ACADEMIC AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES: IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGIATE SATISFACTION AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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The purpose of this correlational research study was to examine the student engagement variables most likely to predict the academic success and satisfaction of African American male college students. Research suggests that African American males who are actively engaged in campus life gain more from the college experience and are more likely to succeed academically (Harper, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Strayhorn, 2008b). This investigation used the National Survey of Student Engagement questionnaire to survey 3,000 students to learn what relationships existed between five student engagement variables and the students’ perceived satisfaction with their overall college experience.

There is a plethora of research that has examined the college experiences, engagement and academic success of minority students in totality (Fleming, 1984; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010; Watson & Kuh, 1996; Watson, Terrell, Wright, Bonner, CuyJet, & Gold, 2002); however limited research exists specifically targeting the correlation between engagement factors and the academic success and college satisfaction of African American males (Greene, 2005; Harvey-Smith, 2002; Kimbrough & Harper, 2006; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010).

Utilizing a conceptual theory of student involvement based on the work of Astin (1984, 1999) this investigation employed multiple regression analysis to explore the relationship between five student engagement factors (Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty
Interaction, Supportive Campus, and Enriching Experiences) and African American males’ academic success and overall satisfaction with their college experience.

Four research questions directed this study relative to the student engagement factors and institutional characteristics that best predict African American male satisfaction with their college experience. The results indicated that three variables significantly predicted the overall college satisfaction of African American males; Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge. Additionally, African American males attending private institutions reported a significantly higher mean score relative to their overall satisfaction with their college experience than those attending a public college or university, while no significance was found between African American males attending an historically Black institution as opposed to a predominately white institution.

Conclusions drawn from the study lead to further questions surrounding how student engagement is defined and perceived by African American college students and higher education institutions. Further the study draws attention to the need to address and incorporate academic and co-curricular initiatives, services and policies in culture of higher education institutions that will enhance the college experience and ensure academic success, retention and matriculation of African American males.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mom, Carolyn Y. Welch, who has always believed and supported me throughout my endeavors. Mom, I am truly blessed and forever grateful to have you as my mother. I love you so much.
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Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

First and foremost, giving all honor and glory to God, I thank and praise the Lord for giving me the strength and wisdom to endure all of life’s test and trials, for I know my “sufferings produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and hope” (Romans 5:3-5).

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The underachievement of the African American male college student in America continues to be a significant societal issue and “has surfaced as a trend that demands immediate attention” (Blake & Darling, 1994; Garibaldi, 2007; Jenkins, 2006, p.127; Kunjufu, 1995). The national college graduation rate for African American males in 2009-10 was 52%, compared to 78% for White male students (Schott Foundation for Public Education [SFPE], 2012). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 1.2 million Black male college students make up 5.5 percent of all college students, while the 5.6 million white male students make up 27% (Toldson & Lewis, 2012, p. 11). While this trend does not extend to African American females, who are outperforming African American males by earning two-thirds of degrees awarded to African American students, statistics show that there is a pattern of low degree attainment among African American males (College Board, 2010; Cuyjet, 2006; Garibaldi, 1992, 2007; Harper, 2012; SFPE, 2011; Strayhorn 2008a, 2008b).

Researchers, Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2006) express that there are “considerable leaks in the educational pipeline” for African Americans and other underserved students. There are many reasons for the leak in the pipeline to higher education. Some research points to a lack of prior academic preparation in early schooling up to the lack of a challenging curriculum in high school (Lederman, 2006). This lack of educational preparedness, writes Lederman, becomes increasingly more significant and reduces the chances of completing higher educational degrees for African American males. Kuh et al. (2006) report that according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, “out of every 100 ninth graders, 68 graduate from high school, 40 immediately enter college, 27 are still enrolled their sophomore
year, and only 18 complete any type of postsecondary education within 6 years of graduating high school” (p. 1).

Trends show that although the number of African American men who entered college increased substantially during the late 1960s and again during the 1980s and 1990s (Palmer & Maramba, 2011), in “1996 the graduation rate for African American males at 300 of the nation’s largest colleges dropped from 35% to 33%” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 128). Patterns continue to show that the population of African American males at higher education institutions fail to increase and continue to represent a smaller proportion of students in college (Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2008a). In 2002, they represented the same exact proportion of all students enrolled in higher education as they did in 1976. Further, in 2004, of the nearly 15 million undergraduates who were enrolled in college, approximately 2 million were African Americans, and they comprised less than 5% of that undergraduate population (Cuyjet, 1997; Strayhorn, 2008a).

Little progress has been made to improve the educational pipeline for today’s African American males in academia. In a needs assessment for African American males conducted by the African American Men of Arizona State University (AAMASU) program, Jenkins (2006) reports that African American males experience a “high level of underachievement in the higher education arena” (p. 128). According to Bowen (2009) national statistics indicate that only “15% of African American males ages 25-29 hold a bachelor’s degree, likely as a result of low high school graduation, low college enrollment and low degree attainment rates” (p. 207).

In the examination of variables associated with African American male academic success, engagement and satisfaction in higher education, it is important to draw attention to the contextual issues that may affect African American males prior to their collegiate experience. There are a host of environmental variables from early schooling that continues to significantly
impact African American males’ initiation and matriculation in higher education institutions. For instance, studies show that African American males are disproportionately suspended and expelled from school, more than any other group (Jackson & Moore, 2006; Meier, Stewart, & England, 1998; Noguera, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008c), and many gain early labels as “behavior problems and are considered less intelligent even when they are still young” (Noguera, 2003, p. 436). Often experiencing high placement rates in special education due to misclassification (Milofsky, 1974; Noguera, 2003), African American males are “more likely to be absent from advanced-placement, honors courses” (Jackson & Moore, 2006; Oakes, 1985; Pollard, 1993; Noguera, 2003) and dual enrollment programs (i.e., introductory college-level courses taken in high school) “excluding them from a rigorous curriculum and preventing access to educational opportunities that might otherwise support and encourage them” (Noguera, 2003; Oakes, 1985, p. 53). Moreover, studies confirm that negative perceptions often perpetuate stereotypes both within and beyond educational settings that can negatively impact ability and behavior, social engagement, academic performance, and college attainment (Harper, 2003; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Steele, 1997, 1999, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008c). As a result, African American males may appear to lack educational aspirations and experience educational challenges such as low graduation rates and low achievement outcomes (Hilliard, 1991; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Noguera, 2003).

These trends are often exacerbated in larger urban environments and as illustrated in the 2010 edition of Yes We Can: Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Male, there are all too often disturbing outcomes for African American males in many of the nation’s largest cities (Schott Foundation for Public Education [SFPE], 2011). Yes We Can highlights concerns that New York City Schools, the district with the nation's highest enrollment of Black students,
only graduates 28% of its Black male students with diplomas on time” (SFPE, 2011). According to Dr. Jackson, President and CEO of the Schott Foundation, the reality is that “each year over 100,000 Black male students in New York City alone do not graduate from high school with their entering cohort” (p. 6).

Research supports the notion that students who receive robust academic guidance fused with enrollment in advanced courses (i.e., advanced placement (AP), dual enrollment) have increased educational aspirations and are more likely to enroll and graduate from college (College Board, 2006; Dougherty, Mellor, & Jian, 2006; Ewing, 2006; Moore, 2006; Speroni, 2011). The College Board (2006) reports that in Texas, “45% of students who have taken one AP course and 61% of students who have taken two or more AP courses complete their bachelor’s degrees in four years or less” (p. 1).

While the research clearly suggests many challenges that may inhibit African American males from entering college, there are also challenges facing those who are enrolled in higher education. Of the African American males enrolled in higher educational institutions, researchers report they tend to lag behind their peers (Gonzales, 1996; Gonzalez & Szecsy, 2002; Harvey, 2001; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Kuh et al., 2006; Noguera, 2003; Polite & Davis, 1994; Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003), cluster at the bottom of almost every academic performance indicator (Ellis, 2004), and are not “on par with their White and Asian counterparts” (Strayhorn, 2008b, p. 26). Despite the pre-collegiate academic challenges, research suggests that increased academic success in college and satisfaction can be achieved when African American males are actively engaged in college life (Astin, 1984, 1993, 1999; Davis, 1995; Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004; Harper, 2009b; Kuh et al., 2006; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Thus, studies show there may be avenues by which higher
education institutions may impact African American college matriculation by examining African American male patterns of engagement.

**Rationale**

The downward trend of African American males on college campuses has consistently increased over past decades in alarming numbers (Howard-Hamilton, 1997; Simmons, 2010). Although under-preparedness for the academic rigor may preclude many from entering higher education, parity relatively few campuses have identified specific theories, programming or intervention goals and objectives geared toward engagement activities to decrease attrition and increase the matriculation of enrolled African American students (Howard-Hamilton, 1997; Simmons, 2010). Harper (2009) further notes that “institutions are negligent in fostering conditions and environments that encourage Black males to take advantage of resources and engagement opportunities” (p. 138).

Actively engaging students is a positive practice in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Strayhon & DeVita, 2010) and has been linked to robust educational gains (Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991) and outcomes such as critical thinking, active engagement, cognitive and intellectual skill development (Harper, 2009b; Harper et al., 2004), college satisfaction and adjustment, moral and ethical development, positive self-image, and persistence rates (Tinto, 1993). However, “African American males have been continually shortchanged” (Harper, 2009b, p. 140) in the creation of targeted active engagement initiatives that will contribute to future advancement.

Historically, African American males tend to garner targeted attention and visibility in higher education when participating in college sports (Harper, 2006; Hamilton, 2008; Roach, 2001). According to Harper (2006) this is true in Division I sports, the highest level of
In his analyses of NCAA data, Harper discovered that in 2004, only 10.4% of male college students were African American and yet 30.5% represented African American male student athletes at Division I universities. What’s more, African American male “participation is even greater in the two major revenue-generating sports: football and basketball” (p. 6).

In relation to the lack of targeted active engagement initiatives, Harper and Harris (2010) report that African American male athletes in high schools are trained to concentrate more on sports than academics and once in college, they do not feel academically engaged with faculty, particularly outside of the classroom. Therefore, scholars suggest colleges implement effective retention plans/programs encompassing administrative and institutional commitment (Person & LeNoir, 1997; Tinto, 1993) that includes aggressively focusing on the engagement trends of African American males (Harper, 2009b). Furthermore, Cuyjet (1997) insists that campuses become places that solidly convey positive reinforcement that possess a culture of engagement.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine institutional characteristics as well as engagement factors that best predict African American male academic success and satisfaction with their college experiences. The study sample of 3,000 first year and senior African American male college students is drawn from the 478,079 college students who participated in the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE questionnaire is an annual survey given to first-year and senior college students. The survey is self-reported and collects student background information and data on the college experience as it relates to engagement, behaviors, and institutional factors. Survey invitations were sent via email, as well as by mail to
more than 1.4 million first-year and senior students from over 769 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada beginning in late January – May 2008 (IUCPR, 2008).

Likert-type self-report responses gathered from the survey were analyzed on benchmark scales (Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Supportive Campus Environment, and Enriching Educational Experiences) based on 42 questions that captured vital aspects of student behaviors, institutional factors, and reactions to college. Results of the study contribute to a body of scholarly literature by providing valuable data on African American male academic success and college satisfaction that can be further used to develop recommendations and strategic programs to engage this population in campus life.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this descriptive study is based on the work of Astin (1984, 1993, 1999), Pace (1984), and Kuh and his colleagues’ (Kuh et al., 1991; Kuh, Whitt, & Strange, 1989) theory of student involvement. It is used to explain student engagement in out-of-class and in-class experiences, such as extra-curricular activities on campus, interactions with faculty, and involvement in the classroom. Kuh (2003) defines student engagement as “the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside of the classroom, and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities.” (p. 25). More simply, student engagement is participating in meaningful activities and experiences (e.g., extracurricular activities, study abroad, internship, co-op, etc.) offered as part of campus life. On the other hand, Astin (1999) uses the term student involvement and defines it as the “quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience” (p. 528). Even though terminology and definitions may vary from one
researcher to the next, when describing the concept of student engagement, “the researchers’ views concur with the simple, but powerful premise that students learn from what they do in college” (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 186). Accordingly, Pike and Kuh report that “research has strongly supported this assumption, indicating student engagement is positively linked and related to objective and subjective measures of gains in abilities, critical thinking, grades and persistence rates” (p. 186).

A second premise of the theory of student involvement according to the frameworks of Astin (1984, 1993, 1999), Kuh et al. (1989, 1991), and Pace (1984), is that higher education institutional factors such as policies and practices influence levels of engagement on campus (Pike & Kuh, 2005). As such, it is imperative to uncover and capitalize on relationships that may exist between African American student behaviors, institutional factors, academic success, and satisfaction with the college experience.

**Research Questions**

1. What student engagement factors best predict African American males satisfaction with their college experience?

2. What is the relationship between academic success and African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?

3. Does African American males’ satisfaction with their college experiences differ by institutional type?

4. Which student engagement and academic success factors best predict African American male satisfaction with their college experience?
Significance of Study

Overall, this study contributes to the literature with implications for leadership and policy development to inform the way institutions approach the engagement of African American males in higher education. This topic is of importance because of the bleak educational pipeline and outcomes for African American males. Scholars argue that postsecondary institutions lag behind in “addressing the human needs” (Hamilton, 2007, p. 13) and providing a campus life experience conducive to the learning, engagement, and personal development of African American males (Hall & Rowan, 2001; Hamilton, 2007). To remedy higher educations’ environments that may be inapt for African American males, policies and practices need to be aimed or restructured to enroll, accommodate and retain African American collegians (Hall & Rowan, 2001; Hamilton, 2007).

While there may be additional costs associated with research and investigation of improving the educational pipeline by redesigning the campus environment to support the needs and academic and social experiences of African American males, higher education institutions should recognize that the direct and indirect societal benefits of African American male higher education attainment strengthens the economy (Baum & Payea, 2004, 2007; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010; Conner, 1997). The benefits of investing in the improvement of the educational pipeline of African American male collegians are far-reaching and will affect students individually as well as the society as a whole (Baum et al., 2010; Cooper, 2010). Consequently, African American males with “college degrees earn more, enjoy better working conditions, contribute more to society, both through higher tax payments and through their civic participation, and give their children benefits that increase the prospects that the next generation
will prosper and will be in a position to contribute to society in a variety of ways” (Baum et al., p. 10).

It would seem imperative that educators, administrators, and policymakers understand the societal significance of developing “adequate programs for African American male college students” to engage (Wright & McCreary, 1997, p. 61). Institutions must “create a seamless learning environment that demands systematic, long-term institutional effort” (Kuh, 1996, p. 136) creating a campus-wide culture of engagement, academic success and satisfaction among African American males in college. Research indicates that there is a strong relationship between college engagement and successful social and academic outcomes for students and institutions, in that both share the responsibility in positive effects, such as increased academic performance, college satisfaction and graduation rates (Astin, 1984, 1933, 1999; Harper, 2004; Harper, 2009b; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). However, there are significant differences between the campus involvement of African American males and their non-minority counterparts (Harper, 2009b; Harper et al., 2004; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Strayhon & DeVita, 2010). Through the examination of institutional characteristics and engagement scales, the results of this study will allow colleges to promote and prioritize campus-wide strategies geared toward increasing engagement, academic success, and college satisfaction of the African American male collegian.

Definition of Terms

Academic Capital. The academic transmission of education, resources, and experiences gained from family and/or other support networks.

Academic Success. A balance between academic and social life. Can be measured by grades, knowledge, skills, and/or personal developmental competencies.
Carnegie Classification. In 1970, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed a classification of colleges and universities to support its program of research and policy analysis. This framework is used in the study of higher education as a way to represent and control for institutional differences and to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty.

College Experience. Experiencing everything college has to offer as it relates to getting involved in student clubs/organizations, staying up late, meeting new people, discovering new interests and experiences, controversies, living on or off campus, studying, etc. Experiences can be positive or negative.

College Student Satisfaction. A student’s cognitive evaluation that determines whether an expectation is met or not met in college as it relates to campus climate, campus services, campus life, and experiences.

Educational Outcomes. Refers to postsecondary institutional performance as it relates to retention and/or matriculation (e.g., degree completion).

First-Year. Used to describe a student’s classification (first year) in college. Commonly used in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data and literature.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Established as early as 1837, HBCUs are institutions of higher education in the United States, both public and private, founded to provide African Americans with educational opportunities after being denied access based on race to predominately White institutions. For the purposes of this study, HBCUs will also encompass predominately Black colleges and universities (PBCUs) which are those institutions founded after 1964 that were implemented after the Sweatt v. Painter and Brown v. Board of
*Education* rulings. Coined as “predominately Black,” PBCUs are not classified as historically Black; however, they serve a large student body of African American students.

**In-Class Experiences.** Active involvement in the classroom that contributes to the learning experience.

**Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (IUCPR).** Gathers data for institutional improvement related to student access, assessment, learning, and persistence. Administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

**Institutional Characteristics.** Describes the college or university as it relates to the type of control (public vs. private; historically black or predominately white college or university); degrees and programs offered; student population; calendar system and/or Carnegie Classification, etc.

**Institutional Factors.** Refers to university policies and practices, campus networks/interactions, and/or campus climate.

**Institutional Type.** Describes a college or university as a historically Black university or college (HBUC) or predominately white (PWCU) college or university, control and/or the enrollment size.

**Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).** A postsecondary education data collection program for the National Center for Education Statistics that collects data on institutional characteristics, prices, enrollment, financial aid, degree completion, student persistence and success and resources.

**Involvement Theory.** A theoretical framework developed by Astin in 1984 asserting that an institution’s education assessment should be based on student involvement. The word ‘involvement’ is used interchangeably with ‘engagement’.
**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).** Known as “Nessie,” after its acronym, NSSE is a survey instrument administered during spring semester to undergraduate students (first-year and seniors) to assess college student engagement.

**Out-of-Class Experiences.** Active involvement outside of the classroom that contributes to the learning experience.

**Predominately White Colleges and Universities (PWCUs).** Higher education college or university that is comprised of enrolled, mostly Caucasian (non-minority) students.

**Senior.** Used to describe a student’s classification (fourth year) in college. Commonly used in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data and literature.

**Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)Version 20.** Statistical software used to conduct the statistical analysis of variables.

**Student Engagement.** The time and energy students devote to activities and experiences in and outside of the classroom that represent good educational practice and related to positive learning outcomes. For the purposes of this study this construct is measured using the five benchmarks of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE): Level of Academic Challenge (Academic Challenge), Active and Collaborative Learning (Collaborative Learning), Student-Faculty Interaction (Faculty Interaction), Supportive Campus Environment (Supportive Campus), and Enriching Educational Experiences (Enriching Experiences).

**The Talented Tenth.** Coined by W.E.B. DuBois in the early 1900’s refers to one in ten African American men that would become leaders in the African American community, if educated in the liberal arts. DuBois believed the Talented Tenth could become leaders and teachers of education and social change for the next generation.
**Delimitations**

Two aspects largely define the boundaries of this study. First, the study utilized a quantitative survey research design. Second, the data utilized a secondary data source from the NSSE (“Nessie”), a survey formatted for paper and online delivery.

**Limitations**

Several limitations affected the study. First, the administration of NSSE reflects responses from first-year and seniors only. Second, due to the nature of the survey instrument, students had a limited opportunity to expound upon their answer choices. Third, the survey responses were self-reported. Finally, any generalizability to all African American male students attending college is decreased since participation in NSSE is voluntary.

**Organization of Remaining Chapters**

The organization of the remainder of this dissertation is as follows: Chapter two is a literature review on the history of educating African Americans in America as well as an exploration of student engagement, academic success and college satisfaction of the African American males in college as it pertains to this study. Chapter three is an explanation of the research methodology used, data collection, and procedures. Chapter four presents the descriptive narrative of the study’s results and an analysis of the data. Finally, chapter five summarizes this study’s major findings and includes leadership and policy implications and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a summary of the literature related to factors influencing African American male college matriculation, engagement, academic success and satisfaction of their college experience. The presence of African American males on college campuses has shown alarmingly downward trends for nearly a half century (Cuyjet, 2006; Howard-Hamilton, 1997; Palmer, Davis, Moore, & Hilton, 2010; Rhu, 2010). National statistics indicate only 15% of African American males ages 25-29 hold a bachelor’s degree—an outgrowth of low high school graduation rates, low college enrollment and retention rates, and low college graduate rates (Bowen, 2009). To help reverse this trend researchers (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Harper, 2009b) insist college campuses become environments that solidly convey positive reinforcement building a culture of engagement for African American males. Moreover, research shows that institutional characteristics, including practices designed to increase student engagement, are the most important factors in student involvement, academic success and college satisfaction (Pike & Kuh, 2005). Further, Pike and Kuh, along with Astin (1984, 1993, 1999), and Harper (2009) assert that student engagement is positively linked to gains in abilities and successful educational outcomes. Chapter two provides a historical overview of the educational challenges and pursuits of African Americans and explores the literature supporting engagement, academic success, and college satisfaction of African American males attending institutions of higher education.

Historical Perspective of African American Educational Pursuit

Education is perceived as the pathway to cultivate societal material prosperity (Spring, 1997). It is through education that people are transformed in desirable ways to increase the capital value and improvement of humanity, thus preparing citizens for future membership and
participation in society. History has shown the path to educational attainment for many African Americans has been an uphill battle marked by challenges, such as perceptions of inferiority (Gavins, 2009), denial of educational opportunities, and the effects of white supremacy beliefs (Gavins, 2009; Hamilton, 2007; Spring, 1997).

From the early days of slavery, African Americans have demonstrated a strong desire for education (Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008); however, laws were in place forbidding African Americans to read or write and deemed teaching them a societal and moral crime. Due to the belief of inherent inferior intellectual and academic ability, it was considered wasteful and unnatural to teach African Americans complex concepts and skills (Hamilton, 2007; Kim, 2002; Willie & Edmonds, 1978). In actuality, there was an underlining fear that “black literacy” would liberate Blacks and threaten the American bondage of servitude (Kim, 2002; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008). Challenging long standing laws of “forced ignorance” African Americans aspired to educate, emancipate, and elevate themselves and their people” (Gavin, 2009, p. 15) seeking freedom while enduring the hardships of educating themselves and one another (Evans, 2009).

Despite numerous obstacles, “a tradition of excellence and an agenda for Black education dates back to the 1860s” (Tillman, 2004, p. 282). African American educators and community members built successful schools, securing funding, and providing a Black education consisting of a unique, visionary and relevant curriculum that enhanced the lives of African American children (Tillman, 2004; Turner, 2003). Although separate, but equal during the pre-Brown v. Board of Education era, the work and leadership of African American educators was influential and laid a foundation of academic achievement, pride and cultural value. (Tillman, 2004). Nonetheless, following the Civil War, only 10% of the adult African American population had a
basic education and even after *Brown*, African Americans in the north and the south fought to continue the quest to facilitate educational quality, equity, access, and opportunity in light of unequal schools (e.g., inadequate educational resources, teachers, and funding) (Dancy & Brown, 2008; Hamilton, 2007).

In the south, securing mere basics such as adequate facilities and well-trained teachers for African American students was a concern the African American community struggled to overcome (Anderson, 1988; Fultz & Brown, 2008). In the north “philanthropically financed African free schools funded through Black churches or private pay” (Fultz & Brown, 2008, p. 857) provided a substandard and inferior education (Dancy & Brown, 2008; Ogbu, 1994). Moreover, the outcome of the *Brown* decision “resulted in the displacement of Black educators, as well as social injustices that threatened the economic, social, emotional, and cultural structure of the Black community and academic success of Black children” (Tillman, 2004, p. 280). By the time the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and after years of unprecedented educational resistance, African American children were trapped in self-perpetuating impoverished neighborhoods and attended inferior schools staffed by poorly trained teachers (Fultz & Brown, 2008; Ogbu, 1994).

Despite strides toward equity, access, and opportunity, our educational system has historically mirrored the current societal climate of inequality and oppression. Many states, especially in the south, proudly maintained separate educational and social structures affording African American students an education throughout the Reconstruction and Civil Rights eras (Dancy & Brown, 2008; Willie & Edmonds, 1978). Institutionalized racism in the north rationalized practices barring African American’s access to higher education and southern institutions of higher education barred them as a matter of law (Dancy & Brown, 2008). Even
the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*, where the courts mandated that public primary and secondary schools eliminate all barriers separating the races’ equal access and opportunity, did little to change the face of higher education (Kim, 2002; Russo, Harris, & Sandidge, 1994). Yet, commencing 10 years after *Brown*, the Coleman Report set out to “probe deeper into societal concerns of educational access and inequality” (Wong & Nicotera, 2004, p. 123).

The Equality of Educational Opportunity (EEO) study commonly referred to as the Coleman Report, is acknowledged as one of the most significant pieces of research in the history of education and influenced the course of educational research and policy regarding school equality (Borman, 2010; Wong & Nicotera, 2004). Steered by James Coleman of Johns Hopkins University, staff from the U.S. Office of Education and a team of researchers gathered data from over 4,000 schools; 60,000 educators; and 570,000 students for two years while being charged with supplying empirical evidence to support *Brown*. The group was charged with conducting an investigation to determine “the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions” (Borman, 2010; Towers, 1992, p. 138). In addition to investigating the influences of *Brown* and the societal concerns of educational access and inequality, Borman (2010) reports it was expected that the Coleman report would expose educational facilities and resource disparities between urban minority schools and predominately white school districts. Nevertheless, after uncovering small discrepancies between the quality of facilities and resources of the minority and white schools, the Coleman group reported the outcomes of the study in the 1966 *Equality of Educational Opportunity Study* (Towers, 1992) concluding that “schools are remarkably similar in the way they relate to the achievement of their pupils” (p. 1203).
The Colman report played a strong role in promoting the debate on equal educational opportunities and impacted the Brown ruling by revealing that incorporating adequate facilities, strong curriculum, and teacher quality in the school environment are significant in the academic achievement of African American students (Gamoran & Long, 2006; Wong & Nicoters, 2004). Whereas, Brown launched racial desegregation, the Coleman report attested societal concerns of educational inequality among African American students. As such, the role of HBCUs became a major force in reframing educational opportunities and academic achievement for African Americans.

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities: The African American Educational Pursuit**

Like the challenges of the public school system during the last century, the quest for equity, access, and opportunity in higher education continues to be an elusive but steady pursuit for African Americans (Brown, 1999; Dancy & Brown, 2008). Prior to the Civil War, a higher education system for African Americans did not exist. Despite desegregation, exclusion of African Americans was common across colleges and universities sending strong messages that segregation and discrimination on college campuses were accepted. Although postsecondary education opportunities were far and few between for African Americans (Dancy & Brown, 2008), the establishment of HBCUs as a “byproduct of systematic social discrimination” assisted with providing educational opportunities for African Americans (Harper, 2007a, p. 109). As with education during slavery, it was thought that African Americans with a college education would jeopardize the racially divided and closely guarded social strata (Kim, 2002).

History reports the earliest access to higher education was granted to freed slave Alexander Lucius Twilight in 1823, who completed his studies and earned a bachelor’s degree from Middlebury College in Vermont (Harper, Patton & Wooden, 2009). Later, two other freed
slaves graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts and Bowdoin College in Maine, which contributed to the movement of college opportunity for African Americans (Harper et al., 2009). Noteworthy for being the first institution of higher education to willingly admit large numbers of African Americans in 1835, Oberlin College in Ohio showed educational commitment; even though their new educational vow caused distress for many Whites who supported the idea of keeping the doors of education closed, and exiling free African Americans to Africa (Baumann, 2010).

A major higher education access movement for African Americans was considered to have begun with the 1837 establishment of Cheyney State Training School (now Cheyney University) which initially opened as a primary and secondary school for freed slaves followed by Ashmun Institute (now Lincoln University), the “first all-African American institution to remain in its original location, award baccalaureate degrees, and develop completely into a degree-granting institution” (p. 393). Finally, in 1856, Wilberforce University, the nation’s oldest historically Black private institution owned and operated by African Americans opened its doors. The founding of other historically Black college and universities (HBCUs) by northern missionaries, abolitionist, and educators whose missions were devoted to educating African Americans and preparing them to teach in segregated schools (Dancy & Brown, 2008; Kim, 2002) followed, however, it was Cheney, Lincoln and Wilberforce Universities that laid the foundation of the HBCU movement providing a culturally congenial educational environment intertwined with equity, higher education access and achievement for African Americans (Harper, 2007a; Harper et al., 2009).

The passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 propelled the HBCU movement by providing land for the establishment of public institutions like Alcorn College in Mississippi, which became the
first land grant institution established for African Americans (Harper et al., 2009). “Access was specially extended to African Americans with the passage of the second Morrill Act of 1890, mandating that funds for education be distributed annually on a ‘just and equitable’ basis to African Americans” (Harper et al., 2009, p. 395) and not show race as a criterion to gain admission to college.” Both Morrill Acts captured the separation of Black and white public higher education institutions underscoring vocational education in mechanics, agriculture, and industrial arts as the curriculum, which many believed to be a lower caliber of academics (p. 395). In support of vocational training stemming from the Morrill Acts, Booker T. Washington, notable for the establishment and development of Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), believed African Americans could attain egalitarianism through the accumulation of power, fortune, and respect by working in practical trades, and thus aligned academic courses closely with vocational training at Tuskegee University (Frantz, 1997; Purnell, n.d.). On the other hand, the vocational and technical training supported by the Morrill Acts and Washington’s notion, were in contrast of W.E.B. DuBois’ position on the education of African Americans.

The first African American in history to earn a doctoral degree from Harvard University, DuBois believed vocational training alone preserved slavery; thus he advocated for the education of the Talented Tenth in liberal arts that would provide intellectual leadership which he strongly felt would propel egalitarianism and a sense of purpose for African Americans in society (Frantz, 1997; Fultz & Brown, 2008; Purnell, n.d.). The strategy of education expressed by Washington and DuBois, practical, technical training grounded in a liberal education, are embraced in today’s HBCUs (Purnell, n.d.) as they withstand to be a major force in reframing educational opportunity in providing an environment that facilitates academic achievement for African Americans.
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) academic programs have often been criticized and devalued (Harper, 2007a, p. 109), yet researchers (D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Davis, 1995; Fleming, 1982, 1984; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006) sustain that student cognitive gains suggest that HBCUs provide an academically supportive and nurturing environment that focuses on academic achievement and positive faculty relationships that contribute to the college experience. Fleming (1984) concurs noting the strength of HBCUs in providing an educational environment that facilitates intellectual development and growth without barriers that may interfere with the educational achievement of students. This growth, reports D’Auguelli & Hershberger (1993) and others (Davis, 1995; Fleming, 1982, 1984; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006) leads to a greater degree of satisfaction in the social and academic endeavors of African American students. For example, African American students engaged in working with faculty tend to be more satisfied with the college experience (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). More specifically, HBCU African American students who participate in faculty research promote college satisfaction and engagement (Kim & Conrad, 2006). Other research yield findings consistent with D’Auguelli and Hershberger (1993), Davis (1995), Fleming (1982, 1984), Kim (2002) and Kim and Conrad (2006) in that African American students at HBCUs have a greater sense of connectedness, power and affiliation with campus life, which subsequently impacted college experience and satisfaction, than their same-race peers attending PWCUs (Harper et. al., 2004).

Deep rooted in a long, rich history of tradition in educating African Americans, HBCUs exemplify the African American quest for intellectual development while functioning as multifaceted institutions, serving as a training ground for education, social, political, and religious leadership for the African American community (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Scott, 1994).
Further, culture affirmation, diversity, and increased levels of engagement with peers and faculty of the same race are benefits African American students are exposed to while attending HBCUs (Stewart, Wright, Perry & Rankin, 2008). Researchers maintain, “As a majority on the HBCU campus, African Americans do not have to cope with assimilating or other collegiate pressures” (p. 27). Reportedly, African American students enrolled in HBCUs have greater learning experiences, develop confidence, poise, character and leadership; devote more effort to academic and social activities; experience more gains in intellectual development, critical thinking, and cultural awareness; and enjoy greater personal and social benefits more than their same race counterparts attending PWCUs (Harper et al., 2004; Palmer & Young, 2009). Therefore, a welcoming environment and interaction with faculty, as well as staff on campus, is optimal in the academic success and retention of African Americans because they rely on them for support, cultural validation, encouragement and advice (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper, 2006, Palmer & Young, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007).

Another benefit of African Americans attending HBCUs as stated by scholars (Kim, 2004; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002) is the intentional design of campus activities and programs to relate and encourage African American students’ participation. Kim (2004) and Scott (1994) further note HBCUs bestow a greater psychological well-being, enhanced self-knowledge, racial pride, cultural affinity, and nurturing academic relations and climate than what’s gained at PWCUs. Hale (2006) asserts, “students who have attended HBCUs can reflect on their HBCU college experience as an “academic expression of their own aspirations” (p. xxviii) which according to Kim (2004) supports why attending an HBCU positively relates to remaining in college and graduating.
Historically Black Colleges and Universities are aware of the “anxiety-producing conditions of provocation, discrimination, neglect, and exploitation” (Hale, 2006, p. xxviii) their students will encounter in society, and therefore have taken proactive steps to “succor and to protect the emotional well-being of their students” while in college (p. xxviii). For instance, oftentimes, African American collegians attending PWCU undergo institutional discrimination, curriculum bias, inadequate support from faculty and negative peer attitudes, all of which contributes to alienation, isolation, poor academic performance, and disengagement (Hale, 2006; Palmer & Young, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). Yet for HBCUs, they are continuing to concern themselves with providing their students with academic access and knowledge afforded to other Americans, (Harper, 2007a, p. 110) as well as creating a nurturing, welcoming, engaging and institutional connected college experience that is symbolic of a HBCU education. In spite of the emblematic HBCU education, HBCUs are not only plagued with the stigma of not having relevant academic programs, maintaining resources (i.e., technology upgrades, capital improvements, etc.) and decreasing endowments (Clay, 2012; Harper, 2007a; Grummon, 2012). Today they are faced with new challenges of attracting and retaining African American students. as many African American male collegians opt to explore and experience a PWCU education (Allen, 1987; Kim & Conrad, 2006).

The African American Male Education Crisis

Schlesinger (1998) reminds us that historically, America has been a nation that has inflicted a variety of harsh injustices on minorities, specifically on African American males. Being an African American male in American society, for many, has meant being psychologically castrated and rendered powerless in the educational and economical arena traditionally dominated by White America (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1978; Harper &
Davis, 2012). Often African American men are “caricatured as second-and-third rate citizens” (Harper, 2009b, p. 698) and “face rigid and racially stratified labor markets,” endure educational marginalization, lack opportunity and equitable resources, and are susceptible to unfair and unjust treatment (Fultz & Brown, 2008, p. 856; Harper 2009).

During the 1930s, as well as in the aftermath of Brown v. the Board of Board of Education, the education and social outcomes of African American youth resulted in a variety of educational policy proposals to push for integration and rid the culture of educational poverty (Fultz & Brown, 2008). While the educational conditions of African Americans took center stage when politically advantageous, “it took close to three decades for policymakers to identify African American males as a special focus” (p. 863). Society began to take notice as a “host of education advocates, policy analysts, and public commentators began to call attention to the behavioral and educational crises of African American males” (Fultz & Brown, 2008, p. 854; Kunjufu, 1995; National Task Force on African-American Men and Boys, 1996; Parham & McDavis, 1987; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1999). “This attention highlighted what was referred to as the perilous situation facing Black male youth, often describing the collective group as “endangered” and “at-risk” (Gibbs, 1988; Fultz & Brown, 2008, p. 854; Focus on Black Males, 1992; Parham & McDavis, 1987; Pedagogical and Contextual Issues, 1994).

By the mid-1990s, negative labels to describe the plight of the African American male became a common theme in the educational arena and contemporary society (Anderson, 1990; Fultz & Brown, 2008; Majors & Billson, 1992; Wilson, 1987). As noted in the introduction, some of those negative labels include dangerous, uneducable, dysfunctional, and endangered. Although African American males managed to persist through societal stigmatization, negative labels caused potential damage and disempowerment causing many of “them [African American
males] to internalize and succumb” to negative stereotypes and racial injustice (Moore, Ford & Milner, 2005 p. 60). Linked to unfavorable educational outcomes, researchers theorize the experiential factors may serve to predispose African American males to lifelong educational challenges.

First, in elementary and secondary schools, teachers and counselors are more likely to discourage African American boys from attending college (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Griffin, Jayakumar, Jones & Allen, 2010; Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994; Oakes, 2005; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn, 2008b). As matter of fact, less than 50% of African American males graduate from high school and even fewer enroll in college (Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010). Research indicates that African American males have the lowest high school grade point average (GPA) and standardized test scores of all race-gender subgroups (Hale, 2001; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn, 2010). For example, a report of African American boys attending Chicago Public Schools reveals that during their high school careers, a huge decline in academic performance and overwhelmingly high rates of failure exist as compared to their counterparts (Griffin et al., 2010; Roderick, 2003). The study notes that “by the end of 9th grade, 80% of African American males in Chicago were failing at least one of their courses, compared to 41% of their female counterparts” (p. 233). In the 2010 report from the Schott Foundation for Public Education 47% of African American male students graduated from high school in 2008 (SFPE, 2011).

Another reason why African American males fail throughout the educational pipeline is the disproportionately high rates of expulsions and suspension placed on African American boys. Scholars (Garibaldi, 2007; Hilliard, 1991; Noguera, 2003; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; SFPE, 2011) agree that African American boys are labeled with having behavior problems and are
“expelled and suspended more frequently and for longer periods than White students” (Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008, p. 127; Polite & Davis, 1999). A number of scholars (Epps, 1995; Milofsky, 1974; Moore, Henfield, & Owens, 2008; Noguera, 2003; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008) also express concern that in addition to remedial classes, African American males are overwhelming placed in special education classes “excluding them from a rigorous curriculum and preventing access to educational opportunities that might otherwise support and encourage them” to graduate and attend college (Garibaldi, 2007; Noguera, 2003; Oakes, 1985, p. 53). Noguera (2003) further posits that as a result, African American males are considered less intelligent (p. 436).

Finally, the overrepresentation of African American males in jails presents an impediment in successfully progressing through the educational pipeline (Cuyjet, 2006). Unfortunately, the prison rate of African American males jailed outnumbers those enrolled college (Green, 2008; Jackson & Moore, 2006, 2008; Palmer & Maramba, 2011; SFPE, 2011). For instance, “approximately one in four African American males between the ages of 20 and 29 are incarcerated, on probation, or on parole . . . only one in five are enrolled in a two- or four-year college program (Palmer & Maramba, 2011; Prothrow-Stith, 1993, p. 163).

Given the precarious challenges the message is undeniable and clear that an educational crisis exists and begins early in the educational pipeline for African American males (Blake & Darling, 1994; College Board, 2010; Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Jackson & Moore, 2006, 2008; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008). In short, these challenges are not endemic to the after mentioned academic settings (Palmer et al., 2010), in fact academia is immersed with literature that indicates the plight or absence of African American males in institutions of higher education (Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Hamilton, 2007; Strayhorn, 2009).
Student Engagement and the African American Male in College

The undergraduate student population of today has changed considerably over the years (Harper, 2009b; Mmeje, Newman, Kramer, & Pearson, 2009, p. 295; Saunders & Bauer, 1998). Today, of the nearly 15 million undergraduates enrolled in college, approximately 2 million are African Americans, and African American men comprise less than 5% of that undergraduate population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The work of Harper (2006) and Strayhorn (2008a, 2008b) also reveal that the African American male undergraduate population continues to represent a small proportion of the students enrolled in college. The lack of prominence of African American males in college has encouraged a need to understand factors of enrollment and engagement by finding effective ways to enhance their college and campus life experience through social and academic engagement (Harper, 2009b; Mmeje et al., 2009; Saunders & Bauer, 1998).

Student engagement has been conceptualized as a good practice in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Strayhon & DeVita, 2010) “involving students in meaningful activities and experiences including in-class discussions, faculty-student interactions, peer interactions, and deep active learning” (p. 88). In regard to the impact of institutional context, Strayhorn & DeVita (2010) note that experiences of good practice are prevalent at liberal arts colleges. Seifert and a team of researchers examined good practice experiences of African American students at 18 four-year institutions using quantitative data from the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL) which reported “significantly higher levels of good practice experiences than their counterparts at regional and research institutions” (p. 90). Further, Strayhorn and his colleague (2009) expanded the study findings by suggesting that African American males at master’s level institutions engage students more often than African American
males at liberal arts colleges, which supports the notion that HBCUs provide welcoming, affirming environments that engender African American student success (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010).

In a different study referencing active engagement as a good practice, Harper (2012) conducted the National Black Male College Achievement Study, based on 219 high achieving African American male undergraduates from 42 college and universities. Active engagement was one of the key findings of the qualitative study crediting college success to active engagement on campus. In the study, the participants shared that their out-of-class experiences had “spillover effects on academic performance” (p. 12). In other words, the participants believe they earned higher grades because they did not have time to waste, engaged with peers who were more academically-driven, and had to maintain their reputations (p. 12). In addition to the benefits discussed above, the participants in Harper’s (2012) study talked about race/gender-specific gains and educational outcomes linked with engagement (p. 12). Table 1 outlines gains and educational outcomes associated with active engagement.
Table 1

Race/Gender-Specific Gains and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Engagement Specifically Helps Black Undergraduate Men:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Resolve masculine identity conflicts (Harper, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negotiate peer support for achievement (Harper, 2006b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop political acumen for success in professional settings in which they are racially underrepresented (Harper, 2006c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop strong Black identifiers that incite productive activism on predominately white campuses (Harper &amp; Quaye, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acquire social capital and access to resources, politically wealthy persons, and exclusive networks (Harper, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Craft productive responses to racist stereotypes (Harper, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overcome previous educational and socioeconomic disadvantage (Harper, 2007; Harper &amp; Griffin, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Student engagement is chronicled in an array of popular and scientific publications (Kuh, 1996, 2003, 2009; Kuh et al., 2006; Harper, 2009b; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010) and nationally, the disengagement of African American males has been the leading dialogue (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper, 2009b; Roach, 2001; Schmidt, 2008). While there are explanatory factors that support the disengagement of African American males, a lack of institutional belonging “stifles engagement” and undermines college degree attainment (Bean, 2005, p. 700; Harper, 2009b). Substantial research exists investigating the experiences of African Americans attending PWCUs in comparison to HBCUs (Allen, 1992; Davis, 1995; Fleming, 1984; Fries-Britt, 1998; Fries-
Britt & Turner, 2002; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008). For instance, Strayhorn, (2008b) asserts that a sense of belonging in African American males attending public PWCU’s revolves around their “interaction with peers from different racial/ethnic groups” (p. 700). Harper et al. (2004) adds that cognitive and intellectual development are impacted in African American males attending HBCUs because they have a sense of belonging, power and affiliation opposed to African American males are attending PWCU’s.

Aside from a having an “insufficient sense of belonging” (Bean, 2005; Harper, 2009b), African American males are plagued with other challenges (e.g., difficulty seeking help, involvement in campus organizations, establishing supportive relationships on campus with faculty, staff and/or peers, etc.) that without support may hinder their academic success (Strayhorn, 2006, 2008b; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010). Research shows that in the absence of supportive relationships, “African American males are less likely to become academically and socially integrated into college life, which in turn increases the chances of dropping out” (Tinto, 1993; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010, p. 88). In fact, Harper (2006) and Strayhorn and DeVita (2010) refer to data from the U.S. Department of Education highlighting that more than two-thirds of all African American men who enroll in college actually drop out before earning their college degree – the lowest degree completion rate among all races and gender. Thus, understanding factors of disengagement of African American males in college is an important and timely research catalyst to abet improvements in enrollment and postsecondary degree completion (Harper, 2009b; Strayhorn, 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this correlational study is based on the work of Astin (1984, 1993, 1999), Pace (1984), and Kuh and his colleagues’ theory of student engagement
(Kuh, 1989, 1991). Used to explain students’ involvement in out-of-class and in-class experiences, such as extra-curricular activities on campus, interactions with faculty, and involvement in the classroom, Astin (1984, 1993, 1999) and Kuh (2003) define an engaged student as one that devotes considerable time and energy to academic and social student engagement. In the same way, the term student involvement is used interchangeably referring to the, “quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience” (Astin, 1999, p. 528). A second premise of the theory of student engagement according to the frameworks of Astin (1984, 1993, 1999), Kuh (1989, 1991, 2003), and Pace (1984), is that institutional policies and procedures are employed to influence levels of engagement on campus (Pike & Kuh, 2005). Figure 1 illustrates the elements of student engagement depicted by realistic experiences, behaviors and conditions.

The first path represents students’ precollege experiences (family background, k-12 academic preparation, demographics, etc.). These factors and associated conditions have an impact on what students will do to prepare and succeed in college. In Figure 1, the following transitions represent what is needed for students to successfully navigate through college: remediation courses, financial aid policies, and working off campus. If students are not able to successfully move their way through these transitions, it is possible that they may lack a successful college experience (Pike & Kuh, 2005).

Students’ behaviors and institutional conditions represent the next pathway, the college experience. As noted in Figure 1, aspects such as time and effort put into studying and interactions with faculty and peers make up students’ behaviors. Elements such as institutional resources, policies, programs, practices, and structural features, represent institutional conditions (Pike & Kuh, 2005).
At the center of Figure 1 is student engagement, which “represents aspects of student behavior and institutional conditions that colleges and universities can do something about, whereas factors such as precollege characteristics are typically beyond the control of the student or institution” (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 8).


Based on the concepts of engagement, researchers (Astin, 1984; Pike & Kuh, 2005) state that the quality and quantity of a student’s involvement influences their learning and development in college. Flowers (2004) gathered data from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) of 7,923 African American students from 192 colleges and universities, and discovered in-class and out-of-class experiences had a significant influence on student learning and development. Flowers’ study also indicates that the magnitude of the positive
effects of student involvement on academic and social development is more pronounced for collegiate experiences relative to library activity, course learning and personal experiences opposed to other involvement experiences such as those in the college student union, athletics and participation in student organizations and clubs. To add, Harper et al. (2004) gathered data from NSSE and studied the differences between 1,167 African American women and men at HBCUs. While Harper et al. (2004) found that overall there were some involvement gains experienced by African American women that were not present in the past (Harper, 2009b) African American males seemed to dominate face time with faculty requiring additional in-class and out-of-class attention (p. 277). More succinctly, Harper et al. (2004) assert that perhaps African American males experience higher levels of involvement with faculty because they are compensating for their lower levels of class and academic preparation. Regardless of the reasons, it is important to expose African American male undergraduates to engagement opportunities (Harper, 2009b; Strayhorn, 2008a; 2008b), positive college experiences and high levels of academic and social integration (Baumgart & Johnston, 1977; Seidman, 2005; Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1981; Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986).

A plethora of educational gains, outcomes, and benefits have been associated with purposeful engagement of students (Harper, 2009b). As such, the research is undisputable: students who are actively involved in both academic and social activities gain more from the college experience and are more likely to succeed opposed students who are not so involved. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Strayhorn, 2008b). Therefore, encouraging and promoting in-class and out-of-class involvement is the cornerstone of the college experience that influences greater educational aspirations, academic success, college satisfaction, academic success, personal development, and persistence (Astin, 1993; Davis, 1995; Flower, 2004; Pascarella &

**Student Academic Success**

Academic breakdown for African American males begins early (Davis, 2003; Garibaldi, 1992; Palmer & Young, 2009) and their academic challenges in higher education are widely discussed and documented throughout the literature (Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Gonzalez, 1996; Gonzalez & Szecsy, 2002; Harvey, 2001; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Kuh et al., 2006; Noguera, 2003; Polite & Davis, 1994; Strayhorn, 2008b; Swail et al., 2003). As a whole, the African American male academic experience is characterized by insufficient academic preparation for college level coursework, low enrollment rates, elevated attrition, and poor degree attainment (Allen, 1992; Cuyjet, 2006; Hagedorn, Maxwell & Hampton, 2001-2002; Harper, 2006, 2008; Wood & Turner, 2011). While troubling, scholars (Fries-Britt, 1997; Griffin et al., 2010, p. 234; Harper, 2006, 2008) agree that the aforementioned challenges are multidimensional and complex. For example, Griffin et al. (2010) supports research from Cohen and Nee (2000) asserting that academic success and educational aspirations are challenging in that “Black men . . . have been victims of an intersectional contextual failure, [with a] combination of ineffective schools, neighborhood and individual poverty, [and] diminishing low-skilled living wage employment opportunities” (p. 234). As such, yielding factors within the college environment that promote and shape academic success is critical to the college success of African American males (Griffin et al., 2010; Palmer & Young, 2009). For instance, the work of Griffin et al. (2010) gathered data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Student Information Form (SIF) of 214,951 freshman African American males between from 1,112 baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities who participated in CIRP over the three past
decades. The study reveals rising trends in overall preparation for college, drive to achieve, academic ability and leadership ability. On average, Black males enrolled at PWCU's reported higher levels of academic achievement than males at HBCU. However in 2000, African American males attending HBCUs looked much like their peers entering PWCU's in terms of academic success (Griffin et al., 2010).

In addition to Harper’s (2012) study attributing college success to active engagement, the large-scale qualitative perspective on Black male success in higher education revealed positive school experiences of high achieving African American males from “boyhood to high school, in that parents, family members and even an influential teacher, who helped solidify going on to higher education after high school, reinforced that college was the most viable pathway to social uplift and success” (p. 9). College choice and the transition once in college were also findings in which participants identified parents, extended family, teachers, and same-race college peers as being supportive and influential in achieving success in college. Participants report that entering an early arrival program, 6 to 8 weeks before the start of their freshman year gave them a positive start to college. Further, the guidance and support they receive from upper class same-race peers, “sharing navigational insights and resources, connecting them to powerful information networks, and introducing them to value-added engagement opportunities on campus,” play a major role in their academic success at their college (p. 11). Harper’s (2012) final discoveries of the perspective focuses on finances and racism. With regard to finances, all participants aggressively explored as many opportunities as possible to help lessen financial pressures. Racism, on the other hand, threatened the men’s achievement and sense of belonging. Although the African American males interviewed for the study were the most visible and
actively engaged student leaders on campus, they “were not exempt from racism, stereotypes, and racial insults” (p. 11).

Expanding on factors that contribute to academic success of African American males, Palmer and Young (2009) conducted a qualitative study consisting of 11 underprepared junior and senior African American men who attended a public, doctoral research intensive HBCU. Palmer and Young (2009) reveal that student involvement promotes academic and social integration, provides structure, and helps to foster meaningful relationships with faculty and peers. Their study also supports other research that concludes non-cognitive variables such as self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, and persistence facilitate student success in the collegiate lives of African American males (Palmer & Strayhorn, 2007; Tracy & Sedlacek, 1995; Palmer & Young, 2009). Similarly, other earlier research (Palmer et al., 2010; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; Swail et al., 2003; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985) purports that non-cognitive variables facilitate persistence in college success and graduation.

While non-cognitive variables are key to the academic success of African American male undergraduates (Palmer & Strayhorn, 2007; Tracy & Sedlacek, 1995; Palmer & Young, 2009), a body of research have identified several other interrelated influences (e.g. financial support, parental involvement, faculty support, campus environment and climate, mentoring, etc.) that attributes to college participation and success (Griffin et al., 2010; Harper, 2012; Herbert, 2002; Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Palmer et al., 2009, 2010; Robertson & Mason, 2008; Simms, Knight, & Dawes, 1993). For example, in Herbert’s (2002) qualitative study of five high achieving African American males at a PWCU, he posits that “evidence of a strong belief in self, combined with internal motivation, supportive mothers, teachers and mentors, recognition of gifts and talents, played a role” in shaping their academic success in college (p. 35).
Even with gains in knowledge assisting in shaping a positive experience for academic success, disparities in college success remain for African American males (Allen, 1992; Cuyjet, 2006; Griffin et al., 2010; Hagedorn et al., 2001-2002; Harper, 2006; Wood & Turner, 2011). According to statistics reported by Harper and Quayle (2009) only approximately 35% of undergraduate students who attend four-year institutions attain bachelor’s degrees within four years and 56% graduated within six years of being enrolled in college. And what’s more problematic, African American males have the lowest college enrollment and retention rates with only 15% attaining a bachelor’s degree (Bowen, 2009) within the four to six year time frame. African American male disengagement is a major factor contributing to poor academic success and increased attrition among African American male collegians (Harper, 2012, p. 12).

College Satisfaction

As noted throughout this review engaging and integrating African American males into campus life is imperative (Harper, 2009b; Strayhorn, 2006, 2008a, 2008b). While the African American male collegian arrives to campus with a variety of characteristics (Kuh et al., 2006), it is reasonable to hypothesize that an individual’s characteristics, abilities and personal attributes may influence the college experience. Seminal works by House (1999) and Walker-Marshall and Hudson (1999) reveal that a student’s academic characteristics, such as high school GPA and environmental variables are a significant predictor of their satisfaction with their college experience. Moreover, a body of research (Allen, 1987; Bean, 2005; Love, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007) affirms that college satisfaction has emerged as a factor that affects academic success, engagement, retention, attrition and graduation rates. In other words, the greater the level of satisfaction with the college environment, the greater the likelihood that the student will remain affiliated with the institution (Astin, 1993; House, 1999; Pascarella &
Terenzini, 1991; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Walker, Marshall & Hudson, 1999). In contrast, students who are dissatisfied with their college experience are more likely to feel disconnected to the institution, which in turn could result in them leaving the institution (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010; Tinto, 1993). Thus, satisfaction is directly influenced by academic and social integration – that is, “the extent to which students feel involved in or connected to the academic and social realms of college life” (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007, p. 73).

Academic and social integration have a strong link to the overall satisfaction of the collegiate experience (Astin, 1993, Kuh et al., 2006). Researchers (Bean, 1993; Kuh, 1981; Strayhorn, 2009) assert that students who are more involved in both curricular and co-curricular activities seem to benefit more than their counterparts not engaged academically and socially. Kuh (1981) notes, “they [students] are happier, are more likely to persist to graduation, and exhibit higher levels of achievement and personal development” (p. 30). For example, subsequent studies indicate that African Americans attending HBCUs seem to be more satisfied with the college environment than their African American counterparts at PWCUs and graduate at rates equal to White students at PWCUs (Allen, 1987; Bohr, Pascarella, Nora, & Terenzini, 1995; Love, 1993; Nettles et al., 1986; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002). In recent research, Palmer, Davis and Maramba (2010) highlight work done by McClure (2006) who explores the impact that a historically Black fraternity had on the college experience and academic success African American males. According to McClure (2006) engagement in a fraternity forms a sense of community and helps to build a supportive environment thereby increasing academic success and satisfaction of the African American male college experience (p.86). Similarly, Harper and
Harris (2006) purport that fraternal engagement facilitates leadership, cognitive development, and racial identity.

Extending the notion of academic and social integration and the impact it has on college satisfaction, research shows that students who interact frequently with faculty and other university personnel are more satisfied with their college experience (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). This notion also holds true for African American students in college, specifically those [Black students] at a HBCU in mentoring relationships (Palmer & Young, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). For example, Palmer et al. (2010) cites a study conducted by Strayhorn and Terrell (2007) that was not focused exclusively on African American males and measured the effect of faculty-student mentoring of 554 African American students; the study found that “establishing a meaningful mentoring relationship with a faculty member enhanced college satisfaction” (p.86).

In relation to African American male undergraduates, Strayhorn (2008b) collected CSEQ data from 8,000 randomly sampled students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds measuring the relationship between academic success (as measured by grades) and satisfaction. Results reveal that having a strong support system/person was positively related with satisfaction in college for African American men (Strayhorn, 2008b). In a different study, Chen, Ingram and Davis (2006) gathered data from NSSE of 4,570 African American students comparing their engagement and satisfaction at HBCUS and PWCUs. They find that African American males attending HBCUs are more engaged than African American males attending PWCUs and that interaction with faculty, staff and peers was prominent in their satisfaction of attending college, more specifically a HBCU. Collectively the studies confirm college satisfaction is positively impacted by being
academically and socially connected to faculty/staff and the campus environment (Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Tinto, 1993, 2000).

Summary

Higher education has evolved for African Americans and college enrollment of African American males have slightly increased over the years. However, the presence of the African American male remains scarce on college campuses. As discussed, national statistics reveal that African American men in college only make up 5.5 percent of all college students, while white male students make up 27% (Toldson & Lewis, 2012). While troubling, the fact remains that an educational crisis exists and begins early in the educational pipeline for African American males.

Despite the fact that the discourse of disparities in educational preparedness, college enrollment, engagement, academic performance, and achievement of African American males is overshadowing, higher education institutions can take the lead in combating the challenges the African American male collegiate faces prior to and upon their arrival to campus. Understanding the connection between student engagement, student satisfaction and student success is vital in eradicating disengagement of African American males attending institutions of higher education (Harper, 2009b).
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a summary of the methods used to examine institutional characteristics as well as engagement factors that best predict African American male retention, academic success and satisfaction of their college experiences. A description of the research design, participants, instrument used to collect data, and data analysis will be presented. This section will also present the research questions that were used to investigate the study and will conclude with a description of the assumptions and limitations of the study.

Research Design

This study sought to uncover if relationships existed between independent variables or predictor variables and the dependent variable. Independent variables included Level of Academic Challenge (Academic Challenge), Active and Collaborative Learning (Collaborative Learning), Student-Faculty Interaction (Faculty Interaction), Enriching Educational Experiences (Enriching Experiences), and Supportive Campus Environment (Supportive Campus). The dependent variable was the perceived satisfaction with the college experience. The inquiry utilized a correlational research design in the form of Multiple Regression Models and Pearson product-moment correlation. It examined the relationship between institutional characteristics as well as engagement factors that best predict African American male academic success and satisfaction of their college experiences. A correlational design was the most appropriate design because the study explored relationships among two or more variables to explain predictive outcomes (Frankel & Wallen, 2009) of the participating African American male college students.

Participants

The United States Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2010) reports close to 16.4 million undergraduate students were enrolled in college
during the 2008 fall academic year. According to NCES, African Americans represented close to 2.3 million of the students enrolled in college and of this, African American males represented 821,300.

In the spring of 2008, the National Survey of Student engagement (NSSE) was administered at college institutions across the United States. The 2008 NSSE administration invited close to 1.4 million first-year and senior students from 769 institutions to participate in the survey. The NSSE 2008 survey consisted of 385,842 total respondents made up 125,440 students sampled under the standard sampling scheme and an additional 260,402 students selected through random oversamples (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research [ICUPR], 2008). Table 2 profiles the 2008 cohort by demographic group.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSSE 2008 U.S. Cohort Percent by Demographic Group (IUCPR, 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial/Ethnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants in this study represented 3,000 random first year and senior African American male college students who completed the 2008 NSSE during spring quarter. According to Frankel and Wallen (2009) a “sample should be as large as the researcher can obtain with at least a sample size of 50 to establish the existence of a relationship” (p. 102). The researcher examined 1,500 first year and 1,500 senior African American male college student responses from a population of 46,301 African American students enrolled in 717 United States public and private baccalaureate granting institutions. The participating institutions had the following Carnegie classifications, research universities with very high research levels (RU/VH), research universities with high research levels (RU/H), doctoral/research universities (DRU), master colleges and universities with larger programs (Master’s L), master’s college and universities with medium programs (Master’s M), master’s colleges and universities with smaller programs (Master’s S), baccalaureate colleges - arts and sciences (Bac/A&S), and baccalaureate college – diverse fields (Bac/Diverse) which includes Theological institutions, but excludes Tribal Colleges. The Carnegie framework represents 10% of undergraduate degrees and where fewer than 50 master’s degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded (Carnegie Classification, 2012).

**Instrumentation**

The *National Survey of Student Engagement* (IUCPR, 2008) was utilized to gather quantitative data for this study. The instrument was developed by a group of scholars to promote student learning and to provide institutions with valid and reliable information about the student experience (Ewell & Jones, 1996; Kuh, 2001; Kuh, 2009). The purpose of NSSE is three-fold: (1) To “provide high-quality, actionable data that institutions can use to improve the undergraduate experience; (2) To discover more about and document effective educational...
practices in postsecondary settings; and (3) To advocate for public acceptance and use of empirically derived conceptions of collegiate quality” (Kuh, 2009, pp. 10-11).

Since spring 2000, approximately 1.5 million students enrolled at more than 1,400 public and private colleges and universities have completed the NSSE questionnaire (IUCPR, 2009a). Administered annually online and through direct mail during spring quarter to first-year and senior college students, the NSSE survey included 28 questions with 100 total items. Forty-two questions on the survey collect information in five categories or benchmark scales on student behaviors, institutional factors and characteristics, reactions to college, and student background information, all of which assesses learning and development (Kuh, 2001).

Depending on the mode of administration, web-based or paper, students were asked to respond to items on the instrument by checking a box, using a drop down option, or filling in the blank. Respondents selected from a wide range of Likert-type scales for various questions in the form of statements and numerical ratings. The actual instrument is presented in Appendix C. The survey queried their institutional experiences relative to the time spent doing homework, involvement on campus, activities inside and outside the classroom, expected major(s) and/or minor, fraternal affiliation, and the extent of their athletic participation. In addition participants were asked to provide demographic information including gender, ethnicity, birthdate, current college classification, enrollment (full-time or less than full-time), living situation (dormitory, other campus housing, or off campus residence), and parents’ highest level of education completed.

A major component of the manner in which NSSE results are reported is through five benchmarks including Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Enriching Experiences, and Supportive Campus. The instrument utilizes a variety of 4 to 8-point
scales capturing critical student responses relative to experiential facets contributing to student learning and personal development (IUCPR, 2009c).

The Academic Challenge benchmark consists of eleven items related to time spent preparing for class, the amount of reading and writing, challenging and intellectual thought, and institutional expectations for academic performance. The response scales used in the Academic Challenge category are on a four to five-point scale ranging from “very often” to “never,” “very much,” and “very little,” and “none” to “more than 20”. Consisting of seven items, Collaborative Learning measured student collaborative work, tutoring and volunteerism. The four-point response scale ranged from “very often” to “never”. Similar to Academic Challenge and Collaborative Learning, the Faculty Interaction benchmark response scales also used “very often” to “never,” “very much” to “never,” as well as “done” to “have not decided.” The six items measured the frequency at which students reported talking with faculty members and advisors, discussing ideas from class with faculty members outside of class, receiving prompt feedback on academic performance, and working with faculty on research projects. Comprised of five questions, the Enriching Experiences benchmark focused on student interactions, views and values of race and politics, use of technology, and participation in co-curricular activities (e.g., learning communities, internships, study abroad, etc.). The four-point and eight-point response scales used were “very often” to “never,” “done” to “have not decided,” “0” to “more than 30,” and “much,” and “very much” to “very little,” “done.”

Finally, the six items of the Supportive Campus benchmark assessed students’ perception and satisfaction of the college experience, as it related to supportive campus relationships. The four-point and seven-point response scales used were “unfriendly, unsupportive, and sense of alienation” to “friendly, supportive, and sense of belonging;” “unavailable, unhelpful, and
unsympathetic” to “available, helpful, and sympathetic;” “unhelpful, inconsiderate, and rigid” to “helpful, considerate, and flexible;” and “very much” to “very little.”

The Academic Success and Overall Satisfaction NSSE subscales served as the dependent variables in the study and reflected 11 items and two items respectively on a four-point response scale. Academic Success subscales included questions relative to Gains in Practical Competence (Competence), Personal and Social Development (Development), General Education, and Grades. These items account for the alignment of academic and social life in regard to grades, knowledge, skills and/or personal development competencies.

The Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience subscale included questions pertaining to whether expectations were met relative to campus life, climate, services and experiences while enrolled in college. Table 3 provides a list of the NSSE item response scales.
Table 3

Table of Item Response Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Response Values and Labels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a-v, 6a-f</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a-e, 10a-g, 11a-p</td>
<td>Sometimes, Often, Very Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a-e</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a-b</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a-h</td>
<td>Have not decided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c</td>
<td>Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a-g</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-v, 6a-f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-e, 10a-g, 11a-p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Have not decided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of Alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c</td>
<td>Unhelpful, Inconsiderate, Rigid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a-g</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 provides a summary of the five NSSE Student Engagement Factors (independent variables), Academic Success and Overall Satisfaction (dependent variables) subscales.

Table 4

*Summary of Subscale Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 1: Academic Challenge</td>
<td>1r, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3c, 3d, 3e, 9a, 10a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 2: Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>1a, 1b, 1g, 1h, 1j, 1k, 1t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 3: Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>1n, 1o, 1p, 1q, 1s, 7d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 4: Enriching Experiences</td>
<td>1l, 1u, 1v, 7a, 7b, 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h, 9d, 10c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 5: Supportive Campus</td>
<td>8a, 8b, 8c, 10b, 10d, 10e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 1: Competence</td>
<td>11b, 11f, 11g, 11h, 11m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 2: Development</td>
<td>11i, 11j, 11k, 11l, 11n, 11o, 11p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 3: General Education</td>
<td>11a, 11c, 11d, 11e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 4: Grades</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>13, 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Validity and reliability are important to consider in selecting or designing an instrument (Frankel & Wallen, 2009, p. 147). Accordingly, the validity and reliability of the NSSE have been examined extensively (Baird, 1976; Berdie, 1971; Kuh, 2001, 2009; Pace, 1984; Pike, 1995; Pohlmann & Beggs, 1974; Turner & Martin, 1984). The NSSE design team ensured survey items were phrased clearly and unambiguously and had high content and construct validity (Kuh, 2001, 2009; IUCPR, 2009b). To this end, tweaking of the instrument involved data collection from focus groups, cognitive testing and various psychometric analyses (Kuh,
Before the first national launch in spring 2000, field testing and pilot administration was completed in 1998 and 1999 to establish validity and reliability of the items and scales (Kuh, 2001, 2009) based on 3,226 students at 12 institutions during spring, 1999 and 12,472 students at 56 institutions in fall 1999. Later, administration analyses was based on 63,517 students at 276 institutions in spring 2000; 89,917 students at 321 institutions in spring 2001; 118,355 students at 366 institutions in spring 2002; and 122,584 students at 427 institutions in spring 2003.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) correlation coefficients are produced when variables have relationships between them. To achieve reliability the “coefficient should be at least .70 or higher” (p. 337). Instrument reliability was conducted by student level test-retest method, wherein the same students were asked to fill out NSSE two or more times within a short period of time. Benchmark score strength was measured at institutions based on student and institutional participation (Kuh, 2001, 2009; IUCPR, 2009b). Item reliability scores from the 2002 ($n=1,226$) and 2005 ($n=1,536$) NSSE test-retest analysis ranged from .72 - .78 exceeding the .70 coefficient benchmark (IUCPR, 2009b).

**Data Collection Procedures**

Before conducting the study, the researcher submitted the NSSE Data Sharing Proposal application from the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (Appendix B). Within the application, the research addressed the following: (1) The purpose and research questions; (2) Description of the data file; (3) Other data proposed to merge or match with the NSSE data; (4) Expected start date and end dates for the analysis; and (5) The name, title, organization, email, and phone numbers of all researchers proposed to have access to the data.

According to the latest data sharing agreement, “NSSE data are made available no sooner than three years after institutional reports are mailed to participating institutions, which means
August 2008 is the earliest date that data from the NSSE 2008 administration will be released.” Therefore, the researcher requested data from the 2008 survey administration. The data sharing agreement also noted that data sets are random samples and all student and institutional identifiers are stripped when data is shared externally.

The researcher received from the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research a SPSS file containing the NSSE data. The student response scores were statistically analyzed using SPSS to determine if a significant relationship exists between institutional characteristics and engagement factors to predict African American males’ academic success and satisfaction of their college experience.

**Research Questions**

1. What student engagement factors best predict African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?

2. What is the relationship between academic success and African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?

3. Does African American males’ satisfaction with their college experiences differ by institutional type?

4. Which student engagement and academic success factors best predict African American male satisfaction with their college experience?

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Prior to analysis, subscale scores were calculated. Student engagement factors were classified as quantitative and categorized under the five NSSE benchmark scales – Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Enriching Experiences, and Supportive Campus.
As recommended by Chen et al. (2009) benchmark scale scores were calculated by converting individual response values into a scale range of 0 to 100 using the following formula: 
\[
\frac{\text{response value} - 1}{\text{total number of response values} - 1} \times 100.
\]
Then mean scores for the scale scores were calculated by computing the mean of the recoded items. In some cases, computing scale scores consisted of calculating the mean for certain items to keep scale scores within the original range (1 to 4) so that scores are interpreted according to the original response units (Chen et al., 2009).

The dependent variable in this study was overall satisfaction with the college experience and two items on the NSSE were used to assess the overall satisfaction of the college experience. For each item, the following formula was used: 
\[
\frac{\text{response value} - 1}{3} \times 100.
\]
Afterwards, the mean of the two items was computed.

Descriptive statistics were generated to examine demographics and subscale trends. For Research Question 1 that examined which factors best predict if African American males will be satisfied with their college experience, a forward multiple regression analysis was applied. Table 4 summarizes the research questions and the statistical tests that were used.

For Research Question 2, the relationship between academic success and satisfaction with the college experience was evaluated. The independent variable was academic success, which was quantitative and characterized the following variables: Gains in Practical Competence (Competence), Personal and Social Development (Development), General Education, and Grades. The dependent variable was satisfaction with the college experience, which was also quantitative. To evaluate the extent of the relationship between the two quantitative variables (academic success and satisfaction of the college experience), Pearson correlation was applied.
For Research Question 3, which examined the institutional type differences in student satisfaction with the college experience, a \( t \)-Test of independent samples was conducted. A \( t \)-Test of independent samples was appropriate because there was one independent variable with two categories (public vs. private) and one quantitative dependent variable (satisfaction with the college experience).

Finally, for Research Question 4, student engagement factors and academic success served as the independent variables. Both variables were classified as quantitative and measured using the NSSE survey. The dependent variable in this study was satisfaction with the college experience. This variable was classified as quantitative and was also measured using the NSSE questionnaire. Forward multiple regression was used to evaluate which variables best predict college satisfaction. Table 5 highlights the research questions, variables and data analysis.
Table 5

Research Questions, Variables, and Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Independent Variable (Quantitative)</th>
<th>Dependent Variable (Quantitative)</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What student engagement factors best predict African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?</td>
<td>Student Engagement Factors</td>
<td>Overall Satisfaction with the college experience</td>
<td>Forward Multiple Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic Challenge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborative Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculty Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enriching Experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supportive Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the relationship between academic success and African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?</td>
<td>Academic Success</td>
<td>Overall Satisfaction with the college experience</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does African American males’ satisfaction with their college experiences differ by institutional type?</td>
<td>Institutional Types (Categorical):</td>
<td>Overall Satisfaction with the college experience</td>
<td>t-Test of independent sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public, Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• HBCU, PWCU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which student engagement and academic success factors best predict African American male satisfaction with their college experience?</td>
<td>Student Engagement Factors &amp; Academic Success</td>
<td>Overall Satisfaction with the college experience</td>
<td>Forward Multiple Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Enriching Experiences &amp; Supportive Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Competence, Development, General Education, &amp; Grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assumptions

The assumption that students responded and completed the entire survey was made. Another assumption of the study was that the students were truthful and honest in self-reporting. Finally, there is an assumption that the preceding African American male college students will be similar to the participants of the study; and that a random sampling method was used to select the participants.

Limitations

Several limitations affected the study. First, the administration of NSSE reflects responses from first-year and seniors only. Second, due to the nature of the survey instrument, students had a limited opportunity to expound upon their answer choices. Third, the survey responses were self-reported. Finally, any generalizability to all African American male students attending college is decreased since participation in NSSE is voluntary.
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of data analysis related to African American males who participated in the 2008 NSSE questionnaire. This study measured the relationship between student engagement factors and the academic success and satisfaction of college life among first year and senior African American male students attending public and private universities. Utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) the data in this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Multiple Regression, ANOVAs, and correlations. Chapter four will begin with a brief description of the demographic characteristics of the sample followed by a review of the subscales. The chapter will conclude with the presentation of research questions explored in the study and subsequent findings.

Characteristics of the Sample

A random sample of 1,500 first year and 1,500 senior year African American males, 65% enrolled in public colleges and 35% in private colleges were analyzed. Of the 3,000 analyzed, 21% of the African American males attended a HBCU and 79% attended a PWCU with an overwhelming majority (92%) living on campus in a residence hall or other campus housing.

Instrument Subscales and Reliability

Chapter 3 presented scores established by the NSSE design team for the survey. Three constructs were utilized to address the research questions: Student Engagement Factors (42 items), Academic Success (17 items), and Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience (2 items). The Student Engagement Factors report the facets of the college student experience as it relates to engagement, student learning and personal development (IUCPR, 2009c). Student Engagement Factors consist of the Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Enriching Experiences, and Supportive Campus subscales. The Academic Success
subscale accounts for the alignment of academic and social life in regard to grades, knowledge, skills and/or personal development competencies. The Academic Success subscale consists of Gains in Competence, Development, General Education and Grades. Finally, the Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience scale conveys whether the expectation was met as it relates to campus life, climate, services and experiences while enrolled in college. The two questions comprising the Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience include (a) how would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? and (b) if you could start over again would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

Several tables are presented describing the descriptive statistics for the subscales used in the study. For each subscale, mean scores from the Likert-scale responses were calculated. Tables 6-12 summarize descriptive statistics for the individual items of Student Engagement Factors (Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Enriching Experiences, and Supportive Campus), Academic Success (Competence, Development, General Education and Grades), and Overall Satisfaction. Table 13 presents a summary of the score calculations for Student Engagement Factors, Academic Success and Overall satisfaction with the college experience. Student Engagement Factors scores were calculated using the sum of the items of each subscale variable of the instrument. Academic Success scores were calculated by using the sum of seventeen items (11a-11p and 25). Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience scores were calculated using the mean of the item subscale variables. The succeeding paragraphs elaborate on the table results.

Table 6 presents descriptive statistics for 11 items on a four-point scale that contribute to the Student Engagement Factor 1, Academic Challenge. These items examine the aspects of student learning, performance, development and institutional expectations. Results reveal that
the mean of African American male college students’ level of Academic Challenge for item 9a was 3.94 ($SD=1.63$). On average, these students spent 11-15 hours per week preparing for class (e.g., studying, reading, writing, doing homework, analyzing data, etc.). For item 10a, most African American males in the sample also felt that their institution emphasized studying “quite a bit” ($M=3.23$, $SD=0.76$). When asked how much writing was done during the current school year (item 3d), participants reported that they wrote 1-4 papers between 5 and 19 pages ($M=2.45$, $SD=0.93$). However, no papers or reports were written of 20 pages or more, item 3c ($M=1.61$, $SD=0.94$).

Descriptive statistics for seven items on a four-point scale contributes to the Student Engagement Factor 2, Collaborative Learning, which measures collaborative work, tutoring and community service involvement. Results presented in Table 7 indicate that during the current school year, African American male collegians often asked questions and contributed to class discussion, item 1a ($M=3.07$, $SD=0.85$). However, when asked about participating in community-based projects, the majority of male students reported that they have never participated in a community service project as part of a regular course, item 1k ($M=1.84$, $SD=0.96$).

The Student Engagement Factor 3, Faculty Interaction captures six items on a four-point scale that measures student interaction with faculty and staff in-and-outside of the classroom. Table 8 indicates that for item 1n, most African American male students often discussed their grades or assignments ($M=2.88$, $SD=0.89$) and received feedback regarding their academic performance from faculty, item 1q ($M=2.78$, $SD=0.86$). But, when asked about working with faculty on activities other than coursework (item 1s), participants reported that they did “sometimes” ($M=1.94$, $SD=1.01$).
### Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Student Engagement Factor 1: Academic Challenge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1r. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations.</td>
<td>2981</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components.</td>
<td>2983</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experience into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.</td>
<td>2973</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d. Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions.</td>
<td>2978</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.</td>
<td>2982</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Number of assigned textbooks, books or book-length packs of course reading.</td>
<td>2987</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c. Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more.</td>
<td>2987</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages.</td>
<td>2993</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.</td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities).</td>
<td>2984</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.</td>
<td>2983</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale ranges (1-4)*
Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for Student Engagement Factor 2: Collaborative Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.</td>
<td>2958</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Made a class presentation.</td>
<td>2946</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1g. Worked with other students on projects during class.</td>
<td>2942</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1h. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignment.</td>
<td>2957</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1l. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course.</td>
<td>2953</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1t. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.).</td>
<td>2970</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale ranges (1-4)*
Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Student Engagement Factor 3: Faculty Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1n. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.</td>
<td>2951</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1o. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.</td>
<td>2961</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.</td>
<td>2955</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1q. Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance.</td>
<td>2976</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.).</td>
<td>2971</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7d. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirement.</td>
<td>2965</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale ranges (1-4)

Table 9 summarizes 12 items that contribute to Student Engagement Factor 4, Enriching Experiences. These items assess learning opportunities focused on student interactions, views and values of race, politics, use of technology and participation in co-curricular activities. The majority of African American male students indicated for item 7b that before graduating they plan to take part in a community service activity or volunteer (\( M=3.24, SD=0.98 \)), as well as participate in a practicum, internship, field experience or clinical assignment, item 7a (\( M=3.00, SD=0.92 \)). These activities had the greatest contribution to their experience. Most participants also stated that they did not plan to register for an independent study or self-designed major, item 7g (\( M=2.26, SD=0.96 \)).

Comprised of six items on a seven-point scale, the Student Engagement Factor 5, Supportive Campus measures student college perceptions and satisfaction levels. Table 10 reveals that most African American males in this study experienced high quality relationships
exhibiting friendliness, supportiveness and a sense of belonging with other students, item 8a ($M=5.59$, $SD=1.41$) and faculty on campus, item 8b ($M=5.32$, $SD=1.44$). Additionally, the participants sensed almost the same with administrative offices and staff, item 8c ($M=4.94$, $SD=1.63$). When asked to what extent their institution emphasizes helping them cope with work, family and other non-academic responsibilities (item 10d), the male students responded with “some,” which contributed least to the overall Supportive Campus subscale ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.03$).
Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Student Engagement Factor 4: Enriching Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment.</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.</td>
<td>2976</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1v. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.</td>
<td>2977</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment.</td>
<td>2983</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b. Community service or volunteer work.</td>
<td>2979</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together.</td>
<td>2972</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7e. Foreign language coursework.</td>
<td>2964</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7f. Study abroad.</td>
<td>2969</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7g. Independent study or self-designed major.</td>
<td>2968</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7h. Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.).</td>
<td>2975</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9d. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.).</td>
<td>2950</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.</td>
<td>2964</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale ranges (1-8)
Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Student Engagement Factor 5: Supportive Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8a. Relationships with other students.</td>
<td>2990</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b. Relationships with faculty members.</td>
<td>2990</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c. Relationships with administrative personnel and offices.</td>
<td>2990</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially.</td>
<td>2949</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically.</td>
<td>2972</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.).</td>
<td>2970</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale ranges (1-7)

Made up of 17 items on an eight-point scale, the Academic Success Subscale encompasses four aspects; Gains in Competence, Development, General Education and Grades. These items examine institutional experiences contributing to academic performance, knowledge, abilities and personal development competencies. Table 11 indicates that the majority of African American males reported having a B+ average at their current institution, item 25 ($M=5.01$, $SD=1.79$). The results also reveal that for most African American male students there are greater gains in General Education because they believed that their institution contributed to their thinking critically and analytically, item 11e ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.74$) and acquiring a broad general education, item 11a ($M=3.32$, $SD=.076$). Similarly, in item 11b Gains in Competence were reported in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills ($M=3.32$, $SD=0.76$). When related to developing a deepened sense of spirituality, item 11p ($M=2.40$, $SD=1.14$), participants reported the least amount of gains in Development.
Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for Academic Success Subscale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11f. Analyzing quantitative problems.</td>
<td>2949</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11g. Using computing and information technology.</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11h. Working effectively with others.</td>
<td>2949</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11m. Solving complex real-world problems.</td>
<td>2927</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11i. Voting in local, state, or national elections.</td>
<td>2933</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11j. Learning effectively on your own.</td>
<td>2936</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11k. Understanding self.</td>
<td>2927</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.</td>
<td>2935</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11n. Developing a personal code of values and ethics.</td>
<td>2929</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11o. Contributing to the welfare of your community.</td>
<td>2933</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11p. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality.</td>
<td>2932</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a. Acquiring a broad general education.</td>
<td>2963</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11c. Writing clearly and effectively.</td>
<td>2951</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11d. Speaking clearly and effectively.</td>
<td>2951</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11e. Thinking critically and analytically.</td>
<td>2954</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grades</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?</td>
<td>2978</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale ranges (1-8)*
The Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience subscale is comprised of two questions that assess whether an expectation was met as it relates to the campus experience, questions 13 (How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?) and 14 (If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?). Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience is calculated by adding both questions 13 and 14. Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience was converted into a scale range of 0 to 100 using the following formula: \([(\text{response value} - 1)/3] \times 100.\) In Table 12, African American male students evaluated their educational experience at their current college as “good” for item 13 ($M=3.17, SD=0.74$) and reported that they would “probably” start over at the same institution, item 14 ($M=3.16, SD=0.74$).

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?</td>
<td>2982</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?</td>
<td>2982</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction (0 – 100)</td>
<td>2982</td>
<td>72.13</td>
<td>23.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale ranges (1-4) for questions 13 and 14.*

Table 13 summarizes descriptive statistics for subscales: Student Engagement Factors 1-5, Academic Success 1-4, and Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Student Engagement Factors consisted of 6 – 12 items on a four through eight-point scale. Scores were calculated using the sum of the items of each subscale variable of the instrument. Comprised of 17 items on an eight-point scale, Academic Success scores were calculated by using the sum of
items 11, letters a though p and item 25. Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience scores was calculated using the sum of two items on a four-point scale.

Table 13 shows that when subscales are disaggregated, Academic Success 3: General Education reports a significantly higher mean score ($M=75.25$, $SD=22.05$). Similarly, Overall Satisfaction ($M=72.13$, $SD=23.56$) and Academic Success 1: Competence ($M=71.12$, $SD=22.48$) are closely aligned, while Academic Success 4: Grades reveals a lower mean score ($M=5.01$, $SD=1.79$) in regard to the overall satisfaction with the college experience.

Table 13

*Descriptive Statistics for Subscales*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 1: Academic Challenge</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>55.32</td>
<td>13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 2: Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>50.57</td>
<td>19.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 3: Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>43.29</td>
<td>21.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 4: Enriching Experiences</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>35.91</td>
<td>18.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Factor 5: Supportive Campus</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>63.27</td>
<td>19.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 1: Competence</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>71.12</td>
<td>22.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 2: Development</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>59.04</td>
<td>26.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 3: General Education</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>75.25</td>
<td>22.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Success 4: Grades</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>72.13</td>
<td>23.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question One**

Research question one explored the ability of the independent variables of student engagement factors (Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning; Faculty Interaction;
Supportive Campus; and Enriching Experiences) to predict the dependent variable of Overall College Satisfaction. A Pearson Correlation was first used to examine the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Correlation results revealed that all Student Engagement Factors are significantly related to Overall College Satisfaction at \( p < .0001 \). However, only the factor of Supportive Campus showed moderately strong relationship (\( r = .524 \)), while the remaining factors were weak. Table 14 presents the correlation coefficients of the student engagement subscales with Overall College Satisfaction.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Coefficients of Student Engagement Subscales with Overall College Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement 1: Academic Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement 2: Collaborative Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement 3: Faculty Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement 4: Enriching Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement 5: Supportive Campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Forward Multiple Regression was then conducted to determine which independent variables Academic Challenge; Collaborative Learning; Faculty Interaction; Supportive Campus; and Enriching Experiences were meaningful predictors of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Regression results indicate an overall model of three predictors (Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge) that significantly predict satisfaction with the college experience, \( R^2 = .284 \), \( R^2_{adj} = .283 \), \( F(3, 2902) = 383.50 \), \( p < .0001 \). Table 15 presents the regression coefficients for the model predicting satisfaction. Two independent variables, Collaborative Learning and Enriching Experiences were not included in the model as
significant predictors. Together, Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge explain 28% of the variance of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. On average, for each unit increase in Supportive Campus, Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience increases by .639 points holding Faculty Interaction and Academic Challenge constant. For each unit increase in Faculty Interaction, Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience decreases by .106 holding constant Supportive Campus and Academic Challenge. As with Supportive Campus, for each unit increase in Academic Challenge, Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience increases by .160 points holding Supportive Campus and Faculty Interaction constant.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Coefficients for Model Predicting Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Challenge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question Two

Research question two explored the ability of the independent variables of Academic Success (Competence, Development, General Education and Grades) to predict the dependent variable of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between each subscale for Academic Success and Overall Satisfaction. Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience was moderately positive correlated with Competence
and General Education. However, a weak positive correlation was revealed for Grades. All four were positively related with the dependent variable Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Therefore as Competence, Development, General Education, and Grades increase, so does the dependent variable Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Table 16 presents the correlation coefficients of the student engagement subscales with overall satisfaction.

Table 16

Correlation Coefficients of Academic Success with Overall Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Success</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Competence</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Development</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: General Education</td>
<td>.442</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Grades</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question Three

Research question three examined institutional type differences in regard to the overall satisfaction with the college experience among African American males where institutional type, public vs. private and historically black vs. predominantly white, served as the independent variables and Overall Satisfaction with College Experience served as the dependent variable. Descriptive statistics were calculated by groups, and two t-Tests of independent samples were conducted. Of the 2,985 respondents, 1,931 attended a public university and 1,054 were enrolled in private institutions. Additionally, 632 African American males were enrolled in an HBCU and 2,353 attended PWCU. Table 17 presents the Overall Satisfaction with the College
Experience of African American males enrolled in public and private institutions, as well as HBCUs and PWCUs.

Overall College Satisfaction scores were calculated by using the adjusted scores based on items 13 and 14 from NSSE. African American males enrolled in private institutions reported a significantly higher satisfaction mean score with their college experience \( (M=73.61) \) than those attending a public college or university \( (M=71.32) \), and therefore a significant difference was found between the two groups using a two-tailed \( t \)-test \( t(2056)=-2.49 \) \( p=0.013 \). Similarly, African American males attending PWCU’s also reported a higher mean score of satisfaction with their college experience \( (M=72.52) \) than those enrolled at an HBCU \( (M=70.68) \); however when comparing means, a significant difference was not found between the two groups; \( t(2983)=-1.75 \), \( p=0.08 \), two-tailed. Therefore, at PWCUs and HBCUs, African American males are not significantly different in how satisfied they are with their college experience.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>71.32</td>
<td>23.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>73.61</td>
<td>24.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBCU</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>70.68</td>
<td>22.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWCU</td>
<td>2353</td>
<td>72.52</td>
<td>23.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question Four

Research question four explored the ability of the independent variables of student engagement factors (Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Supportive Campus, and Enriching Experiences) and academic success to predict the dependent
variable of Overall College Satisfaction. A Forward Multiple Regression was used to examine which factors best predict Overall Satisfaction.

The Multiple Regression generated a six factor model (Supportive Campus, General Education, Grades, Faculty Interaction, Competence, and Collaborative Learning) that significantly predicts Overall Satisfaction with the college experience, $R^2 = .344$, $R^2_{adj} = .343$, $F(6, 2828) = 247.40$, $p < .0001$. The three independent variables of Academic Challenge, Enriching Experiences and Development were not included in the model. Supportive Campus was the first factor entered and contributes to the model most, accounting for 27% of the variance of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Both Faculty Interaction and Collaborative Learning have a negative regression coefficient. For each unit increase in Faculty Interaction and Collaborative Learning, the Overall College Satisfaction decreases by .092 and .047, respectively, holding all other variables constant. Supportive Campus, General Education, Grades, Faculty Interaction, Competence, and Collaborative Learning explain 34% of the variance of the Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. On average, for each unit increase in Supportive Campus, Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience increases by .494 points holding all other variables constant. Table 18 presents the regression coefficients for the model predicting satisfaction.
Table 18

Regression Coefficients for Model Predicting Overall Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>bivariate r</th>
<th>partial r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>16.630</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>21.49</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-4.09</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>-.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>.0220</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>-.043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

As summarized in Table 19, four research questions guided this study. For the first research question, results of the Forward Multiple Regression revealed three predictors, Supportive Campus (i.e., Quality of relationships with students, faculty and university staff; Institution providing the support to thrive socially and succeed academically), Faculty Interaction (i.e., Discussion of grades or assignments; Receiving prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance; Talking about career plans with faculty or advisor), and Academic Challenge (i.e., Hours spent during week preparing for class; Institutions emphasizing studying; Analyzing basic elements of an idea; and Synthesizing and organizing ideas); however, Supportive Campus contributed the most in predicting college satisfaction. The variables of Enriching Experiences (i.e., no plans to participate in a capstone course, independent study and learning community before graduating) and Collaborative Learning (i.e., class participation, working collaboratively with peers in and out of class, tutoring and involvement in community service projects) were not found to be significant.
In research question two, the results of the Pearson Correlation showed a moderately positive correlation between Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience and Academic Success (Competence and General Education). A weak positive correlation was revealed for Grades.

Analysis of the quantitative data using \( t \)-Tests of independent samples for research question three revealed statistically significant differences in Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience between African American males attending private institutions and those attending a public university. However, no significant differences were found for the Overall Satisfaction with their college experiences between those attending HBCU’s and PWCU’s.

Finally, results of the Forward Multiple Regression for research question four revealed that Supportive Campus, General Education, Grades, Faculty Interaction, Competence, and Collaborative Learning were significant predictors of the Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Academic Challenge, Enriching Experiences, and Development were not included in the model. As noted, Table 19 provides a summary of the study results.
Table 19

Results by Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What student engagement factors best predict African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?</td>
<td>Three variables significantly predicted Overall College Satisfaction; Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge. Supportive Campus was the strongest predictor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the relationship between academic success and African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience?</td>
<td>Competence, General Education and Grades showed positive correlations with Academic Success and Overall College Satisfaction. Grades showed the weakest correlation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does African American males’ satisfaction with their college experiences differ by institutional type?</td>
<td>African American males enrolled in private colleges reported a significantly higher mean score relative to their Overall College Satisfaction than those attending a public college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American males attending a PWCU reported a higher mean score reflective of their Overall College Satisfaction than those enrolled at an HBCU, however the difference was not significant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which student engagement and academic success factors best predict African American male satisfaction with their college experience?</td>
<td>Supportive Campus, General Education, Grades, Faculty Interaction, Competence, and Collaborative Learning significantly predict Overall College Satisfaction. Supportive Campus was the strongest predictor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter five provides a review of the study, a discussion of the results, and offers implications for practice with regard to the factors that best predict African American male academic success, engagement and satisfaction of their college experience. Also presented are conclusions and recommended directions for leadership, policy and research.

Review of the Study

The underrepresentation of the African American males in higher education is a national trend that continues to challenge educators, policymakers, and practitioners. Leaks in the educational pipeline and a lack of preparation continue to impact the African American male collegiate journey. As presented in the literature review, African American males may lack engagement activities throughout their educational career (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper, 2009b; Roach, 2001; Schmidt, 2008). Furthermore, literature confirms negative educational experiences influence African American males’ behavior, social engagement, academic performance, and college attainment (Harper, 2003; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Steele, 1997, 1999, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008c).

Research concludes that college student engagement is an integral part of the undergraduate experience where students devote a great deal of time and energy to academic and social activities (Astin, 1984, 1999; Kuh, 2003). Engaged college students are more likely to have meaningful interactions with their peers and faculty and are actively involved in academic and co-curricular activities that are tied to educational gains, critical thinking, active involvement, cognitive and intellectual development, satisfaction with the college experience and campus life adjustment (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Harper, 2009b; Harper, et al., 2004; Kuh et al, 1991; Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010).
Utilizing Astin’s theory of student involvement (1984), the purpose of this study focuses on African American male college students and examined student engagement factors that best predict their academic success and satisfaction with the college experience. The study sample was drawn from 3,000 first year and senior African American male college students who participated in the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) from over 769 colleges and universities, 21% of which were HBCUs and 78% were PWCUs. In addition, 65% of the African American male respondents attended public institutions while 35% of them attended a private college or university. Participants were asked to complete the forty-two item survey as well as respond to questions about their expected major(s) and/or minor, fraternal affiliation (if any), and if they were a student athlete. Additionally, participants were asked to provide responses to demographic information including gender, ethnicity, date of birth, current college classification, enrollment, living situation, and parents’ level of education. A total of 2,835 responses were completed and used in the data analysis. Using a four-point to eight-point response scale, NSSE is designed to measure results that capture aspects of the student campus life experience through five benchmark scales: Level of Academic Challenge (Academic Challenge), Active and Collaborative Learning (Collaborative Learning), Student-Faculty Interaction (Faculty Interaction), Enriching Educational Experiences (Enriching Experiences), and Supportive Campus Environment (Supportive Campus).

Four research questions guided this study. The first research question investigated the student engagement factors that best predict African American males’ overall satisfaction with their college experience. The results of research question one revealed that Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge significantly predicted an overall satisfaction with the college experience. The second research question explored the relationship between
Academic Success (Competence, Development, General Education, and Grades) and African American males’ overall satisfaction with their college experience. The results of research question two demonstrated a moderately positive correlation with Competence and General Education. The third research question examined African American males’ overall satisfaction with their college experiences with regard to the type of institution attended. Results of research question three revealed that African American male college students attending private colleges and universities had a greater overall satisfaction with their college experiences, as demonstrated in their mean scores, than those attending public colleges and universities; the differences were not statistically significant.

Lastly, the fourth research question investigated the Student Engagement and Academic Success factors that best predict African American males’ satisfaction with their college experience. The results of research question four indicated that Supportive Campus, General Education, Grades, Faculty Interaction, Competence, and Collaborative Learning were significant predictors of the Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. The significant findings of each research question will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

**Research Question One: Student Engagement Factors**

Question one explored the relationship between the dependent variable of Overall College Satisfaction and the student engagement factors of Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Supportive Campus, and Enriching Experiences. The multiple regression analysis generated a three-factor model. Of the five student engagement factors, the model found Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge to be statistically significant in predicting Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience with Supportive Campus and Academic Challenge engagement factors positively contributing to the model, while
Faculty Interaction negatively contributed. In other words, when controlling for all the student engagement factors in the model, increases in Supportive Campus and Academic Challenge increased the Overall Satisfaction with the college experience, however increases in interaction with faculty was negatively associated with the Overall Satisfaction with the college experience.

The model suggests the more interaction African American males had with faculty (i.e., talking with faculty in class, discussing academic performance, and working with faculty on research projects, etc.) the less it contributed to the overall satisfaction college experience. This finding is contrary to the tome of previous research on the benefits of faculty student interaction. According to Astin’s theory of student involvement (1984) academic related interactions with faculty enhance the collegiate experience and prior studies show that students who frequently engage with faculty academically are more satisfied with their college experience (Strayhorn & DeVita, 2010; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Tinto, 1993, 2000). More specifically, previous studies convey that for African American males, a well-established relationship with faculty and/or a strong support system on campus enhances college satisfaction (Strayhon & Terrell, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008b). Findings from this study challenge previous claims and provide the need to examine the variables further. The notion that this model asserts the more interaction African American male collegians have with faculty, the less satisfied they may be with their overall college experience raises more questions than it answers and will ultimately require more investigation. But for the purposes of this discussion, the following observations are offered.

The need or desire for faculty interaction may be less for African American males in this study due to their pre-collegiate preparation and activation of academic capital. To elaborate, it is possible the participants in this study entered the college environment with established pre-college experiences (e.g., academically prepared and support networks) enabling them to
navigate through college in a manner that successfully, diminished the need to regularly engage with faculty. Viewed from the theory of student engagement perspective, pre-college experiences have an impact on how prepared and successful students will be in college, as such, scholars (House, 1999; Kuh et al., 2006; Walker-Marshall & Hudson, 1999) posit that a student’s pre-college experiences, characteristics, abilities and personal attributes are significant predictors of satisfaction with the college experience. Thus, the African American males in this study could be high achieving students with access to an established external support network system. Harper (2012) upholds this theory by affirming high achieving African American male college students have support networks away from college (e.g., parents, family members, former teachers, etc.) reinforcing the value of college, social uplift and success. Overall, the researcher surmises that interaction with faculty is dependent on other factors that may be beyond the scope of this study and beyond just what the students bring to college.

As noted in the results, together, Supportive Campus, Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge explain 28% of the variance of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience, in which Supportive Campus accounts for much of the overall satisfaction with the college experience. The possibility exists that it may be due to an overlap in perceptions centered on faculty interactions and academic expectations, such as quality relationships with faculty, staff. For example, African American males noted that their institutions cultivate a sense of belonging and friendly and supportive relationships with various groups on campus. African American males may feel there is an institutional commitment to student groups, but not necessarily to them on an individual basis. In this respect they may not perceive that the interaction is quality time dedicated to them personally.
The results of this study may provide support to implementing structured programmatic initiatives, such as mentoring partnerships, where more personal attention is offered. Consider the response to the survey, in which African American males in this study reported that their institution emphasized the support needed to succeed academically and socially in college. When integrated, mentoring partnerships will enhance campus relationships, shape educational development, and increase college satisfaction. This observation corresponds with the notion that mentoring relationships are positively associated with higher satisfaction levels for African American men in college, which provide clues to effective strategies for improving their engagement, retention, and academic success (Strayhorn, 2008b). Within the frame of Astin’s theory of student involvement (1984), institutional practices and initiatives influence levels of engagement campus-wide (Pike & Kuh, 2005).

**Research Question Two: Academic Success**

Research question two explored the correlations of four independent subscales of Academic Success (Competence, Development, General Education and Grades) with the dependent variable, Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience at the participants’ current university. The academic subscales examined aspects of institutional experiences contributing to academic performance, rigor, learning, abilities and personal development competencies. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between each subscale for Academic Success and Overall Satisfaction. Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience showed a moderately positive correlation with Competence and General Education. However, a weak positive correlation was revealed for Grades. While the results showed all four subscales were positively correlated, the strengths were variable. Therefore as Competence, Development, General
Education, and Grades increase, so does the dependent variable Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience.

First, Competence and General Education were positively associated with the overall purpose of this study – examining student engagement and its predictability on academic success and college satisfaction for African American males. As such, the results from this study affirm other scholars’ (Astin, 1984; Harper, 2009; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Tinto, 1993) assertion that student engagement is positively linked to knowledge, skills, college satisfaction, and successful educational outcomes. Both Competence and General Education are measured on the NSSE survey. Competence is characterized as the acquiring of knowledge and skills, analyzing, solving “real world” problems and working effectively with others, all of which are correlated with the participants’ cognitive, intellectual and social development that underscore the significance of engagement and its influence on learning and development in college. Additionally, General Education is characterized by learning and academic ability; writing, thinking and speaking clearly and effectively and acquiring broad knowledge.

So the study results suggest that institutions in this study have implemented initiatives (e.g., leadership opportunities, mentoring partnerships, etc.) that promote student growth ensuring that knowledge and skills are acquired and development along with academic rigor are maintained to increase their overall satisfaction with the college experience.

Like Competence and General Education, Development and Grades are also measured with the NSSE survey. Development embodies personal development characteristics – understanding self and others, developing a code of values and ethics, spirituality, and contributing to the community. In regards to Grades, participants were asked to record their most recent grades at their institution, in which a “B” average was reported. The results of the
survey indicated that in a typical 7-day week, participants reported that they spent between 21-25 hours per week preparing for class. This would seem to be an area of worthy of investigation. The combination of 21 – 25 hours per week in class preparation and the weaker correlation with Grades may indicate a need to examine the study habit development African American males. A report by Marklein (2012) noted that students spend average of 16 hours per week studying and preparing for classes. The time reported by the African American males in the study would seemingly reflect a stronger correlation between grades and overall satisfaction. While Astin (1993) points to the importance of time spent on studying, he also points out that how a student studies is also pivotal. Further analysis may include examining how students are spending their class preparation time and the skills necessary to create more effective skills and habits. This finding supports Astin’s assertion that it is not only the quantity of physical and psychological energy, but the quality as well.

It has been well documented that college campuses provide learning environments that foster intellectual development and personal growth (Davis, 1995; Fleming, 1982, 1984; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006). The results of this study may question if African American males are lacking the study skills and habits necessary to maximize their study time. These findings would support the value of a socially and academic supportive environment where the development of effective study skills would be fostered.

While African American males attending HBCUs reported the acquisition of knowledge, critical skills and personal development that contributed to their college satisfaction, the weak Grade correlation indicates there is definite room for growth.

Similar to previous discussions, the results of this study provide support to implement institutional structured initiatives, such as study and skill development, which may lead to an
increased the correlation between Grades and overall satisfaction with the college experience. Such an added focus could serve to enhance the experience as African American males in the study already believed their institution contributed “quite a bit” to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in acquiring a broad education, work-related skills, and gaining speaking, thinking, and analytical skills. Campus initiatives focusing on integrating these skills will shape educational development and increase college satisfaction. This observation corresponds with the frame of Astin’s theory of student involvement (1984) noting that institutional practices and initiatives influence levels of engagement campus-wide (Pike & Kuh, 2005).

**Research Question Three: Institutional Type**

The purpose of research question three was to examine institutional type differences in regard to the overall satisfaction with the college experience among African American males. In this query, institutional type, public vs. private, and historically Black vs. predominantly White, served as the independent variables and Overall Satisfaction with College Experience served as the dependent variable. Evidence from this study concluded that African American males enrolled in private institutions reported a significantly higher mean score of their overall satisfaction with their college experience than those attending a public college or university, while no significance was found between attending a HBCU or PWCU.

The researcher believes a higher satisfaction with the private school experience may be attributed to a number of reasons. While Strayhorn and DeVita (2010) suggest institutional type alone seldom impacts college experience (e.g., knowledge, development, engagement, etc.), there may be other variables to consider. According to the National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report (Noel-Levitz, 2011), attending a first choice college institution is a powerful measure of college satisfaction, with 65% reporting they are satisfied with their collegiate
experience. Additionally, the Noel-Levitz Report noted that private schools have a perceptual edge, often garnering more attention for having the perception of higher academic standards and expectations, largely because of the higher tuition costs. These perceptions may also contribute to students finding the experience more satisfying than a public institution.

A final, but critical, thought relates to the “first-choice” concept as discussed by Noel-Levitz (2011). According to the study, students are more satisfied with their college experience if they are attending their “first choice” institution. This researcher posits that “first choice” selections may be made based on a private institutions’ offer of a “value brand” or selected focus that may appeal to a select or exclusive student base. Much like private or parochial secondary schools, students may choose a private institution over a public institution based on a shared value system that may be more likely to result in increased overall satisfaction and retention.

In the discussion of institutional type, this researcher was surprised to learn there was no statistical significance difference when comparing the overall satisfaction with the college experience of the African American males attending HBCUs and the African American collegians enrolled in PWCUs. In reference to the questions on evaluating the entire educational experience and returning to the same institution if starting over, African American males attending PWCUs and HBCUs are not significantly different in how satisfied they are with their college experience. This finding is not consistent with the body of research focusing on the experiences of African Americans enrolled in HBCUs. For instance, scholars (Allen, 1987; Bohr et al., 1995; Chen, Ingram & Davis, 2006; Fleming, 1982, 1984; Harper et. al., 2004; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Love, 1993; McClure, 2006; Nettles et al., 1986; Palmer et al., 2010; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002) have found that HBCU African American males are more satisfied with their
college experience than PWCU African American males because they are provided a more supportive and nurturing environment that encourages intellectual growth and development.

In light of the finding above, it is possible the African American male participants in this study, specifically those enrolled at PWCU's, have developed relationships with their peers of other racial and ethnic backgrounds and have adjusted academically and socially, thus, not possessing feelings of isolation, alienation, or unsupportiveness (Allen, 1987, 1992; Lewis, Oliver, & Burns, 2011; Palmer & Young, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). According to Lewis et al. (2011), many African American students are able to successfully adapt academically and socially, establish social relationships with peers of other races at PWCU's. Further, the last three decades have witnessed major changes in the choices available to African Americans. Thirty years ago, African American males may have been presented with fewer PWCU options and may have afforded more consideration to HBCU’s. Today, PWCU opportunities have increased and the reputation of HBCU’s have suffered for many reasons, including the fact that many quality African American male college applicants are directed toward PWCU’s (Gasman, 2012). Gasman noted that PWCU’s are often recommended over HBCU’s because students are led to believe that PWCU’s will increase their post-graduation employment options.

**Research Question Four: Student Engagement and Academic Success**

Research question four explored the student engagement factors serving as independent variables (Academic Challenge, Collaborative Learning, Faculty Interaction, Supportive Campus, and Enriching Experiences) and academic success (Competence, Development, General Education, and Grades) to predict the Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Forward multiple regression was used to examine which factors best predict Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. A six factor model was generated including Supportive Campus; General
Education; Grades; Faculty Interaction; Competence; and Collaborative Learning, all of which significantly predicted Overall College Satisfaction.

Supportive Campus was the first factor entered contributing to the model most, accounting for 27% of the variance of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience. Both Faculty Interaction and Collaborative Learning were negatively associated with Overall College Satisfaction. The entire model explained 34% of the variance in the model of Overall Satisfaction with the College Experience.

As in Research Question One, Faculty Interaction had a negative relationship to Overall College Satisfaction. Again, the less interaction African American males had with faculty (i.e., talking with faculty in class, discussing academic performance, and working with faculty on research projects) the more satisfied they were with their overall college experience. Collaborative Learning (i.e., working collaboratively with students, community involvement and tutoring), a factor that was not present in the model for Research Question One, was also negatively associated with Overall Satisfaction with College Experience. The less African American males reported collaborating with students in and out of the classroom, the more satisfied they were with their overall college experience. Reminiscent of Research Question One, this analyses conflicts with existing literature. According to research, being actively engaged with faculty, as well as encouraging academic and social collaborations with peers in-and out-of-class influences educational aspirations, academic success, college satisfaction, personal development, and persistence (Astin, 1993; Davis, 1995; Flower, 2004; Harper, 2009b; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Strayhorn, 2008b; Strayhon & Terrell, 2007; Tinto, 1987; Tracey & Seldacek, 1985).
As with the perspectives posited in Research Question One, (a) participants may enter the academy with precollege experiences and attributes or (b) participants may be high achievers with an established accessible supportive network. Another view as to why the participants’ interaction with faculty and engagement in collaborative learning activities with peers did not influence their satisfaction with the college experience could be due to the inability to form campus relationships. However, it is also possible students may believe that the relationships they do form are not the type or quality of relationships contributing to their overall satisfaction. Kimbrough and Harper (2006) did find more current generations of African American college males struggle to establish positive campus relationships and collaborative learning with other students, particularly males. Given this, perhaps the participants in this study depend on their established support networks away from college, which means they may not perceive campus relationships as contributing to their collegiate experience. The researcher further considers there remains the possibility of differences in perception and definitions of “quality relationships and collaborative learning.” Some African American males may not share the same concepts or definitions as assumed on the survey instrument.

The negative relationships generated in this model may again create more questions than answered. The lack of clear understanding in what is perceived as positive and negative faculty interaction and collaborative learning on the part of African American males suggests a need to more deeply examine what may or may not be considered a quality relationship for African American males. This may again lead to the consideration of programs such as university mentors who may be able to assist in creating more valued relationships. A great deal of research has demonstrated that student faculty interactions can enhance the African American male collegiate experience. The results of this study indicate the need to ensure initiatives are
well crafted, formulated and integrated based on theoretical perspectives as well as the needs of the student population.

**Recommendations for Leadership and Policy**

Student engagement is an essential practice in the retention and ultimate graduation of African American males. African American males have traditionally faced educational challenges both before college and during the college experience. African American males require access to secondary academic preparation in early schooling including a challenging high school curriculum (Lederman, 2006). Once in the higher education setting, the literature continues to point out that creating meaningful opportunities to engage males in the collegiate experience is key to increasing the probability of a satisfactory experience leading to retention and graduation. The results of this study may help institutions create best practices to positively impact the way institutions approach engagement of African American males throughout the educational pipeline. Specifically, k-12 educators, administrators, and student affairs practitioners might examine creative ways to promote a culture of engagement among African American males providing a link or bridge from one level to the next.

For those working in k-12 institutions, stimulating college aspirations early by way of pre-college programs and services can best help make the transition from high school to college. In regards to higher education, it may behoove college and universities to survey African American males to see what kinds of activities strongly appeal to them. Results of the survey may follow up with an institutional commitment enforcing programmatic initiatives that support in-and-out of class interaction between faculty and African American males. To enhance such interactions, universities may consider relocating faculty offices to locations African American male students may frequent (e.g., student union, recreation center, etc.).
To further demonstrate a commitment to eradicate African American male disengagement, institutions may consider requiring out of class interaction between faculty and African American male students as a prerequisite for tenure and promotion. Additionally, the results of this study may lead to investigating what is considered “meaningful” and “valued” faculty student interaction. An examination of these interactions may encourage faculty to go beyond their specified roles in the academy by becoming invested in the social and academic successes of their African American male students, which in turn will have positive effects on engagement, academic performance, satisfaction with the college experience, and matriculation (Astin, 1984, 1993, 1999; Harper, 2009b; Harper, 2004; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). In addition to student-faculty interactions, institutions may consider developing leadership programs to help cultivate students’ non-cognitive skills and foster cognitive development. For example, established at one of the largest flagship institutions, the Todd A. Bell Resource Center on the African American Male (Bell Center) at The Ohio State University integrates a formal structure of outreach, engagement, collaboration and advocacy in the development of its Leadership Institute for African American males. As shown in Figure 2, African American males develop core competencies that aid in the overall effectiveness of engagement, retention, and graduation at the university.

The Leadership Institute core competencies encompass the following at the Bell Resource Center:

- Communication. Open-ended, blog, think-piece, speech, presentation, and panel discussion.
- Service. Community service advocacy for specific populations, organizations, or initiatives.
• Involvement. Active positions within organizations or campus activities.

• Continuous development. Involvement in relevant professional development opportunities.

• Planning/Management. Develop a plan for a new initiative, create a strategy for collaboration between two or more organizations, or develop a self-improvement plan.

As a result of the Leadership Institute, as well as other program initiatives in place, the Bell Center reports that African American male first year retention rates increased from 79% to 91% from 2003 to 2008, respectively (Suddeth & Cornute, 2010).

Bell Center Leadership Institute Core Competencies

Figure 2. Leadership Institute Core Competencies. From Suddeth, T. & Cornute, T. (2010). *Building African American male leadership in higher education*. ACPA Annual Conference, Boston: MA.
According to Harper and Harris (2012), legislators have not been at the forefront of dialogues and efforts focused on improving college outcomes and degree attainment of African American males. Given the “pervasiveness of this problem,” funding, collaboration, advocacy and action among national leaders, state legislators, and other governing bodies are crucial steps in moving forward the reach as many African American men as possible (Harper & Harris, 2012, p. 7). Moreover, policymakers should take the lead in in holding institutions accountable for effort and effectiveness of improving the educational pipeline and disengagement of African American men in college (Harper, 2006).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The research results presented in this study indicate possible directions for further study. Further studies could focus on existing initiatives focusing on engagement, academic success and campus life satisfaction, as well as the pre-college experiences, characteristics, abilities and personal attributes African American male collegians bring with them to the college environment. It would be beneficial to understand more about how institutional policies and practices could foster initiatives that meet the needs of African American male college students as it relates to their engagement, academic success and college satisfaction. Perhaps, conducting qualitative analyses on a small and more personal scale may be useful in providing a detailed perspective on the role engagement, academic success, satisfaction with the college experience have in fostering positive outcomes at HBCUs and PWCUs.

Finally, future research could further expand the discernment of disengagement of African Americans in higher education. While this study provides insights on issues related to African American male retention, future studies might also investigate the effects of certain policy initiatives, campus services, and institutional constraints and realities on African
American male disengagement and retention. Thus, based on this study, below is a list of potential research questions that warrant further attention in future research:

1. What services, programs, or policies at HBCUs and PWCUs increase African American male enrollment, retention and matriculation?

2. How do university administrators, faculty and student affairs professionals perceive their role in reducing attrition rates on campus for African American males?

3. How can existing organizational cultures and institutional characteristics at colleges and universities be investigated, and to the extent necessary, modified to increase enrollment, retention and engagement of African American males on campus?

4. How should institutional researchers and/or educational researchers construct a data collection system to monitor and develop African American male on campus that ultimately leads to enhanced retention rates?

5. How can pre-college experiences highlight the importance and advantages of building early relationships with higher education to provide a more seamless transition from one level to the next?

**Conclusion**

Students engagement focuses on the in out-of-class and in-class experiences, such as activities on campus, interactions with faculty, and involvement in the classroom (Astin, 1984, 1993, 1999) and is defined as the time and energy devoted to educationally sound activities and policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities (Kuh, 2003). Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine institutional characteristics as well as engagement factors that best predict African American male academic success and overall satisfaction with their college experiences. Unarguably, institutional mechanisms that promote
support and resources must be devoted to reversing the plight of the African American male
college students, by perhaps increasing their satisfaction (Harper, 2006). Institutions must be
committed to take the lead in designing activities and programs that reflect the African American
experience; promoting institutional connectedness, academic and social integration, and college
satisfaction. Although not a specific focus of this study, African American male college
students must also take responsibility for their college experience and devote time to academic
performance, achievement, and forming relationships with campus constituents (i.e., faculty and
peers) to increase college satisfaction.

Regardless of the pre-college experiences African American males may or may not bring
with them or type of institution in which they enroll, whether HBCU, PWCU, public or private,
colleges and universities must take active steps to incorporate academic and co-curricular
initiatives, services and policies in the educational landscape and culture of the institution that
will enhance the college experience and ensure academic success, retention and matriculation of
African American males.
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Sterling: Stylus.


Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research
Data Sharing Agreement

This Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research Data Sharing Agreement ("Agreement") defines the parameters for data sharing from the National Survey of Student Engagement ("NSSE") between the Research Institution and its Authorized Researchers named below and the Trustees of Indiana University on behalf of the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research ("IUCPR"). The terms below are intended to reflect and comply with the existing agreements between NSSE and the institutions that participate in the survey program. Under these participation agreements, NSSE may:

"...make data, in which individual institutions or students cannot be identified, available to researchers interested in studying the undergraduate experience... NSSE results specific to each institution and identified as such will not be made public except by mutual agreement between NSSE and the institution."

RESEARCHERS

The following researchers ("Authorized Researchers") of Bowling Green State University ("Research Institution") may make use of NSSE data pursuant to the terms of this Agreement:

Toycece Hague-Palmer  Bowling Green State University
Dr. Judy Jackson May  Bowling Green State University

DATA DESCRIPTION

Under this Agreement, IUCPR will provide the researchers a data file delimited in the following ways ("NSSE Data File"):

- **Data Source:** NSSE 2008

- **Variables:** All survey items and some institutional characteristics (percentage of overall female/male students, Carnegie Classification, control, and institutional size). In addition, some institutional characteristics provided by Toycece Hague-Palmer will be merged in with the NSSE data file (percentage of African American males, percentage of African American females, whether the schools is a Historically Black College or University or a Predominately White College or University). All institutional characteristics will each be in ranges/categories that include at least 5 institutions. All student and institution identifying information will be removed.
- **Cases:** A random sample from all African American males attending U.S. institutions of 1,500 first-year and 1,500 senior students.

**PARAMETERS FOR DATA SHARING:**

1. IUCPR will provide a single copy of the NSSE Data File solely for non-commercial research by the Authorized Researchers.

2. The NSSE Data File will exclude the Unit ID code from Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS), any other unique school or student identifiers, and any variables that IUCPR determines reasonably may permit the identification of a participating school or student.

3. The Authorized Researchers will not make any attempt, privately or publicly, to associate elements of the NSSE Data File with the individual institutions or individual students participating in the NSSE, nor will they share the data with anyone else who might do so.

4. In all publications or presentations of data obtained through this agreement, the Authorized Researchers agree to include the following citation: “NSSE data were used with permission from The Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.”

5. The Authorized Researchers agree to provide to IUCPR a copy of all reports, presentations, analyses, or other materials in which the data given under this Agreement are presented, discussed, or analyzed.

6. The data should be encrypted when not in use by the above researcher and should be destroyed once this particular research project (dissertation) has been completed. If the researcher needs the data for any longer period than that which is necessary for completing the dissertation, the researcher is required to ask for an extension. Using the data for other purposes besides completing the designated project (dissertation) must be approved by the Director for the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University at Bloomington.

7. The IUCPR of Indiana University may, by written notification to the Authorized Researchers and the Research Institution, terminate this Agreement if it determines, in its sole discretion, that either the Authorized Researchers or the Research Institution have breached the terms of this Agreement. In the event that this Agreement is terminated, the Authorized Researchers and Research Institution shall return the originals and all copies of the NSSE Data File to the IUCPR, and securely destroy all NSSE Data File elements contained in any analyses or other materials created or maintained by Authorized Researchers, within ten (10) days of the receipt of the termination notice.

8. IU will not be liable to the Research Institution for any direct, consequential, or other damages, related to the use of the NSSE Data File or any other information delivered by
Indiana University or IUCPR in accordance with this Agreement. The Research Institution shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless The Trustees of Indiana University, their officers, employees, and agents, with respect to any and all claims, causes of action, losses, and liabilities, of any kind whatsoever, arising directly or indirectly from the Authorized Researchers' use of the NSSE Data File.

9. FEES

In exchange for access to and use of the NSSE Data File, Toyonna Hagan-Palmer agrees to pay Indiana University the sum of $575, by check upon execution of this Agreement.

SIGNATURES

The undersigned hereby consent to the terms of this Agreement and confirm that they have all necessary authority to enter into this Agreement.

For The Trustees of Indiana University:

Amy O'Hair, Contract Officer

Date: 4/25/12

Office of the VP for Research Administration
Indiana University

Alexander C. McCormick
Director,
National Survey of Student Engagement

Date: 4/26/2012

For the Research Institution:

Dr. Michael C. O'Gara
Vice President
for Research & Economic Development
Division of Research & Economic Development
Bowling Green State University

Date: 4/11/12
Acknowledgment of Authorized Researchers:

Toycee Hague-Palmer
Doctoral Student
Bowling Green State University

Date: 4/18/12

Dr. Judy Jackson May
Dissertation Advisor
Bowling Green State University

Date: April 2, 2012
Write in your year of birth: 19

Are you a student-athlete on a team sponsored by your institution’s athletics department?

Yes  ☐  No  ☐  (Go to question 25.)

On what team(s) are you an athlete (e.g., football, swimming)? Please answer below:

What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?

A  ☐  A-  ☐  B+  ☐  B  ☐  C+  ☐  C  ☐  B-  ☐  C+ or lower  ☐  (Go to question 26.)

Which of the following best describes where you are living now while attending college?

Dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity/sorority house)  ☐

Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance of the institution  ☐

Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within driving distance of the institution  ☐

Fraternity or sorority house  ☐

I prefer not to respond  ☐  (Go to question 26.)

What is your current classification in college?

Freshman/first-year  ☐  Sophomore  ☐  Junior  ☐  Senior  ☐  Unclassified  ☐  (Go to question 27.)

Did you begin college at your current institution or elsewhere?

Started here  ☐  Started elsewhere  ☐  (Go to question 20.)

Since graduating from high school, which of the following types of schools have you attended other than the one you are attending now? (Mark all that apply.)

Vocational or technical school  ☐

Community or junior college  ☐

4-year college other than this one  ☐

None  ☐

Other  ☐

Thinking about this current academic term, how would you characterize your enrollment?

Full-time  ☐  Less than full-time  ☐

Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?

Yes  ☐  No  ☐

THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR RESPONSES!

After completing the survey, please put it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and deposit it in any U.S. Postal Service mailbox. Questions or comments? Contact the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University, 1900 East Tenth Street, Bloomington IN 47406-7512 or nsse@indiana.edu or www.nsse.iub.edu. Copyright © 2007 Indiana University.
During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?

a. Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1-4</th>
<th>5-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>More than 20</th>
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b. Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment

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<th>5-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
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c. Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more

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d. Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages

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<th>1-4</th>
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e. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages

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<th>5-10</th>
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In a typical week, how many homework problem sets do you complete?

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<th>None</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>More than 6</th>
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Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.

Very little 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?

a. Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater, or other performance

<table>
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<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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b. Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities

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<th>Often</th>
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<th>Never</th>
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c. Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)

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<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue

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<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective

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<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept

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<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
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Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?

a. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment

b. Community service or volunteer work

c. Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together

d. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements

e. Foreign language coursework

f. Study abroad

g. Independent study or self-designed major

h. Cumulating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)

i. Foreign language coursework

j. Study abroad

k. Independent study or self-designed major

l. Cumulating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)

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To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

a. Acquiring a broad general education

b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills

c. Writing clearly and effectively

d. Speaking clearly and effectively

e. Thinking critically and analytically

f. Using computing and information technology

g. Working effectively with others

h. Developing a personal code of values and ethics

i. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality

j. Understanding yourself

k. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds

l. Solving complex real-world problems

m. Developing a personal code of values and ethics

n. Contributing to the welfare of your community

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

- Very much
- Quite a bit
- Some
- Very little

About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)

b. Working for pay on campus
c. Working for pay off campus
d. Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)
e. Exercising or participating in physical fitness activities

f. Attending campus events and activities (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)
g. Taking care of children, spouse, etc.
h. Taking care of elderly parents

i. Experiencing a difficult personal crisis

j. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work

t. Dating, socializing, entertaining family and friends

u. Spending time with your family

v. Spending time with your significant other

w. Spending time with friends

x. Fixing up your living quarters

y. Spending time playing video games

z. Violence and family conflict

To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following?

a. Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work

b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically

c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds

d. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
e. Providing the support you need to thrive socially

f. Attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.)
g. Using computers in academic work

Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?

Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Good 6 7 Fair 8 9 Poor 10 11

How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Good 6 7 Fair 8 9 Poor 10 11

If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

Definitely yes 1 2 3 4 5 Probably yes 6 7 Probably no 8 9 Definitely no 10 11
To what extent has your experience at this school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?

- Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
- Community service or volunteer work
- Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together
- Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements
- Take courses outside of course or program requirements
- Foreign language coursework
- Study abroad
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Culinaring senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)
- Mark the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your institution.

Relationships with other students

Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging
- Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work.
- Mark the box that best represents the extent to which the institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?

How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?
Are you a student-athlete on a team sponsored by your institution’s athletics department?

Yes ☐ No ☐

On what team(s) are you an athlete (e.g., football, swimming)? Please answer below:

What have most of your grades been up to now at this institution?

A ☐ B+ ☐ C+ ☐

A- ☐ B ☐ C ☐

B- ☐ C- or lower ☐

Which of the following best describes where you are living now while attending college?

Dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity/sorority house) ☐

Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance of the institution ☐

Residence (house, apartment, etc.) within driving distance of the institution ☐

Fraternity or sorority house ☐

What is the highest level of education that your parent(s) completed? (Mark one box per column.)

Father ☐

Mother ☐

- Did not finish high school ☐

- Graduated from high school ☐

- Attended college but did not complete degree ☐

- Completed an associate’s degree (A.A., A.S., etc.) ☐

- Completed a bachelor’s degree (B.A., B.S., etc.) ☐

- Completed a master’s degree (M.A., M.S., etc.) ☐

- Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.) ☐

Please print your major(s) or your expected major(s).

a. Primary major (Print only one.): ☐

b. If applicable, second major (not minor, concentration, etc.): ☐

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? Mark your answers in the boxes. Examples: or ☐

a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions ☐

b. Made a class presentation ☐

c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in ☐

d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources ☐

e. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments ☐

f. Came to class without completing readings or assignments ☐

g. Worked with other students on projects during class ☐

h. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments ☐

i. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions ☐

j. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary) ☐

k. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course ☐

l. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment ☐

m. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor ☐

n. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor ☐

o. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor ☐

p. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class ☐

q. Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance ☐

During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?

a. Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form ☐

b. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components ☐

c. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships ☐

d. Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions ☐

e. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations ☐