in secondary education and has potential implications for the academic achievement gap for Black college students (Bormon et al., 2016). Unfortunately, first-generation Black students' overall persistence and academic achievement have not realized great benefits from the values-

affirmation writing or difference-education model because of limited relationships with institutional agents (Holland, 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 2011; Stephens et al., 2014). The development of important relationships for FGCS was often missing at the secondary level with high school counselors as well as with educational personnel in higher education (Holland, 2015; McCallum, 2020; Morales, 2014). These findings concerning the lack of essential relationships for FGCS in high school represent an excellent area for education officials to consider implementing some intervention programs. FGCS' earlier experiences in high school with limited social capital and limited preparation for academic rigor are the target areas which education officials should review as potential places to invest additional resources to enhance future academic achievement of first-generation students (Holland, 2015). Overall, lower socioeconomic backgrounds and limited social capital often determine learning environments and eventual learning outcomes of many FGCS in higher education (Brooms, 2018a; Holland, 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Learning Environment

As mentioned previously in this study, educational stakeholders and policy makers in higher education in the state of Texas are the target audience; however, the wider field of education could glean awareness from this study to enhance learning environments across the nation (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; McCaffery, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Crucial implementation of sound strategy may be possible with findings from this research through effective educational leadership focused on influencing future learning outcomes for first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas (McCaffery, 2019). Morales (2014) indicated that minority students in higher education lack effective relationships in their learning environments with educators. Non-traditional Black college men select learning environments at

community college at a rate of 70.55% in comparison with enrollment rates of 28.5% at 4-year institutions across the nation (Jones, 2019). There were several factors relevant to the overall failure of Black college men in learning environments at community colleges that were not related to the lack of interaction and relationship with faculty (Goings, 2018; Jones, 2019). Overall convenience and financial consideration as well as open access were some of the reasons stated why Black college men selected enrollment at community colleges (Jones, 2019).

The Kena et al. (2016) study reported that 11.4% of Black college men who attended community colleges in 2012 completed their degree program in six years in comparison with 25% of White male students. Research indicated that learning environments where minority students enjoy positive relationships with educators and educational staff have a significant influence on minority students' strong levels of self-efficacy and persistence in higher education (Bandura, 1977; Morales, 2014). Further analyzing perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence of the specific participants in higher education in the state of Texas was an important objective for this study. A careful evaluation of the specific learning environments could provide a wealth of useful knowledge for educational stakeholders and policy makers to address learning outcomes of minority students at their institutions (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018; Franklin et al., 2017; Jones, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Legal policy and educational mandates ordered in the landmark ruling by the United States Supreme Court decision in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* slowly produced some improvement in learning environments across the nation (Alexander & Alexander, 2017; Liebowitz, 2018; Mickelson, 2015). However, the widely known historical academic achievement gap for minority students in higher education continues to exist without a successful state or national strategy to eliminate known factors (Stephens et al., 2014). Modern education officials are more informed with knowledge and trustworthy research relevant

to their environmental influence on overall learning outcomes for minority students through addressing known factors such as financial consideration and family structure which can significantly impact unitary status of their learning environment (Brooks, 2015; Liebowitz, 2018). The ultimate goal of all modern educational institutions across the nation to achieve unitary status, eliminating dual standards in their educational systems, is more feasible when key policy makers and officials are presented with empirical evidence regarding student outcomes in their learning environments (Brooks, 2015; Liebowitz, 2018; Selingo, 2013). Family structures and family conflicts can also impact overall learning outcomes with limited measures from education officials (Brooks, 2015).

Faculty

Establishing critical relationships with faculty and networking with agents of institutions were the most important measures to impact future attrition and persistence for minority college students (Morales, 2014). Researchers suggested that creating a positive learning environment with interaction with faculty were relevant factors to academic achievement for minority students from lower socioeconomic communities (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Morales, 2014). Based on Aud et al.'s (2013) reports, Black college students' enrollment at institutions of higher education will increase 26% by the school year 2022, while White and Asian students' enrollment will increase 7% during the same time period. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model suggested that interaction with faculty was critical to reducing attrition in higher education. Therefore, perhaps such a model can influence awareness for the historical retention rates with Black students in higher education. Creating a productive relationship between faculty and Black students is needed because the college degree completion rate for Black students is 39% within six years in higher education in comparison with 56% for Whites students (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014).

A study conducted by McCoy et al. (2015) indicated that White faculty at both a predominantly White institution (PWI) and a historically Black college and university (HBCU) in the mid-Atlantic United States often perceived racial and ethnic minority students as lacking academic preparedness for academic achievement in higher education.

Black college men often experienced various negative stereotypes at institutions of higher education across the nation (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Similarly, in-depth qualitative research revealed that White students at a PWI in the northeast had different interactions with Black faculty in comparison with White faculty (McCoy et al., 2015). Researcher observations of White students' behavior toward Black faculty "revealed challenging, disruptive, and disrespectful responses" (McCoy et al., 2015, p. 355). Wood et al. (2015) recommended in their review of academic integration in community college that faculty should consider requiring attendance of office hours as a potential effective model to ensure establishment of a relationship with Black college men. Perceived self-efficacy of Black college men regarding their active engagement to seek assistance from faculty in higher education was an essential focus of this review of literature (Morales, 2014). While the review of literature indicated Black college men often persist in spite of facing stereotypes in higher education, providing a paradigm change for faculty and education policy makers was the goal that guided this research (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Research indicated that crucial faculty involvement through modern educational challenges for minority students in higher education was possible when educational models were designed around the concept of shared awareness and transparency (Holliman & Daniels, 2018; Lindsey & Walker, 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Non-traditional Black college men often select learning environments at community college at a rate of 70.55% in comparison to enrollment rates of 28.5% at 4-year institutions across the nation (Jones, 2019).

Socioeconomic

Creation of a positive learning environment with interaction with faculty is also a significant factor for academic achievement with minority students from lower socioeconomic communities (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Loeb & Hurd, 2019; Morales, 2014). Financial restraint combined with conflicts related to the family structure for Black students influenced their overall experiences and persistence in higher education (Brooks, 2015). Morales (2014) indicated that 59% of the 147 participants in their research had a lower socioeconomic status, based on Pell grants qualifications, which was reflected of FGCS at that specific institution of higher education. Likewise, a quantitative research approach provided helpful data regarding overall learning outcomes and academic achievement in relationship with the learning environment and lower socioeconomic background for marginal learners (Berkowitz et al., 2016). Data collection and analysis from four well-established databases revealed some correlations between learning environment, academic achievement, and factors consistent with lower socioeconomic status common with minority students (Berkowitz et al., 2016). Students with a lower socioeconomic background frequently have a lower self-efficacy, which can impact their motivation and lack of relationships with institution agents (Bentley-Edwards et al., 2016; Flores & Park, 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 2011). According to Tinto (1975, 1999) persistence as it relates to retention in higher education was often relevant to the quality of the institutions. Students with lower socioeconomic backgrounds were not the largest student population at the highest quality institutions of higher education across this nation. Therefore, education officials' analyses of financial situations for lower socioeconomic students at high quality institutions were more effective with proactive leadership that a focus on modern innovation and inclusion (Toutkoushian & Paulsen, 2016).

Brooks (2015) indicated that minority participants experience different relationships within their family social structure as a direct correlation with attending higher education and that such conflicts influenced students from lower socioeconomic communities. As mentioned throughout this study, the lack of an effective relationship with faculty influences persistence rates of lower socioeconomic minority students in higher education (Flores & Park, 2015; Morales, 2014). However, some of the stereotypes related to lower socioeconomic status for Black college men when properly addressed can produce positive findings relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence through active involvement with faculty, staff members, and administrators at institutions of higher education (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018; Wood et al., 2015).

This review of the literature revealed several different links with social-class achievement factors related to perceived self-efficacy and persistence for Black college students. A limited focus in this literature review was given to the areas of the social-class achievement gap. In the discussion about the social class achievement gap, Goings (2018) states there has been a limited focus on Black male nontraditional college students. According to Goings (2018), “There is a tremendous opportunity for universities to recruit the almost 70% of Black men who have not finished college back to school” (p. 158). Over the past half-century institutions of higher education have continued policies and program that “reproduce and widen, rather than close” (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 943) the condition known as the social-class achievement gap. In addition to recruiting nontraditional Black college men back to campuses, the difference-education intervention model offers education officials a potential strategy to close the social class achievement gap through helping FGCS seek varying college resources to include online education (Beaudoin, 2016; Goings, 2018; Ortagus & Tanner, 2019; Stephens et al., 2014).

Texas

A decrease in minority students' enrollment in public institutions of higher education occurred in the state of Texas after the deregulation of tuition in 2003 (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Texas deregulation of tuition at its public institutions impacted financial aid policy and allowed administrators at institutions of higher education statewide to establish varying tuition rates (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). All financial matters in higher education such as the deregulation of tuition in Texas should have "transparency and honesty" (Holliman & Daniels, 2018, p. 49) necessary for overall ethical confidence. There was limited literature regarding specific descriptions of perceived self-efficacy factors as they relate to persistence of first-generation Black college men at 4-year institutions in Texas (Flores et al., 2017). However, there were studies investigating Black students' retention and persistence rates in community colleges in the state of Texas (Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014). Research revealed that all 50 colleges in the Texas Association of Community Colleges system had implemented modern developmental math initiatives, including "the New Mathways Initiative" (Park et al., 2016, p. 825), which were designed to enhance students' preparation for higher education.

The research sites for this study included two public institutions and one Christian 4-year institution of higher education in the state of Texas. Two public institutions, an HBCU and a PWI, were selected to provide a wider range of potential experiences in relationship with the deregulation policy in Texas as it relates to persistence in higher education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Flores et al., 2017; Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Exploring experiences and awareness of minority students in higher education in the state of Texas is necessary for modern education officials to have the most updated information for future educational reform decisions. The inclusion of the large suburban Christian institution in this research is important to gain data

of the different learning environments from first-generation Black college men (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015).

The Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB), provided funding for a 2-year research study across nine colleges and universities across the state to develop a useful model to help first-year students improve their academic skills and abilities (Booth et al., 2014). That research regarding developmental education plans did not focus on minority students, but the results indicated a significant improvement in academic achievement through the innovative education models (Booth et al., 2014). As mentioned in this review, research was conducted in the state of Texas to determine community college graduation and persistence rates as a function of the students' ethnicity (Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014). A quantitative research approach focused on analyzing data regarding graduation and persistence trends for White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian students enrolled in community colleges in Texas from 2000 through 2010 (Spangler & Slate, 2014). Based on data from the THECB, the trend for Black students' graduation and persistence rates in community colleges in Texas increased by 8.27% for that time period. Moss and Slate (2014) provided a useful limited analysis of the distinction for Black students' persistence rates at community colleges in Texas. However, empirical research of perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for first-generation Black college men from 4-year institutions in the state of Texas was limited in scope. The literature review did not provide a comprehensive status of current strategies at the state level to address minority academic achievement challenges at 4-year institutions in Texas (Booth et al., 2014; Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014). Given the overall increase in minority student enrollment specifically to the projected 26% increase of Black college students in higher education through the school year 2020, education officials at the state and national levels should consider this matter a priority

(Aud et al., 2013). Consequently, the issues and problems are significant as only 39% of Black college students will complete their college degrees within six years in comparison with 56% of Whites college students in the same time period (Aud et al., 2013).

Persistence

Persistence considerations relevant to perceived self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men are the central drivers in this study. The third research question in this study focused on determining how first-generation Black college men describe their family structures and influences on academic preparation as it relates to persistence in higher education. There are several definitions to describe the overall concept of persistence as it relates to students' ability to overcome different challenges relevant to retention and graduation rates within institutions of higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1997, 1999). Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model was used to help guide the theoretical framework in this study to suggest that the lack of relationship and social connections in the educational settings with faculty and other academic personnel have a significant influence on students' retention rate in higher education. Therefore, the matter of persistence for minority students in general was relevant in this discussion regarding the critical roles positive networks have on motivation and accountability in higher education (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Flores & Park, 2015; Reddick et al., 2017; Tinto, 1975, 1997).

There are references in several books of the Bible regarding the principles for followers of Christ to continue their fight against evil on earth and to never give up such as in the books of Isaiah, James, and Luke. The biblical worldview for persistence as it relates to retention for minority students in higher education was aligned with what the Bible calls perseverance. This concept is found within the message of James 1:12: "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trail because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has

promised to those who love him” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). Similarly, the biblical principle of persistence is found within the message of Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). This message of persistence is most clearly demonstrated in the message of Luke 11:8: “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs” (*New American Standard Version Bible*, 1971/1995).

Tinto’s (1975, 1993) student integration model was selected to help guide this study concerning essential influences that college students need to impact their persistence and retention in higher education. Evaluation of the central phenomenon within the lens of persistence through the transcendental phenomenological design in this study provided rich and thick descriptions of first-generation Black college men in Texas (Moustakas, 1994). Potential awareness of persistence as it relates to minority students’ perceived self-efficacy and influences on academic preparation and retention in higher education provides useful information for educational stakeholders (Holland, 2015, 2019). Providing attention concerning implementing effective modern educational models to improve learning outcomes of minority student population on campuses across the state of Texas is needed to address retention and academic achievement, as well as the impact of tuition deregulation (Flores & Shepherd, 2014; Tinto, 1999). Furthermore, limited successful empirical strategies with historical records for improvement of overall persistence rates for first-generation Black college men at 4-year institutions of higher education in Texas suggests a gap in modern literature.

Research and statistics indicate that Black college men continue to gain access to community colleges; however, their lack of persistence and retention rates were 40% in comparison with 27% of White students who completed their degrees at 2-year public institutions (Card & Wood, 2019; Kena et al., 2016). Indeed, the overall status dropout rate for Black youths between age 16 and 24 years old declined nationwide from 11.5% in 2006 to 6.5% in 2017 (McFarland et al., 2019). In comparison, during the same period, White dropout rates declined from 6.4% to 4.3%, while Asian dropout rates declined from 3.1% to 2.1% (McFarland et al., 2019). According to Goings (2018) education officials and policy makers have a tremendous opportunity to recruit almost 70% of Black male undergraduate students who dropped out of college. A modern approach to address this historical academic achievement issue with a focus on persistence and self-efficacy as it relates to first-generation Black college men in Texas seems possible through literature reviews of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs (Brooms, 2019). Focus and attention through implementing BMI type programs to enhance minority college students overall social community and positive relationships with faculty in higher education is a modern approach with potential advantages to address the historical academic persistence issues for first-generation Black college men in Texas (Brooms, 2018a, 2019; Flores & Shepherd, 2014; McFarland et al., 2019; Morales, 2014). BMI programs designed to create learning environments within the state of Texas with a focus on minority college students could possibly be relevant to the improvement of persistence as it relates to higher education and a possible effective model for educational policy makers (Brooms, 2019). Consideration of the BMI programs in modern educational strategy could address learning outcomes for minority students through developing student organization and ethnic-based

programs across the state of Texas which could represent a feasible recourse to the deregulation of tuition policy of 2003 (Brooms, 2019; Flores & Shepherd, 2014).

Self-Efficacy

Research studies on perceived self-efficacy as it relates to Black female students in higher education was very prevalent in the numerous forms of literature. In contrast, limited research regarding perceived self-efficacy for first-generation Black college men in 4-year institutions of higher education was discovered (Bandura, 1977; Dortch, 2016). Dortch (2016) reported that two Black female doctoral students were able to enrich their self-efficacy and motivation for advance studies through establishing relationships with faculty and others in their educational environments. Both Black female doctoral student participants acknowledged influences consistent with phenomena such as their feeling of isolation, lack of connections to resources, and lack of institutional agents at a predominately White institution (Dortch, 2016; Morales, 2014). However, the Black female doctoral student participants received enough positive interactions and connections within the academic environment to sustain their overall perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education (Dortch, 2016). Perceived self-efficacy is one of the two considerations related to students' academic achievement in this research and study (Bandura, 1977). Through the lens of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy principles and concepts are useful discoveries: the Black female doctoral students' greatest source of academic challenges was their innate tendency not to seek assistance from educational personnel (Dortch, 2016; Morales, 2014). Such findings provide an area of future consideration for awareness of potential self-efficacy factors for first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas. Evaluation of educational intervention to include learning environment, faculty, and BMI are considerations to help guide future suggestions for students with low levels of perceived

self-efficacy as addressed in other sections within this study (Brooms, 2019; Holland, 2015; Morales, 2014).

Individuals with high levels of perceived self-efficacy considered such challenges as merely necessary hurdles to climb (Bandura, 1977; Reddick et al., 2017). Research indicates that family structure and relationships are important aspects that have a significant impact on students' self-efficacy and academic resilience (Brooks, 2015; Morales, 2014). Similarly, overall development of a positive self-efficacy appears essential for future educational success. Research on self-efficacy and resilience of minority students in higher education continues as the underlined and most valuable theme discussed throughout this literature review regarding describing persistence rates (Alvarado et al., 2017; Morales, 2014). The two female doctoral student participants developed positive peer relationships and active connections within their educational environments which increased their resilience for the doctoral journey (Dortch, 2016). Furthermore, research indicated that some Black college men persist in higher education regardless of the obstacles and stereotypes (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). According to Bandura (1993) students', teachers', and faculties' beliefs in their efficacy help form cognitive development and functioning in relationship to their internal academic motivation and aspirations.

What is self-efficacy as it relates to perceived persistence factors relevant to first generation Black college men in institution of higher education in Texas? For this study, self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). In addition to the focus of this research to describe perceived self-efficacy for first-generation Black college men, a review of the literature indicated that external factors such as student-professor interactions and relationships significantly influences overall self-efficacy

levels in minority students in higher education (Franklin et al., 2017; Morales, 2014). The term self-efficacy is not specifically mentioned in the Bible. However, based on its similarity to the concept of persistence, there are biblical references in alignment with the concept and principle of self-efficacy. The use of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-discipline throughout the Bible usually convey themes similar to the educational definition of students' belief in their innate ability for academic achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1993). A biblical presentation of self-efficacy is clearly represented in the message of Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me" (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017). Likewise, the innate theme is found within the message of 2 Timothy 1:7: "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline" (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). Lastly, the biblical worldview relevant to perceive self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men is the foundation within 1 Peter 2:9: a chosen special generation that had been delivered from darkness and gives praises to God for wisdom (*New King James Version*, 1982).

Education Intervention

Modern research revealed improvement related to attrition and persistence in secondary and higher education, which requires active involvement from teachers, faculty, and educational leadership (Holland, 2015; Morales, 2014). There were several educational interventions discovered during the review of literature that produced positive results for enhancing academic achievement in secondary and higher education (Booth et al., 2014; Bormon et al., 2016; Stephens et al., 2014). Two of those interventions, a developmental education program and values affirmation writing, are further described in this section for their potential to have a nationwide application (Booth et al., 2014; Bormon et al., 2016). The Texas model was used in a 2-year research study funded by the THECB to develop an effective educational program to

prepare freshmen college students at nine institutions of higher education across the state of Texas (Booth et al., 2014).

Similarly, a values affirmation writing instrument was used during a 1-year research study to improve minority secondary students' perceptions of their academic abilities and self-efficacy (Bormon et al., 2016). The innovative developmental, educational model required participation and evaluation of 234 staff and faculty as well as 170 student participants to successfully develop and produce positive results from the instrument (Booth et al., 2014). There were implementations of the values affirmation writing interventions across 11 secondary schools and the instrument produced improvement of academic achievement and self-efficacy as measured through grade point average and standardized test scores (Bormon et al., 2016). The difference-education intervention model is a strategy to eliminate students' social class achievement gap by encouraging FGCS to seek assistance from faculty and staff in higher education (Stephens et al., 2014). Overall modern educational developments such as the innovative developmental education program, difference-education intervention and the self-affirmation model represented evidence-based resources for future nationwide implementation in higher education (Booth et al., 2014; Bormon et al., 2016; Stephens et al., 2014). The use of advance placement examination to enhance students learning outcomes in higher education with consideration for overall cost effectiveness was another potential model reviewed by education officials in the state of Texas (Davis et al., 2015). Administrators and key educational policy makers can anticipate the use of these educational innovations in their future strategy to improve self-efficacy for Black college men. Research did not reveal widespread priority of active implementation and management of these educational innovations in the state of Texas. Effective action is needed in Texas to address persistence rates relevant to the historical academic

achievement gap for minority students. Education officials and state policy makers have not produced large initiatives designed to improve the overall graduation and retention rates for first-generation Black college men in Texas. Conversely, the state of Texas adopted an initiative to provide more authority to higher education officials in public institutions to improve students' preparedness for higher education instead of addressing specific historical academic issues with minority students (Booth et al., 2014).

Another educational intervention model discovered during the review of literature involves the BMI programs (Brooms, 2018a, 2018b). BMI programs are designed to provide Black college men with a common culture community during their enrollment at institutions of higher education. Literature indicates the main purpose of BMI programs was to enhance retention and graduation rates of Black men in higher education (Brooms, 2018a; 2018b). The BMI's interventions appear in alignment with the initial goal of this study to provide effective ideas to key higher education officials for consideration in their learning environments. Brooms (2019) stated that research revealed BMI programs were successful in helping Black college men develop bonds and partnerships with other Black college men. Those common bonds and integration provided shared experiences regarding the challenges and struggles often experienced within higher education (Brooms, 2018a, 2019; Tinto, 1975, 1993). According to Brooms (2019), Black college men from three different institutions engaged with similar activities in BMI programs demonstrated commitment and persistence as a result of mutual relationships with other Black college men. Literature revealed that Black male college students frequently experience unfair racial stereotypes in learning environments across the nation (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018). Implementation of BMI programs represents a potential model for a future educational strategy at the state and national levels. While research revealed some focus on

Black college men's academic achievement over the past 20 years, more attention is needed in the state of Texas such as through creation of the BMI programs (Palmer et al., 2015; Wood & Palmer, 2014).

The inclusion of such BMI programs as well as similar programs to develop common cultures to address the rapid growth of Hispanic and other minority students seems appropriate for the state of Texas. Research revealed that between 2002 and 2011 Hispanic students eligible to attend college in Texas experienced an unprecedented 72% increase while eligible Black students increased to 29% during that same period (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). In addition to the goals of describing common experiences related to self-efficacy and retention of minority students in Texas, finding common cultural community programs is also appropriate in this study (Brooms, 2019; Palmer et al., 2015; Wood & Palmer, 2014.) Therefore, the BMI programs based on a similar common cultural concept appeared as a possible solution for underrepresented minority students in the state Texas, after the tuition deregulation of public institutions of higher education in 2003 (Brooms, 2019; Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Creation of the BMI programs may help enhance retention and graduate rates for the minority student population across public institutions as well as private institutions of higher education (Brooms, 2019). More attention is also appropriate in higher education concerning the historical issues of retention and graduation for minority students as diversity in future workforce will significantly influence a national economic outlook with potential global impact (Demetriou et al., 2017). Faculty involvement is essential with all modern educational models. Faculty and staff in learning environments across the state of Texas continue to enjoy tremendous responsibility to manage students' learning outcomes through adaption of modern innovation and interventional educational programs (Booth et al., 2014; Flores & Shepherd, 2014; Jones, 2019; Moss & Slate, 2014). Faculty

relationships with minority students as related to interactions within the academic domain have a significant impact on persistence and retention in higher education; hence, attention and research is needed for additional models such as the BMI programs to assist minority retention in Texas (Brooms, 2019; Morales, 2014). Moreover, key educational stakeholders' focus beyond the normal financial aid policies could impact learning outcomes and minority retention (Banta & Palomba, 2015; Holliman & Daniels, 2018). Assessment and evaluation of modern solutions seem critical to address decline in minority enrollment and retention rates of 4-year public institutions of higher education in Texas, following the deregulation of tuition in 2003 (Banta & Palomba, 2015; Brooms, 2019; Flores & Shepherd, 2014).

Summary

The historical academic achievement gap for minorities in higher education has been a focus of education in both public and private learning environments across the nation (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Bormon et al., 2016; Holland, 2015; Morales, 2014). Exploring perceived self-efficacy and persistence rates for first-generation Black college men in higher education was the focus of this review of literature. Specifically, the focus was aimed at providing useful awareness concerning potential challenges with learning outcomes in higher education for Black college men. Attention and consideration for educational leadership was the purposeful audience. The literature review addressed first-generation Black college students' persistence rates through an examination between socioeconomic relationship and their learning environment (Stephens et al., 2014; Wright, 2019). The persistence concept analyzed through this literature review indicated that marginal learners with lower socioeconomic background are also impacted significantly from positive academic improvement in their learning environments (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Brooks, 2015; Goings, 2018). One educational innovation development model designed to

enhance academic preparedness in new students in higher education in the state of Texas revealed significant improvement relevant to the primary phenomenon in the study (Booth et al., 2014). Similarly, the literature revealed that several modern instruments such as the values affirmation writing intervention influenced achievement through positive enhancement of perceived self-efficacy in minority students in higher education (Bormon et al., 2016).

There were several studies related to minority college students' persistence and resilience rates in higher education (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018; Morales, 2014; Wood et al., 2015). Literature was relevant to exploring first-generation Black college students' attrition and persistence rate in community colleges in Texas (Moss & Slate, 2014; Spangler & Slate, 2014). Literature that examined self-efficacy of Black female college students provided useful analysis for educational reviews of effective models for institutions of higher education (Dortch, 2016). A gap existed in the literature that described perceived self-efficacy as it related to persistence for first-generation Black college men at 4-year institutions of higher education in Texas. This research study was designed to provide a focused review of modern development and innovation to examine the phenomenon for potential solutions for education officials (Booth et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2014).

Based on the projected increase of 26% in Black students' enrollment in higher education by 2022, as well as the 39% graduation rate within six years of attendance for Black students, this study maybe extremely important for educational leadership (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014). The overall review of literature regarding perceived self-efficacy and persistence of minority students was relevant with modern interventions and revealed a potential nationwide solution to address the historical achievement gap in higher education with such interventions as the BMI programs (Brooms, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Booth et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2014). This

research focused on the state of Texas through a theoretical framework with Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy and Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model. The scope of this comprehensive study was designed to explore varying descriptions of self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men who persisted through various programs in institutions of higher education in Texas (Swanbrow Becker et al., 2017). Awareness through the literature provided a review of current knowledge regarding the central phenomenon relevant to persistence influences of first-generation Black college men in Texas in alignment with the qualitative transcendental phenomenological research method (Moustakas, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of Chapter Three was to describe the specific research methods to include data collection, data analysis, and research design selected for this study. A transcendental phenomenology was chosen for use in this study to describe the perceived self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men at higher education institutions in the state of Texas as it relates to their persistence. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory provided the theoretical framework for guiding this study to describe first-generation Black college men's perceived self-efficacy at three higher education institutions in Texas. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model was used in this study to address the application of Tinto's concept of academic and social integration relevant to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. The first section in this chapter focuses on the design of the transcendental phenomenological approach selected to guide the analysis of lived experiences related to the central phenomenon in this research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). This chapter provides thorough descriptions of the research questions, setting, participants, and procedures and an in-depth presentation of the researcher's role, which was essential to minimize the injection of personal biases in this study (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). A detailed description of the data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical consideration sections provides a comprehensive explanation of the research method and procedures selected for this study. Chapter Three concludes with a summary designed for future replication of this research.

Design

Researchers have utilized quantitative methods in the past using various theoretical foundations to evaluate self-efficacy, attrition, and persistence factors relevant to the historical

academic achievement gap for minority students in public higher education (Houle, 2014). There was a plethora of statistical data developed from quantitative studies which have had limited success influencing a national educational strategy (Goings, 2018; Spangler & Slate, 2014; Stephens et al., 2014). There was mutual agreement among educational professionals that a national education strategy to address educational mandates established in the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*'s decision has produced limited nationwide success (Alexander & Alexander, 2017; S. R. Harper et al., 2018; Liebowitz, 2018). Despite the wealth of quantitative data, there is little understanding of the central phenomenon in this study relevant to first-generation Black college men in Texas. Therefore, I selected a qualitative research design to examine the central phenomenon in this study.

The selection of a phenomenological approach was an appropriate research design to examine perceived experiences and perspectives in higher education (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I initially considered using an ethnographic research approach to describe the shared experiences of first-generation Black college men in Texas. However, I declined the use of an ethnographic approach because of the potentially large scope necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of the shared experiences of the participants' culture group (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In comparison, the phenomenological approach allowed examination of the participants' shared experiences relevant to self-efficacy and persistence in higher education with a smaller scaled research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (2014, 2019) reiterated that obtaining the essence of lived experiences from participants is the primary focus of a phenomenology.

The rationale for a transcendental phenomenological design was to ensure the focus remained on the central phenomenon of this study related to perceived self-efficacy and

persistence of first-generation Black college men in Texas (Moustakas, 1994). Using a transcendental phenomenology research design allowed an in-depth examination to develop textural and structural descriptions as well as themes and patterns from the selected qualitative data collection approaches, interviews, focus groups, and writing prompt used in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). The researcher used bracketing to reduce potential biases during the data collection and analysis phase of this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2014). However, I acknowledge that a qualitative research approach allowed personal awareness, such as experiences gained as a first-generation Black college man which was similar to the participants of this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

The transcendental phenomenological design was a qualitative approach which provided rich descriptions of perceived self-efficacy and persistence of participants from the two public and one private Christian institution of higher education in Texas (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). The literature revealed several modern transcendental phenomenological examples that analyzed the perceived experiences of students in higher education (Pisarik et al., 2017). According to Pisarik et al. (2017), transcendental phenomenology was an excellent design to examine the central phenomenon of career anxiety among college students in their study. The primary reason for selecting a transcendental phenomenological approach in researching career anxiety was to analyze and describe the perceived experiences of the participants (Pisarik et al., 2017). Similarly, the purpose of a transcendental phenomenology in this study was to analyze perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in Texas. Qualitative research that explores students' perspective of lived experiences can potentially provide invaluable data to education officials for the potential improvement of learning outcomes at their institutions of higher

education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The transcendental phenomenology approach allowed the researcher to use “systematic methods” and “universal structures” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 315) as well as intuition and imagination to develop an accurate awareness of the participants’ perceived experiences.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their self-efficacy?

RQ2: Why do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges believe they have persisted in college?

RQ3: How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their family influences on academic success in higher education?

RQ4: How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe faculty and peer student influences on their academic success in higher education?

Setting

The sites for the research in this study were two public institutions and one Christian institution of higher education in Texas. Vague descriptions and pseudonyms are critical in this study to limit actual descriptions of the settings within the state of Texas. The rationale for selecting two public institutions, an historical Black college or university (HBCU) and a predominately White institution (PWI), was based on the goal to provide in-depth evaluations of the central phenomenon from different higher education institutions in Texas. The 2003 state-wide tuition deregulation policy at public institutions in Texas is relevant. Subsequently, it impacts financial aid and enrollment of minority students as well as potential attrition rates for those underrepresented student populations in higher education in Texas (Flores & Shepherd,

2014.) Southern Texas College (STC), a pseudonym for the selected HBCU, was a small urban liberal arts institution, while Big Texas College (BTC), a pseudonym for the selected PWI, was a larger institution located in a suburban setting in Texas. Texas Christian Bible Institute (TCBI, pseudonym) was a large suburban Christian institution selected to increase participants from different learning environments within Texas. The student population was predominately White at TCBI. Greater research depth was possible with research from multiple sites (Patton, 2015).

Participants

Sample sizes for qualitative methods are relatively small, which allows a more significant in-depth examination of the central phenomenon in a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The transcendental phenomenology consisted of research for 10 first-generation Black senior college men who attended three institutions of higher education in Texas: four participants from each of the two mentioned sites, BTC and TCBI, and two participants from STC. A purposeful sampling method and snowballing methods were used to identify participants for this study.

The use of a purposeful sampling method at the three settings, STC, BTC, and TCBI, enhanced data collection and analysis of the phenomenon related to first-generation Black college men in Texas. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), using a purposeful sampling design assists researcher with the selection of participants and research settings that specifically contribute to further awareness of the central phenomenon of the study. Patton (2015) indicated that greater research depth is possible with research from multiple sites. Therefore, the purposeful sampling for this research was relevant to develop a modern understanding of perceived self-efficacy and persistence for first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas. A recruitment survey described the criteria needed for this study as a first-generation

student, Black man, and current senior college student at one of three designated research sites in this study (see Appendix B). Pseudonyms for both participants and institutions was used throughout this study and will be used in the future to enhance ethical standards and protection of collected data.

In addition to the use of gatekeepers at each research site, snowball sampling was used to supplement the recruitment flyers when necessary to locate the 10 participants for this study (Patton, 2015). Pseudonyms were used for all participants and institutions to ensure confidentiality, and ethical considerations were maintained for the protection of collected data from inappropriate disclosures. The participant demographics of the 10 self-identified first-generation Black senior college men are described in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Self-Identified Race	Age	Research Site
DeShawn	African American	28	BTC
Andre	Black	23	BTC
Jamel	African American	22	BTC
Jalen	African American	23	BTC
Darius	Black	21	TCBI
Hakeem	Black/African American	23	TCBI
Darnell	Black	22	TCBI
Treyvon	Black	31	TCBI
Terrell	Black	29	STC
Tyrone	Black	23	STC

Procedures

The first procedure for this study involved the submission of an application and approval to conduct research from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). I acknowledge that no data collection or external action was allowed without IRB approval (see Appendix F). I was aware that approval from research sites was necessary as well as from Liberty University. The following procedures were implemented upon receiving approval from the IRB at Liberty University and any necessary approvals from the setting locations:

1. Coordinate with the points of contact from the sites for participant selections.
2. Recruitment flyers were used to match the criteria for participants.
3. Snowball sampling was used, when necessary, to locate the 10 participants.
4. Conducted one round of semi-structured individual interviews with open-ended questions regarding the phenomenon in this research (see Appendix C).
5. Participants completed and submitted journal prompts after the individual interview to allow reflections of questions and possible additional responses about shared experiences relevant to the phenomenon in this study (see Appendix E).
6. Conducted three focus groups with discussions centered around themes and patterns developed during individual interviews (see Appendix D).
7. Data analysis using qualitative software.
8. Reported and stored the data in compliance with standards to provide protection and safeguard collected information.

The Researcher's Role

I am a retired Supervisory Special Agent from the United States Secret Service and was blessed to serve two assignments at the White House. I was a member of the Presidential

Protective Detail for President Clinton, President Bush, and later for President Obama. Over my 36-year professional career with three agencies within the federal government, I gained a wealth of knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to protecting classified information. I received classified training and developed an awareness of invaluable experiences implementing procedures designed to ensure protection for the highest level of data within the federal government. In addition to essential awareness for the protection of information, I also served as a military investigator and later a federal criminal investigator for the Department of Treasury and the Department of Homeland Security.

As a criminal investigator, I completed numerous interviews with various subjects for both administrative and criminal investigations. The skills I developed from conducting interviews in my previous career in law enforcement taught me attention for the crucial passive roles interviewers should take to retrieve the perspectives of interview subjects. I am also a first-generation Black college man and former at-risk student, who experienced poverty and marginal learning in early childhood through mandatory attendance in a segregated elementary school during the 1960s in North Carolina. Therefore, I have firsthand experiences from past educational challenges and struggles that provided useful insight into the overall scope of this study regarding factors that influence self-efficacy and academic achievement for minority students (Berkowitz et al., 2016; Ratcliff et al., 2016).

As the primary instrument of data collection in this study, I was aware of the critical step in the qualitative research designed "to bracket personal past knowledge" (Patton, 2015, p. 117) and restriction against personal relationships with participants in the research study. I was not affiliated with the institutions in this study and had no personal relationships with the participants in this study. The use of bracketing helped me account for my background and biases relevant to

the phenomenon in this study (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) stated that a barrier to credible qualitative findings can result from either “unconsciously, inadvertently, or intentionally” (p. 700) manipulating findings based on personal biases. Therefore, information about my background was included in this section that acknowledged relevant past experiences, such as a first-generation Black college man and a former federal law enforcement official.

Data Collection

The use of multiple data collection techniques in this study, which included semi-structured individual interviews, journal prompts, and three focus groups, enhanced trustworthiness in the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). These qualitative collection methods provided thick, rich data necessary to develop textural and structural descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The transcendental phenomenological approach in this study provided a pathway to analyze the development of themes and patterns from the participants’ perspectives of their self-efficacy and persistence in higher education in Texas (Moustakas, 1994). All data collection techniques used in this study followed the recommendations of established research methods and literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews began after approval from the IRB and site officials to conduct the research described in this study. This data collection method included audio recording and semi-professional transcriptions of interviews from the participants. The interviews were conducted at convenient times through arrangements with the participants. The interviews lasted no longer than 1 hour. I asked opened-ended questions, listened for responses, and minimized non-verbal reactions to obtain in-depth awareness of the participants’ shared

experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The semi-structured interview questions were created in alignment with the research questions to provide potentially useful descriptions of perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The individual open-ended interview questions were as follows (see Appendix C):

1. Please tell me about yourself and educational background.
2. Describe the educational background of your parents.
3. Describe the interaction with your family regarding educational goals.
4. Describe your family support for your academic preparation for higher education.
5. Describe your perceived self-efficacy (innate thinking about your ability to achieve success).
6. Describe what influenced your persistence to not drop out of higher education.
7. Describe factors that influence your current perceived self-efficacy.
8. Describe your overall motivation for higher education.
9. Describe your relationships and involvement with faculty and staff at your current institution of higher education.
10. What other information would you like to provide regarding your overall perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in Texas?

Question 1 was an ice breaker to establish a dialogue with the participants through the invitation to talk about themselves (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questions 2–4 were designed to gather information regarding the participants' relationships and family structure (Brooks, 2015). Question 5 provided the definition for self-efficacy as used in this study and asked participants to describe their internal awareness (Bandura, 1977). Question 6 was developed to obtain a greater understanding of the participants' perceived awareness of their innate ability for higher education

(Brooms, 2018a). Question 7 was significant with regards to current factors the participants perceived has influenced their confidence as a senior college student (Bormon et al., 2016). Question 8 allowed the participants to express their learning objectives and shared experiences relevant to the central phenomenon in this study (Goings, 2018; Ma & Shea, 2019). Question 9 was designed to obtain data regarding perceived relationships with faculty and perceived educational involvement, which is invaluable information for educational stakeholders (Morales, 2014; Neville & Parker, 2017). The final question of the individual interview afforded the participants the opportunity to expand on information related to the central phenomenon of this research (Patton, 2015). All questions in this section were constructed in alignment with Moustakas' phenomenological research methods and guidance (Moustakas, 1994).

Journal Prompts

The next data collection method in this study was through journal prompts. The writing prompts provided a second method of consideration to enhance the collection of different aspects of the participants' shared experiences related to the phenomenon in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Karahan & Roehrig, 2015; Patton, 2015). Therefore, the overall goal of the writing prompts was to obtain additional primary data of the participants' perceived experiences relevant to the phenomenon in this study (Moustakas, 1994). To accomplish this goal, I provided each participant with the following list of open-ended questions after the individual interview, to direct their independent writing prompt assignment (see Appendix E):

1. Provide additional detail about yourself that you believe is relevant to this study.
2. Provide additional information about your educational background that you believe is relevant to this study.
3. Why do you believe your family supported or did not support your academic preparation

for higher education?

4. What other information would you like to provide regarding your overall perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in Texas?

Questions 1 and 2 were designed to supplement the ice breaker and background questions in the individual interview and provided the participants with an opportunity to provide additional relevant information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Question 3 was designed to supplement the information obtained during the individual interviews relevant to the participants' relationships and family structure (Brooks, 2015). The final journal question prompted the participants to expand on information related to the central phenomenon of this research (Patton, 2015). The rationale for analyzing participants' writing prompts through this primary source method provided additional information to increase the level of saturation in data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All documents collected for data analysis were photocopied and personally identifiable information was redacted.

Focus Groups

I conducted three focus groups. Participants were invited to participate in a focus group virtually with other participants from their research site after the individual semi-structured interviews and completion of the written prompts (Del Rio-Roberts, 2011). Although observations were not a separate analysis for this study, I had an opportunity to observe the participants during the individual interviews and focus groups. I documented those observations into a personal written journal for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Open-ended questions for the focus groups were anchored on the three core research questions in this study. Themes and patterns developed from the single round of individual interviews did not prompt any adjustment of questions for the focus groups. The following questions were created in accordance with

Moustakas' (1994) and Patton's (2015) design for participants to expand on responses about shared experiences while in the focus group (see Appendix D):

1. Please introduce yourselves and share with the group your application experiences for enrollment at your current institution.
2. Describe any campus social support that has influenced your persistence in college.
3. Describe any helpful academic support programs used at your current institution of higher education.
4. What can your current institution do to ensure first-generation Black men succeed in college?
5. Describe your interactions and relationships with faculty within the classroom at your current institution.
6. Describe how your family relationship influenced your overall self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in college.
7. Describe how your educational background influenced your self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in college.
8. What is the most significant reason for your academic retention in college?
9. What other information would you like to contribute that was not addressed about self-efficacy and persistence of first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas?

Question 1 was designed as an ice breaker and gave each participant an opportunity to share potential common experiences about their admission process to higher education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questions 2 and 3 sought awareness of on-campus resources such as social and academic programs which may have impacted the participants' self-efficacy and persistence in college (Bandura, 1977; Tinto, 1993). Question 4 was a core inquiry about the participants'

perception of the resources education officials should consider to enhance the retention of first-generation Black college men (Holland, 2015). Question 5 allowed the focus group participants to provide their shared experiences and perceptions of relationships with faculty in their learning environments (Morales, 2014; Tinto, 1993). The purpose of Question 6 was to generate a dialogue with the focus group regarding family relationships relevant to the central phenomenon in this study (Bandura, 1977; Brooks, 2015). Question 7 provided a dialogue with the focus group concerning perceived experiences relevant to their educational background and the central phenomenon of this research (Bandura, 1977; Tinto, 1975). Question 8 was designed to provide an in-depth awareness of the focus group shared experiences for academic retention in college (Bormon et al., 2016). The final question for the focus group afforded the participants the opportunity to provide additional information they deemed relevant to this research study (Patton, 2015).

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures for this study employed Moustakas' (1994) modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen's method of organizing and analyzing phenomenological data and consisted of four steps which guided data analysis in this research study. The first step in data analysis was for me to create a full description of my perceived experiences relevant to the central phenomenon in this study through the use of a phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, I provided a recorded verbatim transcript of a self-interview with the same questions created for the individual interviews in this study (see Appendix C). The second step was for me to use my transcript as a model of shared experiences with the following considerations:

1. Review the significance of each statement in the verbatim transcript for a specific description of the shared experiences relevant to the phenomenon in this study (Moustakas, 1994).
2. Document all significant and relevant statements determined above.
3. Develop a comprehensive list of the “invariant horizons or meaning units” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122), which were the non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements of the shared experiences.
4. Develop a list of themes from relevant clusters of the non-repetitive and non-overlapping significant statements of the shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994).
5. Provide “verbatim examples” in a well-synthesized composition of themes and patterns that present a clear picture “of the textures of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122).
6. Create “a description of the structures” from my experiences relevant to the phenomenon in this study after reflection of my “own textural description” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122).
7. Create “a textural-structural description” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122) of my overall reflection of shared experiences related to the phenomenon in this research study.

The third step was to use the participants’ verbatim transcripts from their individual interviews to complete the same considerations listed above in the second step of this data analysis. The final step in the data analysis was to create a comprehensive representation of the “meaning and essences” from “individual textural-structural descriptions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122) of all participants’ shared experiences relevant to perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education.

The use of the NVivo computer software from Liberty University was available to assist with the creation of structure for data files. I manually created the overall structure of the data

files without the use of computer software to analyze the patterns and themes developed during the collection phase of this research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016), research with multiple participants is more effective with the use of computer software in comparison with only manual coding. However, Saldaña (2016) indicated that coding was one of the many methods to analyze qualitative, not the only or best way. The use of a composite description built on a "cluster of meaning" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 315) helped me achieve triangulation and enhancement of trustworthiness during data analysis. Data analysis based on the three qualitative data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups, were selected to enhance the level of trustworthiness in the findings as well as the use of bracketing and member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015).

Trustworthiness

Similar to the selection of two theories to ensure a robust theoretical framework in the literature review section of this research, three data collection methods enhanced aspects of trustworthiness in this study. Trustworthiness was supported in this study through selection of the data collection methods and analysis with the additional use of direct quotations, member checks, triangulation, and single engagement in the field (Patton, 2015). Implementation of the process of *epoche* started with the first data collection method, which set the tone to focus on the participants' perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in the state of Texas (Moustakas, 1994). Trustworthiness was comprised of four main components: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Credibility

Credibility was achieved when research and findings were conducted within known standards that demonstrated confidence in the overall process and results of this study.

Credibility was achieved in this phenomenological research approach with the use of triangulation as defined by Patton (2015) through the procedures of checking the consistency of different qualitative sources used in this study.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability in this research was achieved using member checks, which was a crucial method to receiving feedback from the participants regarding the accuracy and dependability of collected documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The objective of linking the findings in this research beyond researchers' reflexivity measures with member checks and auditing, such as peer debriefing, was not feasible with the single researcher for this study (Patton, 2015). However, the use of triangulation strategies and developing thick, rich descriptions enhanced confirmability in addition to the mentioned member checks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Overall, the use of member checks within empirical studies has been determined to increase validity for those research studies (Moustakas, 1994).

Transferability

Transferability is viewed in qualitative research as possible when the reader's awareness is enhanced through thick findings that allowed similar potential outcomes from a different research study (Carminati, 2018). The core principles, such as commitment, academic and social integration of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model, were evaluated for applicability within first-generation Black college men's perceived description of influences for their persistence in higher education. The use of a journal and documentation of qualitative data

collection were essential for future duplication of specific aspects used in this study to achieve similar findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The selection of participants from three different higher educational institutions in this research increased transferability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations and procedures were addressed before operational implementation began in this study. Pseudonyms were used throughout this research to protect the identities of participants and institutions of higher education included in the study. The researcher was a retired federal law enforcement official and had experience implementing safeguards and countermeasures to protect the highest levels of officials in the federal government. The researcher was also a former at-risk minority student who was sensitive to safeguard cultural and ethnic considerations. Confidentiality of material obtained during this research was maintained through locked cabinets and password-protected electronic files. The researcher's past experiences working with highly classified material and crisis management at the White House and other federal agencies should enhanced protection in future presentations of the findings of this research. According to Moustakas (1994), opening the phenomenological interview with a brief social conversation can often create a "relaxed and trusting atmosphere" (p. 114), where the participants may respond fully. With consideration of the potentially uncomfortable nature of the interview questions, I used "bracketing" while providing a short summary of personal background during the introduction and overview of the data collection procedures (Moustakas, 1994, p. 181). I also observed participants during the interviews and reiterated to them that participation was voluntary in compliance with the consent form and participants could withdraw from the research at any time (see Appendix A).

Summary

This chapter provided the rationale for the qualitative research method selected for this study. The transcendental phenomenological method described in this chapter was an appropriate qualitative research approach to describe the perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). Descriptions of the qualitative research method mentioned in this chapter, including the design, data collection, and data analysis, were outlined and delineated. Descriptions of the settings, participants, and procedures, as well as the role of the researcher, provided a thorough plan that analyzed first-generation participants for useful findings of shared experiences relevant to self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in this study. The transcendental phenomenological approach allowed the establishment of standards that enhanced trustworthiness in the findings of perceived self-efficacy for first-generation Black college men's persistence in Texas.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe perceived self-efficacy as it related to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in Texas. This chapter presents the research findings and data analysis related to the perceived experiences of participants in this study. An in-depth discussion of the results is presented in Chapter Five. The next section in this chapter describes the 10 participants and their perceived experiences relevant to the central phenomenon in this study (Patton, 2015). The third section in this chapter presents data analysis results developed from three data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups, based on Moustakas' (1994) modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen's qualitative method. A transcendental phenomenological design was used to reduce personal biases from this study's data collection and analysis phase (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). The transcendental phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to use "systematic methods" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 315) and universal structures to developed accurate awareness of the participants' perceived shared experiences. Findings and themes that emerged from the transcribed interviews, transcribed focus groups, and journal prompt analysis of the participants' perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education in Texas are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the four themes that emerged from the data analysis relevant to the research questions in this study.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 10 self-identified first-generation Black senior college men who attended three higher education institutions in Texas. A purposeful sampling design and snowball sampling method were used to select four participants from each of the

following institutions, Big Texas College (pseudonym) and Texas Christian Bible Institute (pseudonym), and two participants from Southern Texas College (pseudonym). There were additional potential participants from two of the research sites who wanted to participate in this study. However, four students from Big Texas College (BTC) and three students from the Texas Christian Bible Institute (TCBI) did not match the research criteria definition of first-generation. Those potential participants had reported at least one of their parents had attended college, in contrast with the definition for first-generation students used in this study (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Redford & Hoyer, 2017). Similarly, one potential participant submitted by the gatekeeper from BTC was later determined through the recruitment survey process as a first-generation junior student and did not match the grade-level criteria for this study. In addition, four potential participants responded to the recruitment survey of 148 eligible first-generation Black college senior men at Southern Texas College (STC). However, only two STC students responded to repeated communications and later participated in data collection in that research setting.

A gatekeeper at TCBI also inquired about a potential participant with a mixed racial background, which was declined because the research focused on the perceived experiences of Black men in higher education. The original data collection goal to enhance findings with greater research depth from multiple research sites in this research study was a tremendous task and served as a demonstration of trustworthiness and ethical implementation throughout the data collection phase of this research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Three of the participants were legal residents who were born in Africa and therefore determined to match the research criteria of Black senior college men. The 10 participants in this research were given

pseudonyms (Deshawn, Andre, Jamal, Jalen, Darius, Hakeem, Darnell, Treyvon, Terrell, and Tyrone) in alignment with their culture and research criteria as Black senior college men.

DeShawn

Deshawn was a 28-year-old, self-identified African American first-generation college senior man and military veteran who attended BTC. He grew up without a father, and his mother finished high school in the 1980s before joining the workforce. His grandmother also raised DeShawn and his sister because his mother struggled financially with low-income employment. Deshawn credits his grandmother for maintaining his grades in elementary and middle schools; however, he failed the seventh grade after his grandmother died. He developed a mentor in the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) manager at his high school. Deshawn eventually received a self-reported 3.4 overall grade point average (GPA), which motivated him to accept a delayed enlistment in the military during his junior year of high school. He acknowledged, “I never had the mindset to go to college” which was mainly because of his immediate environment and lack of support for higher education. Deshawn stated that he saw other successful Black men while in the military, which allowed him to “see my true potential.” He believes the experiences and financial resources obtained through military service developed “perseverance and mental fortitude to push through and not quit once things got hard.” He had a self-reported 2.5 GPA and planned to complete his undergraduate program at BTC in either the summer or fall of 2021.

Andre

Andre was a 23-year-old, self-identified Black first-generation college senior man who attended a junior college before enrollment in BTC. He was raised on the West Coast by a military father between the second and seventh grades before returning to Texas to live with his

mother and sister. He stated his father was an athlete in high school but left school before graduating and enlisted in the military. Likewise, his mother did not like education either but managed to complete high school and enjoyed classes that prepared her for the workforce, such as cooking and woodshop. Andre received encouragement in high school from his mother and Black teachers in contrast to the lack of positive motivation provided by the White teachers from his elementary and middle school. However, Andre did not feel prepared for higher education based on the lack of educational accomplishment in elementary and middle school. Therefore, he first went to a junior college and later transferred to a community college to help increase his academic and mental preparation for success in contrast to recommendations from educators and other friends. Andre revealed he thought about dropping out of college when his father, grandparents, and best friend died. During that period, his grades declined to result in the loss of his academic scholarship. Andre's persistence for higher education was motivated through those challenges and because of relationships he developed on campus: "I met some of my closest friends in college."

Jamal

Jamal was a 22-year-old, self-identified African American first-generation college senior who transferred from University of Texas at San Antonio after he chose to stop playing football and focus on pre-medical classes. Jamal had graduated early from high school and enrolled in an accelerated program at the University of Texas which allowed students to complete 3 years of undergraduate classes before "you're automatically accepted in the San Antonio medical school." Jamal indicated that because he graduated early from high school he was not eligible for the accelerated program, yet he had also received a football scholarship and still enrolled in pre-medical classes. However, after Jamal disagreed with the football coach's decisions to

withdrawn him from pre-medical classes to provide more focus on playing football, he decided to transfer to BTC to resume pre-medical classes. His parents received the equivalent of a middle school education in Africa before they relocated to the United States to ensure the best opportunity for his success, which was centered on higher education. Jamal stated his parents were supportive of his overall higher education completion through financial and mental resources and provided essential accountability to ensure his grades were within the highest standard. Jamal had an apparent higher level of self-efficacy that he believed was based on awareness that other people like him had completed similar objectives; therefore, he could do the same. Similar to several other participants in this research, Jamal's overall motivation to attend college and consider medical school was as follows: "I do credit my high school because my high school" continued to push all students towards college. He reported a 3.0 GPA that reflected his "excellent" relationships with faculty and staff at BTC.

Jalen

Jalen was a 23-year-old, self-identified African American first-generation college senior man who received his associate degree from a community college before his current enrollment at BTC. Jalen received an invitation to play basketball for a college in Hawaii; however, his mother determined the cost to attend that college was too expensive without a full scholarship. Therefore, he attended the local community college and believed playing basketball would have motivated him more: "I felt basketball was like the thing for me to kind of help me keep my grades up." Jalen reported a 3.0 GPA and planned to attend graduate school to get his master's after graduation from BTC in 2021. He expressed disappointment for not receiving his bachelor's degree earlier with his former high school classmates. However, his parents were happy and thankful for the associate degree achievement as a significant milestone for their first-generation

family. Jalen believes his humble background and goal to help people through social work has been the greater motivation to keep him from dropping out of college. He plans to help kids in the future through the creation of a not-for-profit fieldhouse where kids can attend and "keep them off the streets and into school just like me." Jalen also indicated that he is "not a fan of losing" and acknowledges a desire to finish higher education because he wants to become a white-collar worker, not someone who works in a warehouse. He experienced essential support from the faculty and staff over the last two years at BTC.

Darius

Darius was a 21-year-old, self-identified Black/African American first-generation college senior man who attended TCBI. Darius stated his mother completed high school or received a GED, while his father stopped in the 11th grade and did not finish high school. He acknowledged that higher education was not a reality for his parents. Their lack of experiences concerning higher education had a negative impact on the family's ability to support Darius' academic preparation. He believes his mother achieved "a tremendous job instilling educational values" in him beginning in early childhood. He "cannot blame her for not knowing" how to help him in college. Darius' mother always told her children that obtaining a stable and successful career was "definitely" possible through higher education. However, Darius experienced many self-doubts about his academic abilities as a younger student because of his parents' limited educational accomplishments. He also believes college was more difficult because he did not receive educational guidance from his immediate family. He indicated that being a first-generation college student was like traveling a new path in life because his family did not establish a path toward higher education. He believes resources received through TCBI for first-generation students had a tremendous impact on his overall academic achievement in higher education. He

also valued assistance he received from colleagues and mentors that helped develop a different college perspective in general and his educational abilities. His motivation and persistence in higher education were relevant to seeing other people around him succeed, which increased his self-efficacy.

Hakeem

Hakeem was a 23-year-old, self-identified Black first-generation college senior man who attended TCBI. Hakeem indicated his mother had a second-grade level education. His father achieved a fifth-grade level education in Africa before dying during ethnic violence in Africa. He was born in Africa and came to the United States as a refugee at age 16. His family did not understand the importance of education and did not support Hakeem's academic preparation for higher education. He had extremely low grades as a freshman in a local, predominantly African American high school. However, when he graduated four years later, his ranking was eighth in the class, and he received a full scholarship to TCBI. He acknowledges that God had brought other vital people into his life that supported and encouraged him to continue pursuing higher education. His motivation and persistence in higher education have a foundation based on his overall understanding of future success and achievement: "It's much bigger than me." In essence, Hakeem stated that his upcoming degree belongs to his mother, relatives, and the community that shared and supported his development. He believes that having a group or community outside of the typical fraternity for people with similar backgrounds and experiences was essential for him to find overall empowerment in higher education.

Darnell

Darnell was a 22-year-old, self-identified Black first-generation college senior man who attended TCBI. Darnell did not receive support or academic preparation for higher education

from his immediate family because both parents were not allowed to attend school while living in Africa. However, he believes his family did an excellent job after coming to the United States “creating a culture of success” which later developed his motivation and interest in education. He explained that the most significant “turning point” in his educational journey occurred in the fifth grade when a Black teacher pulled him out of class for behavior management and reiterated how success through his current struggles was possible through education. Therefore, Darnell’s primary goal was to “break the generation cycle of no college education” which he believed was feasible because many such mentors pushed him to consider higher education. He experienced an increase in self-efficacy beginning in his sophomore year of high school when the family established their first stable living environment. He commented that having financial resources for higher education motivates students to persist through learning challenges. His fellowship with other minority scholarship awardees was essential to his commitment and retention in the predominately White institution.

Treyvon

Treyvon was a 31-year-old, self-identified Black first-generation college senior man who attended TCBI. He self-reported a 2.9 GPA and planned to graduate in May 2021 from TCBI. He was a veteran with over 10 years in the military that included an overseas assignment for 2.5 years in Europe. Treyvon indicated that his mother and father did not attend higher education and believes they never received formal education beyond either 10th or 11th grade in high school. However, his mother later completed her GED while raising six children and maintaining employment with two jobs. His mother worked as a custodian before advancing to her department's lead coordinator, while his father was reported as "definitely the hardest working person I have ever known." He described his mother as the source of his motivation to become

the first male in their extended family to graduate from higher education except for a male cousin that played college football. He was not expected to attend higher education and based on high school grades, Treyvon believed he would have dropped out of college if he had attended immediately after high school. Therefore, he thinks joining the military provided him the needed time to mature and became motivated for higher education success when he first enrolled at age 28.

Terrell

Terrell was a 29-year-old, self-identified Black first-generation college senior man who attended STC. He self-reported a 3.5 GPA and planned to graduate in May 2021 from STC. He was accepted at a local college in Texas in 2010 after high school but was "academically dismissed" about a year and a half later. He also attended a local community college but acknowledged that he "didn't really care for [his] education." Terrell eventually dropped out of college in 2013 and began a career as a rapper, which he indicated was slightly successful. He is a "firm believer of everything come full circle"; therefore, he became aware of the essential value of higher education. His mother encouraged him to go back to college. Terrell located a degree program at STC that perfectly "aligned with what I wanted to do in life." However, he also acknowledged some fear of returning to college as an older student. Terrell described his mother as always encouraging him to make good grades in middle and high school for his chance of going to college, which was in contrast to his father's advice. His grandmother provided the most significant financial support and overall motivation to finish his undergraduate degree and continue into law school in the fall of 2021.

Tyrone

Tyrone was a 23-year-old, self-identified Black first-generation college senior man who had the option to attend three institutions of higher education in the state of Texas, but selected STC to attend the summer program. During his early childhood, his father was incarcerated, and child services later removed him from his mother's care, "and so four of us was taken from my parents and was in the system for about a couple of years." Tyrone moved to another state and was raised by his grandmother between sixth and eighth grade until he exhibited behavior issues and had a dispute with his grandmother. He was sent back to Texas and later placed in a foster home, where the foster parents "help[ed] me get to the place that I needed to be" to include completion of high school and applying to three colleges. Tyrone indicated that through time management higher education was much easier for him in comparison with high school where the teachers controlled his whole schedule. While his parents did not attend higher education, his grandmother had a college degree and encouraged Tyrone to pursuit higher education to become the first of 16 siblings to receive a college degree. Therefore, Tyrone's overall motivation for finishing higher education was to be a role model for his younger siblings.

Results

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in Texas. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model analyzed academic and social integration relevance for first-generation Black college men's persistence. Self-efficacy was defined and used in this study as individuals' belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). Persistence was defined in this study as students' actions to continue through difficulties to graduate from higher

education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Four research questions focused data collection related to the participants' perceived self-efficacy, persistence, family influences, and perceived experiences with faculty and peer students into the development of themes in this research study. Data collected in this study through semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups were organized and analyzed with procedures using Moustakas' (1994) modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen's method.

Theme Development

I acknowledge my role as the primary instrument of data collection through the use of Moustakas' (1994) modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen's method of organizing and analyzing data in this study. As a first-generation Black college student, I understand the critical step to reduce personal bias by suspending my judgment based on past experiences relevant to the phenomenon and participants in this study (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). I had no affiliations with the institutions and no personal relationships with the participants in this study. To help maintain the sense of openness during the data collection interviews and focus groups, I did not ask follow-up questions in contrast to the skills I developed as a former federal criminal investigator. In essence, I implemented the epoche's concept to "see with new eyes in a naïve and completely open manner" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86).

I carefully read and reread the transcribed interviews, transcribed focus groups, and journal prompts to achieve a clearer textural picture of the participants' lived experiences without "prejudgments and preconception" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). This method of phenomenological reduction was the next step after epoche, which allowed me to bracket personal experiences to achieve the unbiased meanings of the participants' shared experiences. I noticed patterns and themes by reading and rereading the interviews and focus group transcripts and analyzing the

journal prompts. Review of significant statements in the interviews and focus group transcripts relevant to the phenomenon in this study helped developed a comprehensive list of invariant horizons and clusters of those non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements of the participants' shared experiences, which emerged into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Manual coding was considered but not needed to identify categories and emerging themes from the data collections (Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016), coding was not the only or best method to analyze qualitative data. The use of manual analysis in this small-scale qualitative research study provided me with more overall control of the manipulation process (Saldaña, 2016).

In comparison, the semi-structured interviews produced robust sharing of lived experiences essential for comprehensive data collection and analysis. However, the participants had limited responses during the journal prompts and focus group activities. Therefore, participants' experiences collected through interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups are presented in this section on theme development. The data collected through the interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups were manually organized into themes and supporting categories listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Table of Themes

Theme	Supporting Categories
Self-Efficacy	Confidence, Motivation, Persistence
Family Relationships	Parents, Siblings, Grandmother
Community Obligations	Role Model, Youth, Indebtedness
Campus Relationships	Faculty, Mentors, Peers

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy emerged as a significant theme during this study. Self-efficacy was defined as an individual's belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). Often extra focus was necessary to explain self-efficacy's exact meaning and concept to several participants during the individual interviews. However, all participants shared extensive examples of their varying levels of self-efficacy development and growth. Empirical literature research determined that cognitive learning and persistence were meaningful in higher education (Bandura, 1977; Dortch, 2016). The below quotations from five of the 10 participants of this study ranged from a deficient level of self-efficacy that caused several participants to doubt their future success in higher education after high school graduation to a significantly higher level of self-efficacy, which manifested itself in several pending applications to graduate school immediately after completion of their current program. One of the participants, a military veteran, acknowledged that his low level of self-efficacy is a direct result of the lack of an educational support system and interaction from his parents beginning in early childhood. DeShawn stated in reflection to his levels of self-efficacy:

With failing the seventh grade and being raised in a single-parent household, the odds were always against me. My father was not in the picture much in raising me to become the role model male figure I yearned to see. My mother struggled financially with raising me and my sister on a low income, and my grandmother carried a major role in keeping our grades and school in order. When she passed away our family crumbled, and my sister and I started to lack in school causing me to repeat the seventh grade. That set a tone for me because I saw my friends move forward and realize how I would be left behind.

Another participant who was also a military veteran indicated that he received failing grades in high school because of his low level of self-efficacy towards education. He received failing grades in high school, which caused him to transfer to an alternative school to graduate from high school. Treyvon stated in reflection of his levels of self-efficacy:

If I would have done this immediately after high school, I think there is a strong possibility I would have dropped out. I would either fell down. I would have dropped out. I think just me going into the military and maturing and pretty much understanding how certain things work, how to interact with people, how to prioritize certain things. I think that is what, that pretty much was what kept me alive today, especially in school. So I was not the best student in high school. I was pretty close to dropping out to be honest.

Terrell who is a 29-year-old, first-generation college senior who attended higher education for about 18 months after he graduated from high school in 2010. He acknowledged that education was not a priority, he “didn’t really care for [his] education,” which manifested itself in his academic dismissal from higher education. He later dropped out of another community college to become a rapper. Terrell said, “I’m a firm believer of everything come full circle”:

I got to experience some things that a lot of people would never experience in life, but the more that you understand the importance of education and understand how important the business aspect of it is, right? So they call it the music business.

Additionally, Terrell remarked on his increased level of self-efficacy:

Despite the challenges of starting school as a Black man, and having a history of being non-committal, I set a goal for myself and pushed myself to see it through. It is my belief

that self-efficacy is something one must discover within him/herself through time and dedication to one's craft.

In contrast, another participant experienced a difficult and challenging childhood that included several interstate moves and removal from his mother's custody by the Child Protective Services. Tyrone, who was then raised by his grandmother and later by foster parents, continued to demonstrate a higher level of self-efficacy. He planned "to go straight to the military" after high school, but "what really pushed me to go to college was my grandmother"; therefore, he applied and was accepted into three colleges, and the state of Texas provided full tuition. Tyron's response about attending higher education at STC without assistance illustrated his high level of self-efficacy:

Really, I did not receive no real help when it was time for me to move into my college dorm. For the first time I moved in by myself. I got all my books myself. I did everything myself. I took care of everything I needed to because I know like my parents could have had theirs. That's just what they chose not to do. My siblings could have had it. That's what they chose not to do. Some of them started and did not finished. So they still had not went back. So that was not my job to dictate or ask somebody to help me. It was my job as a man to be like, this is what I want and what I am doing. So I am going to put myself through school.

Another participant who was a 21-year-old college senior at TCBI with a self-reported 3.6 GPA acknowledged low self-efficacy at the beginning of his first year in higher education. Darius reflected that his low level of self-efficacy was the results a wrong perspective about his ability:

My initial self-efficacy, freshman and sophomore years of college, were relatively low. I knew deep down that I was fully capable to succeed as I made it to college just like many of my peers, but I still would doubt my ability to perform well. This low self-efficacy diminished more when I would fail. If I performed poorly on an exam or missed an important meeting/opportunity, I felt like it was confirming my beliefs that I was not capable of succeeding in higher in higher education. With help of colleagues and mentors and putting some things into perspective, I was able to change my outlook on college and my abilities. Now, I have a higher self-efficacy and not only believe in myself more, but I believe that I can overcome my obstacles.

Family Relationships

Family relationships emerged as a theme that many of the participants indicated had influenced their persistence and motivation to not drop out of higher education. The literature review suggested that changes in family relationships often occur as a direct result of participants attending higher education (Brooks, 2015). Participants in this study also credited their parents, siblings, and grandmothers for guidance, support, and inspiration for their current academic achievements. Research revealed that first-generation college students (FGCS) lack accurate academic preparation for higher education and 89% of low income FGCS do not complete their degree programs within six years of enrollment in higher education (Alvarado et al., 2017). Jamal, who graduated early from high school to attend an accelerated college program designed for pre-med students, enjoyed the financial support of his parents who paid for online tutoring “since they cannot really do it themselves.” Jamal stated:

I believe my family supported because they wanted me to have a better life and more opportunities than they had growing up. My family wanted me to become successful in life and they felt that higher education would give me the tools to properly do that.

Jalen also stated awareness of his family relationships and support for education:

My parents were not really able to afford me going off to a university. So the way they showed or tried to get me, which I did not see it that way for the longest. I wanted to go play basketball and I was pretty good. . . . I did not have the best like highlights, but college I guess, was interested in me and invited me to come play for them in Hawaii. Come try out. And I was interested in going there, but my mom could not afford it. So she said no, and since it was not a scholarship I went to community college there near town and did not even get to play, just went to school. But for the most part for as long as I did not understand it, but they support me going to community college, tried to keep me motivated, but it bothered me because I felt like basketball was like the thing for me to kind of help me keep my grades up.

One of the first-generation participants considered his parents' lack of knowledge and experiences about higher education as "better" as the lack of specific experiences from higher education limited their recommendations and suggestions for the participants. Andre added:

I think the best thing my parents, my mom does to support me is she do not because she do not know nothing might be the best. This sounds bad, but it might be the best thing. Because I have talked to people that parents went to college and is scared for because they parents went to college. So they think they understand what college is like, but it is a different for different time. Periods is out the best way. And my mom did not really pressure me into what my major should be.

Another participant whose father died during ethnic violence in Africa suggested that it is important for faculty to understand and support students that lack academic performance acknowledgement from their family. Hakeem stated:

So going back to mom home, although she was not educated, she understood that education was one of the keys to success and just changing your circumstances. And she wanted a better life for us. So she definitely emphasize education a lot. Not all of my siblings really fell in line with the rest of us, but me and the second youngest are the only ones that were able to go to college because as soon as she identified the we were good in school, she was like okay, this is going to be the way out.

Hakeem added:

My family did not support my academic preparation for higher education because they did not know any better. Since no one in the family had attended college, there was no way for them to really understand what I needed and how best to be supportive.

Another participant whose parents are refugees from Africa had always encouraged him to seek higher education but lacked the knowledge and resources to assist. Darnell stated in his journal prompt:

My family did (not) support me much in my academic preparation and is not due to them not being interested but rather they did not know much about academics. My family came here as refugees that escaped a civil war in (Africa), and while living in (Africa) they were not allowed to attend school or higher education. When they came here to the US, academic was all new to them. I had to figure out things on my own and take the path that led toward my academic success. My family I would say did wonderful job in motivating

me, but other than that they just did not know how to get around. Example, I had to find my own tutors, study without parental support, ways to succeed in school, etc.

Community Obligation

Community obligations emerged as a theme that many participants indicated their motivation for persistence in higher education was significantly influenced through an obligation to become a role model and to give back to their community. DeShawn stated:

So my thing is trying my best to give them images, to reflect back on. I look like you I'm in the same classes as you. I am your peer, but I understand that you still have to do more than what you are doing out here. That is how I am trying to explain it, to understand that you are a minority in a situation in which you need to bridge a gap and have to be able to not only push yourself through it but help others around you also, because you do not want to sit at the table alone.

Jalen said:

I like helping people. That is why I want to go into sort of social work. I like helping kids and anyone I can really, specifically kids. I feel like they have the ability to change like humanity in a way. So I feel like if we can get them on the right track at a younger age, it is better before they get stuck into stuff, not saying that they all will, but some kids kind of were off into other things. But if they have someone that is kinda in their corner and supporting them and guiding them through that can help. So that is why I went into the field that I am in.

Jamal added:

I feel good about myself and I want to be a role model for whoever's wanting, or also on the other hand, if we are talking about my parents, is so now your son is actively

overachieving. What you could not do, which is actually a good thing. It might not the way it is worded does not sound like a good thing, but that is actually what is supposed to happen.

Another participant strongly believed his overall persistence and academic achievement in higher education was directly linked and influenced from a feeling of indebtedness and commitment to his community. Hakeem stated:

So I think the main driving force for my persistence is the big goal and the dream, because I understand it is so much bigger than me. Like the work I want to do is so much bigger than me and there is a need for it. So it was just like, even when I am struggling, when I am going down to just look back at the big picture and I am like, okay, this is not just for me. Like my degree is not just my degree. It is my community's degree. It is my mom's degree. It is everyone under me, my nephews, my nieces, everyone who has really been there supporting me, everyone, who enable me to dream. So that is what keeps me going. Keep driving persistence, even when times are hard.

One participant connected his motivation for persistence in higher education to both family and mentors for his overall indebtedness to that community. Darius indicted:

One thing that has motivated me to follow through with my education goals is the presence of my family and mentors. I personally feel that I owe them for all the faith they have placed in me. They all have supported me throughout my journey and the least I could do is prove to them that I am fully capable accomplishing my goals.

Campus Relationships

Campus relationships emerged as another theme; many of the participants suggested their campus-based relationships with faculty, mentors, and peers significantly influenced their

perceived self-efficacy in higher education. The literature review revealed research that suggested learning environments where minority students enjoy a positive relationship with educators and staff significantly influence the overall minority students' perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education (Morales, 2014). The focus of this research study was to provide educational stakeholders and policy makers in Texas with a modern awareness relevant to the potential learning outcomes of their minority students populations (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018; Franklin et al., 2017; Jones, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Andre said, "The friends I have meet so far in college have become lifelong friends and have pushed me and further my education and that is what I think some males lack in college is that support system." Andre added during this his interview:

Like these are some lifetime lifelong friends. And I think that kind of stops me from dropping out because I met them all in college. Like this makes me want to continue my education because I met some great people that I do not feel like I would have met if I would have stopped.

Another participant acknowledged his misconception of faculty support for his overall educational development and growth as well as social and family welfare. The participant previously assumed his professor had a personal agenda because of a past decision but gained awareness and appreciation of the larger concept that includes concern for all students under the professor's care and consideration. Terrell stated:

I do not open up to people a lot, but losing my father made me realize the bottom of my professors had my back because you know, I lost my father the day after the freeze, like during that week. And just the overwhelming support that I got from them. Like take your time, do not worry about anything, just the calls, just the prayers, just the

overwhelming support that I got from them surprised me because I did not think some of them really even cared about me. Because there were certain instance where I feel like they trying to block me from my opportunity using certain things. But I had to realize too that, it was not so much as them blocking me, but understanding that I am there yet and wanting to get other students to that point. So, I definitely love STC definitely love them. I just had one of my professors, she wrote me the best letter of recommendation I have ever received in my life.

Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model was used in this research study as part of the theoretical framework to examine the relevancy of the essential concepts of academic and social integration related to first-generation Black college men's persistence in higher education. Black students' attrition rates in higher education were 61% in comparison with 44% attrition rates for White students' within six years of attendance (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014). Therefore, the creation of the fourth research question in this study was designed to evaluate participants' experiences with faculty, staff, and peer students at particular institutions of higher education. Treyvon stated:

I can personally say that my professors have been more than professors. I can say that. I personally have not had any personal issues with a professor. As far as it goes with my peers, a lot of times when I am going to a class, and I hate to sound like I am discriminating, but a lot of times I actually go into the class, the first thing I look for is another student of color.

Darius indicated:

But with education, also comes struggles. So I have always been successful. One of the biggest things my mentors have always taught me is perseverance, and understanding that being knocked down is not the biggest deal. Getting back up is what is important.

Darnell shared his experiences during the focus group at TCBI about Greeks club memberships which related to the theme of campus relationships: “Just having that support from my brothers has really been a big thing for me in college.” The message seemed relevant to perceived self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men at it related to their persistence in higher education in the state of Texas.

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe perceived self-efficacy as it related to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in higher education in the state of Texas. Three data collection methods, interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups, were used to describe participants’ experiences related to these research questions. Those findings are presented below.

Research Question 1

How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their self-efficacy? This question sought an in-depth awareness of first-generation Black college men’s perceived understanding of their abilities to achieve academic success in higher education and modern society (Bandura, 1997, 1993; Hébert, 2018). Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy theory provided a comprehensive explanation for overall efficacy achievement related to psychological development and cognitive learning. According to responses through interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups, all 10 first-generation Black college men in this study described their current perceived self-efficacy as high relevant to persistence in higher education. Many of the

participants acknowledged previous lower perceived self-efficacy relevant to academic achievement in secondary education and various times during their enrollment in higher education. DeShawn stated:

I never had the mindset to go to college because no one in my immediate family has attended college. It was not until joining the military and seeing Black men in a professional [role] as Officers and the President of the United States, that allowed me to see my true potential.

Research Question 2

Why do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges believe they have persisted in college? Persistence considerations relevant to first-generation Black college men's perceived self-efficacy were the foundation and central drivers in this study. The findings in this study indicated all participants perceived that self-efficacy influenced their persistence in secondary and higher education through their relationships with family, faculty, peers, mentors, and community obligations. Each of the participants acknowledged previous lower perceived self-efficacy relevant to persistence at various times during their enrollment in secondary and higher education. Hakeem said, "Some students like me, come from families where academic performance is not acknowledged, leave alone praised so it is very vital for faculty to advocate for students in this way."

Research Question 3

How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their family influences on academic success in higher education? FGCS often lack accurate academic preparation in high school and limited support and guidance from their parents to manage essential skills in higher education (Alvarado et al., 2017; Hines et al., 2019). Eight of

the participants in this study indicated receiving significant positive influences from their family regarding their perceived self-efficacy related to academic success in higher education. Two participants in this study stated that non-family relationships had a greater influence on their perceived self-efficacy and persistence related to academic success in higher education. Jalen indicated:

Not saying that my parents did not do good for themselves, but I just did not want to limit myself to working a warehouse job or something. Just having the push from my family and my friends, we motivate each other to make sure we are keeping each other up through this process of getting through school.

Research Question 4

How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe faculty and peer student influences on their academic success in higher education? Tinto's (1993) student integration model defined awareness and constructs related to the phenomenon of retention in higher education. The framework of the student integration model was analyzed for alignment in this research question to address the application of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model's concept of academic and social integration relevancy to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. Research had shown that minority students often lack effective relationships with faculty in higher education and social capital relationships with institutional agents, which are essential for academic preparation in high school (Holland, 2015; Morales, 2014). The findings in this study supported existing research that faculty and peer relationships strongly influenced the participants' perceived academic success in higher education. All participants in this study indicated overall positive relationships with faculty and peers that influenced their perceived self-efficacy and persistence in high education. However,

educational stakeholders and officials should also note the findings in this study that a few participants experienced limited relationships with educators and staff in secondary and higher education. DeShawn stated:

I would say in Texas, like graduating from Texas and going to school in Texas I feel that we, I feel that it is always can be a way to prepare a lot better for these endeavors and the school system does not always prep you for the amount of coursework and the things that you want to go through when you get to these institutions. Especially if you are graduating from a high school with a demographic, there is completely different from the institution that you are going to attend. You are not going to always have the academic background to push through it alone. So I feel that with the education system, they should try to understand the ideal of equality and equity. You know, every person has a different level in which they might need to achieve the same goal.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the research findings and data analysis related to the participants' perceived self-efficacy as it related to college persistence at two public institutions and one private Christian institution of higher education in the state of Texas. Patterns and emerging theme development identified four themes aligned with the 10 participants' lived experiences related to perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education in Texas. This chapter concluded with a comprehensive explanation of data analysis results derived through qualitative interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups, as well as responses to the research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men at two public institutions and one private Christian institution of higher education in the state of Texas. While quantitative studies have focused on the historical academic achievement gap for minority students in higher education, there was limited qualitative research regarding Black men in college and their perceived self-efficacy related to college persistence in Texas (Spangler & Slate, 2014). This phenomenological study was designed to describe the lived experiences of first-generation Black college senior men who persist at three higher education institutions in Texas. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model analyzed academic and social integration relevance for first-generation Black college men's persistence. Self-efficacy was defined and used in this study as individuals' belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). Persistence was defined in this study as students' actions to continue through difficulties to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). In this chapter, a summary of the findings of this study is provided as well as a discussion of the results and the implications in relationship with relevant literature and theories. A review of the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications and an explanation of decisions regarding delimitations and limitations implemented in this study are presented next in the chapter. The final section in the chapter provides recommendations for future research and actions relevant to findings of self-efficacy and persistence for first-generation Black college men in higher education in Texas.

Summary of Findings

This phenomenological study had a foundation on four research questions about first-generation Black college men's perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education in Texas. The theory that guided this study was Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model and how they applied to first-generation Black college men. Tinto's concept of academic and social integration forged a research question that asked: How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe faculty and peer student influences on their academic success in higher education? Based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups, all 10 Black college senior men who participated in this study indicated that campus-based relationships with faculty and peers influenced their retention and persistence in higher education.

Similarly, findings in this study aligned with existing research that family relationships influenced most participants' academic achievement at both secondary and higher education. The following question prompted this response: How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their family influences on academic success in higher education? First-generation college students (FGCS) often lack accurate academic preparation in high school and receive limited support and guidance from their parents to manage essential skills in higher education (Alvarado et al., 2017; Hines et al., 2019). In addition, the following question was essential to address shared experiences from the 10 participants in this study regarding three different higher education learning environments across the state of Texas: Why do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges believe they have persisted in college? Persistence was defined as an individual's (student) continual effort to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975). Most of the participants in this study

acknowledged previous lower perceived self-efficacy levels during their secondary school and enrollment in higher education. One participant was academically suspended and later dropped out of higher education for over a decade. Two other military veteran participants did not enter higher education until almost a decade after high school, based on varying levels of their perceived self-efficacy-related persistence in academic achievement for higher education.

Lastly, the following question was the overall foundation of this research study: How do first-generation Black college men who are seniors in Texas colleges describe their self-efficacy? This research question regarding perceived self-efficacy guided the focus and theoretical framework of this study. All 10 first-generation Black college men who participated in this study described their current perceived self-efficacy as high or adequate relevant to persistence in higher education. Most of the participants acknowledged previously lower perceived self-efficacy pertinent to academic achievement in secondary education and various times during their enrollment in higher education. Therefore, the findings in this study suggest that the retention and persistence of Black men who are college students are influenced by relationships with faculty and peers in higher education.

Discussion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe perceived self-efficacy as it related to the persistence of first-generation Black college men at two public institutions and one private Christian institution of higher education in the state of Texas. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory served as the theoretical framework of this study. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model was utilized to analyze academic and social integration principles relevant to the first-generation Black college men who participated in this study. Limited empirical studies were located during the literature review with first-generation Black

students as research study participants. Self-efficacy was defined as an individual's belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1997). The term persistence was described in this study as students' action to continue their efforts through difficulties to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Findings for this study came from three qualitative data collection methods and analysis of first-generation Black college men, and were in alignment with existing literature indicating self-efficacy, family structure, student integration, and faculty relationships can significantly influence retention and graduation rates in higher education (Bandura, 1977; Morales, 2014; Tinto, 1993). The findings of this study of perceived experiences of 10 first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas should benefit educational stakeholders and policy makers in higher education to help create an effective national strategy to address the historical academic achievement gap for the minority that was first addressed in the Supreme Court landmark decision in 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*, imposing equality in public education (Alexander & Alexander, 2017; Liebowitz, 2018).

Empirical Discussion

The empirical literature review indicated that students' family background and characteristics significantly impact their retention in higher education (Holland, 2019; Houle, 2014). One of the four themes developed during this study aligned with family relationships. Patterns developed from three qualitative data collection methods reflected that most participants perceived experiences relevant to family relationships influenced their persistence in higher education (Holland, 2019; Houle, 2014; Tinto, 1993). Brooks (2015) suggested that minority participants experienced different relationships within their family social structure directly correlated with attending higher education and that such conflicts influenced students from lower socioeconomic communities. The literature suggests that FGCS lack awareness and knowledge

of skills needed to successfully manage routine issues related to the role of a college student (Alvarado et al., 2017). According to Holland (2015, 2019), first-generation minority high school students and high school counselors often lack trust in each other, which significantly impacts the level of critical college information and assistance the minority students receive from counselors. Findings in this study revealed that three participants perceived that lower self-efficacy and a lack of positive relationships with teachers in secondary education influenced their decision to not immediately attend a 4-year institution of higher education after high school. Research indicated that many education officials acknowledge and recognize that low-income, first-generation, and minority students were at-risk for dropping out of higher education in comparison with traditional college students (Goings, 2018; Hines et al., 2019; Holland, 2019; Jones, 2019; Loeb & Hurd, 2019).

Social isolation and lack of institutional agents were reviewed through literature to have a significant negative impact on minority students' persistence in higher education (Bormon et al., 2016; Brooms, 2018a; Dortch, 2016; Flores & Shepherd, 2014; McCallum, 2020; Morales, 2014; Moss & Slate, 2014). According to Berkowitz et al. (2016), perceived self-efficacy, socioeconomic status, and lack of positive networks were critical aspects for students' motivation and accountability. One of the four themes also developed during this research study aligned with campus relationships. Patterns developed and responses to a research question about faculty and peer student relationships revealed that most participants of this study indicated their relationships on campus significantly influenced their persistence in higher education (Morales, 2014; Tinto, 1993). Results of this study confirmed existing research and evidence that faculty involvement represented a significant influence on minority students' academic resilience and persistence in higher education (McCallum, 2020; Morales, 2014). The literature revealed that

some of the stereotypes related to the lower socioeconomic status of Black college men, when properly addressed, can produce positive findings relevant to perceived self-efficacy and persistence through active involvement with faculty, staff members, and administrators at institutions of higher education (Boyd & Mitchell, 2018; Wood et al., 2015). Research also indicated that essential faculty involvement through modern educational challenges for minority students in higher education was possible when educational models are designed around the concept of shared awareness and transparency (Holliman & Daniels, 2018; Lindsey & Walker, 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2018).

A third theme that emerged in this study was related to community obligations. Most of the participants in this study indicated their motivation for persistence in higher education was related to their perceived role model position with other youth and feelings of indebtedness to their community. According to Stephens et al. (2014), researchers used a panel with senior college students to provide first-year FGCS peer-based perspectives through a difference-education model. The results of the difference-education model were positive, and learning outcomes from that one-year project suggest a potential model for academic performance improvement for first-generation minority students (Stephens et al., 2014). Participants from that study were motivated by that model, as indicated in this statement: "People with backgrounds 'like me' can succeed" (Stephens et al., 2014, p. 946). Similarly, patterns and themes developed from participants' perceived experiences in this study were relevant to their perceived community relationship and motivation for persistence in higher education. For instance, Hakeem stated, "My degree is not just my degree. It is my community's degree."

One of the four themes developed in this study was aligned with the overall focus of perceived self-efficacy as defined and utilized in Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. The

central phenomenon in this study was relevant to perceived self-efficacy as it related to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. Literature suggested that different learning experiences existed in higher education due partly to ethnic minority students' level of academic preparation and lack of relationship with faculty (McCoy et al., 2015; Morales, 2014). The findings and results of this study were in alignment with existing literature that the level of academic preparation and relationships with faculty for first-generation Black college men influenced perceived persistence in higher education. There was limited literature regarding qualitative research relevant to first-generation Black college students related to 4-year institutions of higher education. Despite the wealth of statistical data and information acquired through quantitative analysis, there were limited empirical findings from first-generation Black college students relevant to the phenomenon in this study. According to Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2011), lower socioeconomic factors are not always directly influenced by self-efficacy and persistence in minority students. While there was research on numerous aspects of the central phenomenon in this study, a gap existed in the literature of perceived self-efficacy related to persistence for first-generation Black college men at 4-year institutions of higher education in Texas. The findings of this study provided educational stakeholders and policy makers with modern assessments that aligned with existing literature as further evidence that first-generation Black college students' perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education were influenced by relationships with faculty, peers, students, community, and family (Bandura, 1977; Morales, 2014).

Empirical research indicated that faculty involvement significantly influenced minority students' academic persistence in higher education. This study's findings aligned and supported the literature review that self-efficacy and retention in higher education were positively impacted

by essential relationships between faculty, peer students, and minority students (Morales, 2014; Stephens et al., 2014). Within the group of 10 research participants in this study, nine out of 10 participants indicated that on-campus academic support such as tutoring was essential to their retention and persistence in higher education. All research participants in this study reported their memberships with on-campus social clubs and organizations, such as the First-generation, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and other clubs, were critical to their perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education.

Those findings were also consistent with the literature review, in which Brooms (2018b) reported that implementing Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs in higher education in the past 15 years had a positive influence on Black college student retention and graduation rates across the nation. The findings in this study were significant because of the lack of modern empirical research on Black college men in the state of Texas. Fortunately, the educational stakeholders at the public PWI in this study agreed with the importance of this research and the value of a modern awareness relevant to their 15% Black student population (McFarland et al., 2018). Therefore, I was given an exemption to the institutional policy against external research and allowed to conduct this study with student participants from that educational site. According to McFarland et al. (2018), that public PWI achieved a 46% graduation rate for Black college students compared with the national 39% graduation rate for Black students within six years in higher education. However, the 46% Black students' graduation rate was the lowest graduation rate of any race/ethnicity of students at that public PWI (McFarland et al., 2018).

The findings in this study indicated that participants who were encouraged by high school teachers and other officials to consider higher education developed a higher level of perceived self-efficacy for immediate enrollment in higher education following high school graduation.

According to Holland (2015), research suggests the lack of positive relationships between high school counselors and minority students negatively impacted minority students' aspirations for college. Therefore, future research should also focus on minority participants in high school to examine similarly reported usefulness of mentors in secondary education in preparation for higher education (Franklin et al., 2017; Morales, 2014).

Theoretical Discussion

The findings in this study aligned with Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and Tinto's (1993) student integration model, which established the theoretical framework in this study. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory served as the primary guide in this study as it related to the participants' belief in their academic ability in education through persistence, not merely behavioral self-control. Bandura's (1997, 1993) self-efficacy-based theories focused on the aspects of efficacy expectations and performance accomplishments within the four sources of treatment related to psychological and cognitive learning. According to Bandura (1993), perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development also influenced faculties' innate beliefs of their attributions and contributions to the overall learning outcomes of their student population. Therefore, educational administrators and officials should provide attention and training for educators, focusing on developing effective learning environments based on awareness of educators' perceived experiences and bias and the participants' perceived experiences in this study.

In addition to the focus of student's perceived self-efficacy related to persistence in education, Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model indicated that academic and social integration are essential to developing relationships that can also influence participants' perceived persistence in higher education. The emerging patterns and themes developed in this

study added to existing research such as Tinto's (1993) student integration model to confirm relevancy with first-generation Black college men who were seniors in higher education in Texas. Although future larger-scale research and studies were recommended in this chapter, based on existing literature, educational stakeholders and officials should implement immediate actions to address the overall findings in this study. The selection of Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model was essential to this study of first-generation Black college men's perceived experiences related to persistence in higher education. Awareness that participants' background, characteristics, and personal attributes did not stop their integration into academic and social relationships was a positive finding from the two predominately White higher education institutions in this study. Developing the four themes in alignment with the findings in this study indicated that selecting the student integration model to help guide research relevant for a modern assessment of Black college students was appropriate.

Implications

This study gave a voice to Black men in college and their perceived self-efficacy related to college persistence at two public institutions and one private Christian institution of higher education in Texas. Specific implications revealed through the experiences of the 10 first-generation Black college participants can benefit educational stakeholders and policy makers in higher education across Texas. This section presents theoretical, empirical, and practical implications for academic officials at the secondary level as well as institutions of higher education across the nation.

Theoretical Implications

Two seminal studies and models established the theoretical framework for this study of perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy

theory and Tinto's (1993) student integration model were used to describe self-efficacy related to persistence for first-generation Black college men in Texas. This study further supports the theories of Bandura and Tinto that first-generation Black college men's perceived self-efficacy related to their cognitive learning and overall academic achievement are influenced through relationships with faculty and peers, as well as family structures (Bandura, 1977; Morales, 2014; Tinto, 1975, 1993). The fourth research question in this study was specifically designed to address the relevancy of Tinto's (1993) student integration model. The findings in this study add to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory and support focused explicitly on Tinto's (1993) student integration model related to first-generation Black college men who were seniors in higher education in Texas.

Empirical Implications

The empirical implications of this study provided a voice for Black college students relevant to self-efficacy theories focused on academic achievement in higher education. Previous research on minority students' perceived self-efficacy and persistence was centered on community college experiences. This study focused on first-generation Black college men at two public institutions and one private Christian institution of higher learning in Texas. All participants in this study suggested contributions of social, academic, and other campus-based support groups were relevant to their perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education. These findings were consistent with the literature review of BMI programs in higher education in the past 15 years and their positive influence on Black college student retention and graduation rates (Brooms, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). The findings in this study were significant because of the lack of modern empirical qualitative research on Black college men in the state of Texas.

Practical Implications

Practical implications were forged mainly from recommendations received during focus group sessions with first-generation Black college men related to their perceived experiences focused on two public institutions and one private Christian institution of higher education and secondary education settings in Texas. Many of the participants opined during this research study that their relationships with high school teachers significantly influenced the participants' motivation for higher education. However, two participants stated their high schools did not prepare them academically for the necessarily increased learning rigor of higher education and recommended more teachers of color were needed at those high schools in Texas. Educators in secondary education should implement changes to the level of rigor in the learning environment in alignment with higher education standards.

Similarly, immediate action should address current situations that non-traditional Black college men select community college at a rate of 70.55% compared to enrollment rates of 28% at 4-year colleges and universities across the nation (Jones, 2019). Jones (2019) reported that overall convenience and financial consideration were some of the reasons Black college men indicated for selecting community colleges. However, secondary education administrators and officials should strongly consider empirical research that perceived low self-efficacy negatively influenced persistence in higher education (Bandura, 1977). The most significant and immediate recommendations offered by participants in this study for higher education stakeholders and policy makers involved significant increases in the numbers of faculty of color within the classroom and within leadership roles and staff positions at their institutions of higher education.

Delimitations and Limitations

There were several purposeful delimitations in this study. I selected the transcendental phenomenology research design to reduce personal biases from the research because I am a former at-risk first-generation Black college man and the primary instrument in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) opined that using a transcendental phenomenological approach was an appropriate research method to limit the researcher's potential biases through such measures as bracketing. A transcendental phenomenological design was an excellent research method that examined participants' perceptions of lived experiences relevant to the central phenomenon in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015).

The participants for this study were limited to first-generation Black college senior men from three higher education institutions in Texas. My rationale for selecting an HBCU, a PWI, and a private Christian institution was that I wanted to obtain in-depth analyses from different higher education institutions in Texas. Patton (2015) stated that more robust research depth was possible with data from multiple research sites. I selected Black senior college men as participants to explore their lived experiences for a modern awareness of potential positive findings in contrast with the nationwide 39% graduate rates for Black college students within six years in higher education (Aud et al., 2013; Morales, 2014). This study focused on the state of Texas, where minority students' enrollment had significant increases in higher education before the 2003 state policy to deregulate tuition in public higher education (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). Evaluating the overall impact on minority students' enrollment in higher education after the deregulation of tuition in Texas had mixed results. The Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB) summarized that between 2003 and 2009, tuition rates at public higher

education institutions in Texas had increased by 72%. Still, the THECB's 2-year research study did not focus on minority students (Flores & Shepherd, 2014). While the THECB-funded study across nine colleges and universities in Texas developed a helpful model to help first-year students improve their academic skills and abilities, this study focused on senior participants that were more likely to graduate and provide a deeper understanding of their lived experiences relevant to the central phenomenon of this study.

A limitation of this study was the sample size, based on a lack of support for this critical research topic and participation from Southern Texas College, the HBCU listed in the study. Four participants were located in both the public PWI and private Christian institution of higher education. However, exhaustive efforts over 10 months at Southern Texas College with five different school officials resulted in two participants for this study. The last gatekeeper at Southern Texas College distributed my Google recruitment survey to 148 potential participants who matched the criteria for this research. Four students completed and submitted the recruitment survey. Subsequently, two participants from Southern Texas College eventually responded to requests for participation and conducted the individual interview, writing prompts, and focus group data collection procedures for this study. I was fortunate to locate the two participants from Southern Texas College, which limited the potential robust sharing during their focus group. Although the initial design for this study was designed for four participants at each of the three research sites, this smaller sample size limitation of 10 participants was within the policy and standard of qualitative research study at Liberty University. Therefore, I did not revise or request additional approval from the Intentional Review Board (IRB) to finish the research study with a sample size of 10 participants.

The global health crisis related to COVID-19 further limited potential in-person research within my current residential state of Texas. Therefore the lack of a broader geographical scope for data collection and analysis of participants' lived experiences related to the central phenomenon of this study justifies additional research. Data collection obtained from the limited three research sites in Texas was conducted at three completely different educational settings. However, there could be varying lived experiences compared with participants from other academic locations both inside and outside of Texas.

Subsequently, data collection measures were limited to a virtual platform for the individual interviews and focus groups, while email submissions were allowed for the writing prompts. I have become proficient in conducting meetings and interviews on virtual platforms such as Zoom and WebEx communication. However, I found it entirely restrictive to conduct potential robust virtual focus groups with participants sharing and engaging with their experiences related to perceived self-efficacy and persistence in higher education. I was surprised that participants were reluctant to engage in additional dialogue with other participants during the focus group sessions.

Recommendations for Future Research

The global crisis related to COVID-19 greatly impacted the scope and scale of the initial research settings, which mandated off-site coordination and virtual data collection procedures in this study. Future research regarding learning outcomes and retention of first-generation Black college men should focus on an expanded population with on-site data collection. In addition to a larger population sample, perhaps combining a quantitative survey as part of a mixed-method study would enhance data collection and future presentations to educational stakeholders. Based on the vital research relevant to self-efficacy and persistence of first-generation Black college

men, future research should strongly consider full-time faculty members to serve as gatekeepers and co-investigators to assist external researchers. A mixed-method study should be considered focusing on minority high school seniors and first-year minority college students. The focus on perceived self-efficacy of minority students relevant to persistence in higher education for future research study could be extended to include analysis of academic and social preparation at the high school level through the relationships between high school teachers, counselors, and student participants (Holland, 2015; Loeb & Hurd, 2019; Morales, 2014). According to Holland (2015), research suggests the lack of positive relationships between high school counselors and minority students negatively impacts minority students' aspirations for college. The finding in this study indicated that participants who were encouraged by high school teachers and other officials to consider higher education developed a higher level of perceived self-efficacy for enrollment immediately following high school graduation compared to participants who reported the lack of teacher relationship and encouragement in high school.

A final recommendation for future research is to ensure the critical discussion regarding the historical academic achievement gap for minority students in the education system in the United States receives essential high-level attention through the national political system instead of the local and state field of education. Therefore, future research should conduct a comprehensive analysis with current data from the National Center for Education Statistics regarding the national retention rates for minority students in higher education, focusing on high school seniors and first-year college students' grades. The overall goal should focus on establishing national uniform standards and policies to eliminate the historical academic achievement gap in public education in the United States.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the persistence of first-generation Black college men in Texas. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. Tinto's (1975, 1993) student integration model analyzed academic and social integration relevance for first-generation Black college men's persistence. Self-efficacy was defined and used in this study as individuals' belief in their innate ability to accomplish a goal (Bandura, 1977). Persistence was defined in this study as students' actions to continue through difficulties to graduate from higher education (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Four research questions focused data collection on the participants' perceived self-efficacy, persistence, family influences, and perceived experiences with faculty and peer students, leading to the development of themes in this research study. Data were collected in this study through semi-structured interviews, journal prompts, and focus groups using Moustakas' (1994) modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen's method to analyze patterns and theme development that produced four themes for this study.

No significant discoveries were noted during this research, and findings aligned with existing research related to self-efficacy and persistence for college students in the United States. The 10 first-generation Black college men who shared their lived experiences relevant to the central phenomenon in this study supported recommendations in the literature that educational stakeholders and policy makers should implement programs such as the Black Male Initiative, which has shown a positive impact on Black college student retention and graduation rates across the nation for the past 15 years. Most of the participants in this study indicated similar outcomes and results from their relationships and membership in campus-based organizations (Brooms, 2018b). The most significant and immediate recommendations offered by participants in this

study were for educational stakeholders and policy makers to significantly increase the number of faculty of color within the classroom and leadership roles and staff positions at their higher education institutions.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, H. A. (2006). A view from somewhere: explaining the paradigms of educational research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 40*: 205–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2006.00502.x>
- Alexander, K. W., & Alexander, K. (2017). *Higher education law: Policy and perspectives* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Alvarado, A., Spatariu, A., & Woodbury, C. (2017). Resilience & Emotional Intelligence between first generation college students and non-first-generation college students. *FOCUS on Colleges, Universities & Schools, 11*(1), 1–10.
- Aud, S., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Kristapovich, P., Rathbun, A., Wang, X., & Zhang, J. (2013). *The condition of education 2013*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84* (2), 191–215. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191>
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and function. *Educational Psychologist, 28*(2), 117–148.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Banta, T. W., & Palomba, C. A. (2015). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Beaudoin, M. (2016). Issues in distance education: A primer for higher education decision makers. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2016*, 9–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20175>

- Bentley-Edwards, K., Agonafer, E., Edmondson, R., & Flannigan, A. (2016). If I can do for my people, I can do for myself: Examining racial factors for their influence on goal efficacy for black college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 57*(2), 151–167.
- Berkowitz, R., Moore, H., & Astor, R. A. (2016). A research synthesis of the associations between socioeconomic background, inequality, school climate, and academic achievement. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(2), 425–469.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316669821>
- Billings, S. B., Brunner, E. J., & Ross, S. L. (2018). Gentrification and failing schools: The unintended consequences of school choice under NCLB. *Review of Economics and Statistics, 100*(1), 65–77.
- Booth, E. A., Capraro, M. M., Capraro, R. M., Chaudhuri, N., Dyer, J., & Marchbanks, M. P., III. (2014). Innovative developmental education programs: A Texas model. *Journal of Developmental Education, 38*(1), 2–4,6,8,10,18.
- Bormon, G. D., Grigg, J., & Hanselman, P. (2016). An effort to close achievement gaps at the scale through self-affirmation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 38*(1), 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373715581709>
- Boyd, T. B., & Mitchell, D., Jr. (2018). Black male persistence in spite of facing stereotypes in college: A phenomenological exploration. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(4), 893–913.
- Brooks, J. E. (2015). The impact of family structure, relationships, and support on African American students' collegiate experience. *Journal of Black Studies 46*(8), 817–836.
- Brooms, D. R. (2018a). "Building us up": Supporting Black male college students in a Black male initiative program. *Critical Sociology, 44*(1), 141–155.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516658940>

- Brooms, D. R. (2018b). Exploring black male initiative programs: Potential and possibilities for supporting black male success in college. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 87(1), 59–72.
- Brooms, D. R. (2019). Not in this alone: Black men's bonding, learning, and sense of belonging in black male initiative programs. *The Urban Review* 51, 748–767.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00506-5>
- Card, P., & Wood, J. L. (2019). The impact of faculty validation on male students of color at community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 43(5), 386–389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2018.1487890>
- Carminati, L. (2018). Generalizability in qualitative research: A tale of two traditions. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28(13), 2094–2101.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318788379>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Davis, C. M., Slate, J. R., Moore, G. W., & Barnes, W. (2015). Advanced placement exams, incentive programs, and cost effectiveness: A lack of equity and excellence for Black students in Texas, New York, and Florida. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 84(2), 139–153.
- Del Rio-Roberts, M. (2011). How I learned to conduct focus groups. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(1), 312–315.

- Demetriou, C., Meece, J., Eaker-Rich, D., & Powell, C. (2017). The activities, roles, and relationships of successful first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*(1), 19–36.
- Deming, D. J., Cohodes, S., Jennings, J., & Jencks, C. (2016). When does accountability work? Texas system had mixed effects on college graduation rates and future earnings. *Education Next, 16*(1), 70+.
- Dortch, D. (2016). The strength from within: A phenomenological study examining the academic self-efficacy of African American women in doctoral studies. *The Journal of Negro Education, 85*(3), 350–364.
- English Standard Version Bible*. (2001). Crossway Bibles.
- Essex, N. L. (2016). *School law and the public schools: a practical guide for educational leaders* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Flores, S. M., & Park, T. J. (2015). The effect of enrolling in a minority-serving institution for Black and Hispanic students in Texas. *Research in Higher Education, 56*(3), 247–276. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-014-9342-y>
- Flores, S. M., Park, T. J., & Baker, D. J. (2017). The racial college completion gap: evidence from Texas. *Journal of Higher Education, 88*(6), 894–921.
- Flores, S. M., & Shepherd, J. (2014). Pricing out the disadvantaged? The effect of tuition deregulation in Texas public four-year institutions. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 655*, 99–122.
- Franklin, A. S., Debb, S. M., & Colson, D. G. (2017). Predictors of academic self-concept for African American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology, 43*(6), 636–653. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798416671578>

- Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, W. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Gibbons, M. M., Rhinehart, A., & Hardin, E. (2019). How first-generation college students adjust to college. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 20(4), 488–510.
- Goings, R. B. (2018). “Making up for lost time”: The transition experiences of nontraditional Black male undergraduates. *Adult Learning*, 29(4), 158–169.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159518783200>
- Grace-Odeleye, B., & Santiago, J. (2019). A review of some diverse models of summer bridge programs for first-generation and at-risk college students. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and Research*, 9(1), 35–47.
- Greene, A. E. (1995). *Reclaiming the future of Christian education: A transforming vision*. Association of Christian Schools International.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Sage.
- Gutek, G. L. (2011). *Historical and philosophical foundations of education: A biographical introduction* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Harper, C. E., Zhu, H., & Kiyama, J. M. (2020). Parents and families of first-generation college students experience their own college transitions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 91(4), 540–564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1647583>
- Harper, S. R., Smith, E. J., & Davis, C. H. F. (2018). A critical race case analysis of Black undergraduate student success at an urban university. *Urban Education*, 53(1), 3–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916668956>

- Hébert, T. P. (2018). An examination of high-achieving first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 62(1), 96–110.
- Hines, E. M., Cooper, J. N., & Corral, M. (2019). Overcoming the odds: First-generation Black and Latino male collegians' perspectives on pre-college barriers and facilitators. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, 13(1), 51–69.
- Hodges, J., Tay, J., Lee, H., & Pereira, N. (2019). The influence of the great recession on the identification of students from non-white populations in the state of Texas. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 30(2), 124–143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X19825802>
- Holland, M. M. (2015). Trusting each other: Student-counselor relationships in diverse high schools. *Sociology of Education*, 88(3), 244–262.
- Holland, M. M. (2019). Framing the search: How first-generation students evaluate colleges. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 91(3), 378–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1647582>
- Holliman, A., & Daniels, J. (2018). Faculty motivation in challenging times: do leadership and economic condition matter? *Planning for Higher Education*, 47(1), 49+.
- Houle, J. (2014). Disparities in debt: Parents' socioeconomic resources and young adult student loan debt. *Sociology of Education*, 87(1), 53–69.
- Jones, M. N. (2019). Community college faculty foster or foreclose on opportunities to improve black male students' success. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 26(1), 15–27.

- Karahan, E., & Roehrig, G. (2015). Constructing media artifacts in a social constructivist environment to enhance students' environmental awareness and activism. *Journal of Science Education & Technology*, 24(1), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-014-9525-5>
- Kena, G., Hussar, W., McFarland, J., de Brey, C., Musu-Gillette, L., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Diliberti, M., Barmer, A., Bullock Mann, F., & Dunlop Velez, E. (2016). *The condition of education 2016*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- King James Bible*. (2017). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1769)
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). *The leadership challenge* (6th ed.). John Wiley and Sons.
- Kubiszyn, T., & Borich, G. (2013). *Educational testing & measurement: classroom application and practice* (10th. ed.). Wiley & Sons.
- Liebowitz, D. D. (2018). Ending to what end? The impact of the termination of court-desegregation orders on residential segregation and school dropout rates. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 40(1), 103–128. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373717725804>
- Lindsey, R., & Walker, E. (2016). Perception of self-efficacy among African American college students. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 87, A66–A67.
- Loeb, E., & Hurd, N. M. (2019). Subjective social status, perceived academic competence, and academic achievement among underrepresented students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 21(2), 150–165.

- Ma, P.-W. W., & Shea, M. (2019). First-generation college students' perceived barriers and career outcome expectations: Exploring contextual and cognitive factors. *Journal of Career Development, 48*(2), 91–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845319827650>
- McCaffery, P. (2019). *The higher education manager's handbook: Effective leadership and management in universities and colleges* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- McCallum, C. M. (2020). Othermothering: Exploring African American graduate students' decision to pursue the doctorate. *The Journal of Higher Education, 91*(6), 953–976. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2020.1731262>
- McCoy, D. L., Winkle-Wagner, R., & Luedke, C. L. (2015). Colorblind mentoring? Exploring white faculty mentoring of students of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 8*(4), 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038676>
- McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Wang, K., Rathbun, A., Barmer, A., Forrest Cataldi, E., & Bullock Mann, F. (2018). *The condition of education 2018: Characteristics of postsecondary faculty*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/indicator_CSC/coe_csc_2018_05.pdf
- McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Wang, X., Wang, K., Hein, S., Diliberti, M., Forrest Cataldi, E., Bullock Mann, F., & Barmer, A. (2019). *The condition of education 2019 (NCES 2019-144): Status dropout rates*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Mickelson, R. A. (2015). The cumulative disadvantages of first-and-second generation segregation for middle school achievement. *American Education Research Journal, 52*(4), 657–692. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215587933>

- Morales, E. E. (2014). Learning from success: How original research on academic resilience informs what college faculty can do to increase the retention of low socioeconomic status student. *International Journal of Higher Education, 3*(3), 92–102.
- Moss, S., & Slate, J. R. (2014). Differences in Black students' persistence rates in Texas community colleges by institutional status. *International Journal of University Teaching and Faculty Development, 5*(3), 165–174.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.
- Neville, K. M., & Parker, T. L. (2017). A breath of fresh air: Students' perceptions of interactions with African American faculty. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*(3), 349–364.
- New American Standard Version Bible*. (1995). Thomas Nelson. (Original work published 1971)
- New International Version Bible*. (2011). Zondervan. (Original work published 1978)
- New King James Version*. (1982). Thomas Nelson.
- Nilson, L. B. (2016). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors* (4th ed.) Jossey Bass.
- Nunez, A.-M., & Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998). *First-generation students: Undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Oliva, P. F., & Gordon, W. R. (2013). *Developing the curriculum with my education lab* (Custom 8th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Ortagus, J. C., & Tanner, M. J. (2019). Going to college without going to campus: A case study of online student recruitment. *Innovative Higher Education, 44*, 53–67.
- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-018-9448-9>

- Palmer, R., Wood, J., & Arroyo, A. (2015). Toward a model of retention and persistence for Black men at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 4(1), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.2979/spectrum.4.1.02>
- Park, T. J., Tandberg, D. A., Hu, S., & Hankerson, D. (2016). One policy, disparate reactions: Institutional responses in Florida's developmental education reform. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(10), 824–837. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2015.1131644>
- Parkay, F. W., Anctil, E. J., & Hass, G. (2014). *Curriculum leadership: readings for developing quality educational programs* (10th ed.). Pearson.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. SAGE.
- Pisarik, C. T., Rowell, P. C., & Thompson, L. K. (2017). A phenomenological study of career anxiety among college students. *Career Development Quarterly*, 65(4), 339+.
- Pratt, I. S., Harwood, H. B., Cavazos, J. T., & Ditzfeld, C. P. (2019). Should I stay or should I go? Retention in first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 21(1), 105–118.
- Ratcliff, N. J., Costner, R. H., Carroll, K. L., Jones, C. R., Sheehan, H. C., & Hunt, G. H. (2016). Causes of and solutions to the achievement gap: teacher's perceptions. *Teachers Educators' Journal*, (9) 97–111.
- Reddick, R. J., Johnson, E. A., Jones, A., Lowe, T. A. J., Stone, A. N., & Thomas, J. (2017). Resilience, reconciliation, and redemption: An initial historical sketch of pioneering black students in the plan II honors program. *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, 18(1), 79–108.

- Redford, J., & Hoyer, K. M. (2017). *First-generation and continuing-generation college students: A comparison of high school and postsecondary experiences. Stats in Brief* (NCES 2018-009). National Center for Education Statistics.
- Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. J., & Spaulding, L. S. (2014). *Navigating the doctoral journey: A handbook of strategies for success*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Rodriguez, S. L., Garbee, K. T., Miller, R. A., & Saenz, V. B. (2018). How community colleges in Texas prioritize resources for Latino men. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 42(4), 229–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2017.1281179>
- Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Sage.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage Publication.
- Selingo, J. J. (2013). *College unbound: The future of higher education and what it means for students*. Amazon Publishing.
- Spangler, J. M., & Slate, J. R. (2014). Texas community college graduation and persistence rates as a function of student ethnicity. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(8), 741–753. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2013.878261>
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youth. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 1–40.
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2011). A social capital framework for the study of institutional agents and their role in the empowerment of low-status students and youth. *Youth & Society*, 43(3), 1066–1109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X10382877>

- Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. (2014). Closing the social-class achievement gap: a difference-education intervention improves first-generation students' academic performance and all students' college transition. *Psychological Science, 24*(4), 943–953. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797613518349>
- Stephens, N. M., Townsend, S. S., Hamedani, M. G., Destin, M., & Manzo, V. (2015). A difference-education intervention equips first-generation college students to thrive in the face of stressful college situations. *Psychological Science, 26*(10), 1556–1566. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615593501>
- Swanbrow Becker, M. A., Schelbe, L., Romano, K., & Spinelli, C. (2017). Promoting first-generation college students' mental well-being: Student perceptions of an academic enrichment program. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*(8), 1166–1183.
- Tello, A. M., & Lonn, M. R. (2017). The role of high school and college counselors in supporting the psychosocial and emotional needs of Latinx first-generation college students. *The Professional Counselor, 7*(4), 349–359.
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research, 45*(1), 89–125.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (1997). Classrooms as communities: Exploring the educational character of student persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education, 68*(6), 599–623.
- Tinto, V. (1999). Taking retention seriously: Rethinking the first year of college. *NACADA Journal, 19*(2), 5–9.

- Tinto, V. (2006). Research and practice of student retention: What next? *Journal of College Student Retention, 8*(1), 1–19.
- Tinto, V. (2017). Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 19*(3), 254–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115621917>
- Toutkoushian, R. K., & Paulsen, M. B. (2016). *Economics of higher education: Background, concepts, and applications*. Springer.
- van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice*. Left Coast Press.
- van Manen, M. (2019). Rebuttal: Doing phenomenology on the things. *Qualitative Health Research, 29*(6), 908–925. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319827293>
- Wong, V. C., Wing, C., Martin, D., & Krishnamachari, A. (2018). Did states use implementation discretion to reduce the stringency of NCLB? Evidence from a database of state regulations. *Educational Researcher, 47*(1), 933. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17743230>
- Wood, J. L., Newman, C. B., & Harris, F., III. (2015). Self-efficacy as a determinant of academic integration: an examination of first-year Black males in the community college. *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 39*(1) 3–28.
- Wood, J. L., & Palmer, R. T. (2014). Academic achievement and the community college: Perspectives of Black male students on the importance of "focus." *College Student Affairs Journal, 32*(1), 141–153.
- Wright, B. (2019). Supportive campuses and first-generations-student learning outcomes. *Information Discovery and Delivery, 47*(2), 84–95. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IDD-09-2018-0042>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Perceived Self-Efficacy as it Relates to Persistence for First-Generation Black College Men in Texas.

Cleveland Earl Brown Sr.
Liberty University
School of Education
2020

This study seeks to understand perceived self-efficacy of first-generation Black college men shared experiences relevant to persistence in higher education in the state of Texas. You have been identified as a potential participant based on your match of criteria for this research study. Please read the below information that was written to inform all volunteers of specific details related to this doctoral dissertation.

- **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research study is to describe perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence for a selective group of first-generation Black college men who are seniors in higher education in Texas. The researcher is a former at-risk student who experienced marginal learning during segregation in the 1960s and is a current doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University.
- **Participant of the Study:** Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants can withdraw from the research at any-time. Participants will be interviewed individually once during the school year and participants will be asked to participate in a focus group setting with other Black college men participants with similar backgrounds. Both individual and focus group interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- **Risks and benefits of the Study:** This qualitative research have been reviewed and approved for quality and safety by Liberty University. Minimum amount of risk is associate with the type of research and no monetary benefits will be provided to participates of this study.
- **Confidentiality:** To ensure that all responses and participants are kept confidential the researcher will use composite profiles to mask the identifies of the volunteers, as well as the institutional settings of this study. Findings developed in this study will be presented in formal academic papers and presentations with continual safeguard for confidentiality of participants.
- **Withdraw from the Study:** Participants can withdraw from the research at any-time. If participants elect to withdraw for this research any data and information collected about them will immediately be destroyed and not used for this research study.

If you have any questions about the research please contact me directly at [REDACTED] or you can contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Shante Austin at to ask any questions concerning this research. Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University can also be connected via their email at irb@liberty.edu or mail 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515.

Thank you for your participation in this important opportunity to help develop a greater awareness of research on perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence of first-generation Black college men in higher education in the state of Texas.

Please sign below after you have read this consent form completely and your signature will indicate your interest to participate in the above described research study to include permission to audio record and transcribed the individual and focus group interviews.

Participant's Name (print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Recruitment Survey

Instructions: Please complete the below Google form with your short answer to each question. This recruitment survey will screen criteria to determine potential participation for the research study.

Recruitment survey questions are as follows:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your race?
4. What is your educational classification (grade level)?
5. Where do you currently attend college?
6. What is your contact information (phone & email)?
7. Did either of your parent(s) attend college level education?
8. When are you planning to complete your undergraduate program?
9. What is your current GPA?
10. Are you involved with any educational club or organization?

Appendix C: Individual Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about yourself and educational background.
2. Describe the educational background of your parents.
3. Describe the interaction with your family regarding educational goals.
4. Describe your family support for your academic preparation for higher education.
5. Describe your perceived self-efficacy (innate thinking about your ability to achieve success).
6. Describe what influences your persistence to not dropout of higher education.
7. Describe factors that influences your current perceived self-efficacy.
8. Describe your overall motivation for higher education.
9. Describe your relationships and involvement with faculty and staff at your current institution of higher education.
10. What other information would you like to provide regarding your overall perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in Texas?

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourselves and share with the group your application experiences for enrollment to your current institution.
2. Describe any campus social support that has influenced your persistence in college.
3. Describe any helpful academic support programs used at your current institution of higher education.
4. What can your current institution do to ensure first-generation Black men succeed in college?
5. Describe your interactions and relationships with faculty within the classroom at your current institution.
6. Describe how your family relationship influenced your overall self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in college.
7. Describe how your educational background influenced your self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in college.
8. What is the most significant reason for your academic retention in college?
9. What other information would you like to contribute that was not addressed about self-efficacy and persistence of first-generation Black college men in the state of Texas?

Appendix E: Writing Prompt Questions

1. Provide additional detail about yourself that you believe is relevant to this study.
2. Provide additional information about your educational background that you believe is relevant to this study.
3. Why do you believe your family supported or did not support your academic preparation for higher education?
4. What other information would you like to provide regarding your overall perceived self-efficacy as it relates to persistence in higher education in Texas?

Appendix F: IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 9, 2020

Cleveland Brown
Shante Austin

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY19-20-471 A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of Perceived Self-Efficacy as it Relates to Persistence for First-Generation Black College Men in Texas

Dear Cleveland Brown, Shante Austin:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the date of the IRB meeting at which the protocol was approved: December 9, 2020. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make modifications in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update submission to the IRB. These submissions can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office