An Investigation of How Career-Related Influences Shape Career-Related Decisions

and Behaviors of Black Male Collegians

Dissertation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the process through which Black male

collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what actors,

factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g., major

choice, out-of-class involvement) that influence their career path/choice?

The main research questions that this study addressed:

1. What do Black male collegians report as important influences on their intended

   career choice?

2. How do these important influences shape Black male collegians' career-related

   decisions in college?

Black male collegians at three public universities in a Midwestern state

participated in this study.   Information was collected through a demographic form and a

semi-structured interview. Grounded theory methods were used to guide data collection

and analysis.   Trustworthiness of the data collected was ensured through multiple

methods of data collection, member checking, and use of a research partner to limit

potential bias as a result of my experiences and perspectives that relate to this study.

Findings from this study suggest that major influences of Black male collegians

on their career choice include family, peers, role models, and career-related activities

from early childhood through college. These influences had a major impact on how

students approached decisions about their academic major and career choices during their

time in college. Students that reported a high level of pre-collegiate career-related experiences, in contrast to their peers, were less likely to change their academic major, provided more specific details about the type of career they desire and plan to obtain it. These students were also more involved in career-related activities in college (ex: internships, research and student organization related career choice). In addition, students with a low level of pre-collegiate career-related experiences were able to compensate for their lack of career exploration through involvement in extracurricular activities in college related to vocational development. Last, Black male collegians reported that involvement in career-related extracurricular activities either provided insight into new career options or validated current career goals.

This study illustrates how instrumental pre-collegiate career-related experiences are in the career choice decisions of Black male collegians. Students in this study that had career-related experiences throughout their pre-collegiate years had a higher level of career decision-making self-efficacy in college.   This finding demonstrates the connectedness between pre-collegiate and higher educational experiences. Further research on career-related experiences of Black male collegians is needed to inform effective practices throughout the spectrum of education.

Dedication

To my wife who took care of home, so that I could complete this journey. I love you dearly. It is your turn now.

To my mother who gave me and so much more that I can write in this entire document. Thank you for believing in me and giving me the best chance to success in life.

To my dad, my educational role model, my love of reading came from you. Thank you for love and affection that most of my friends never got from their father.

To my brother, who taught me so much about life outside the normal confines of my daily life. Thank you for showing me how to think for myself

To Ms. Curry, my second mother, who have me a second chance at life. I am so glad that I listened to you and moved to Columbus

Acknowledgements

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." – John Donne

The above quote best describes this journey to complete my doctoral journey. I am blessed to have so many people in my life who have supported me in achieving this goal. Without the support of numerous people that I will mention, completing the requirements to earn this degree would not have been possible.

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even stronger recently; I look forward to spending more time with my brother. I love you Miko.

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Deirdre, my friend, there is not enough space to share what you mean to me as a person. I am so grateful for our relationship. You have consistently supported and encouraged me especially when I did not feel like being supported or encouraged. Thank

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Vita

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Publications

Oaks, D., Duckett, K., **Suddeth, T.,** & Kennedy-Phillips, L. (2013). Leadership Development and the African American Male College Student Experience. *Journal of College and Character*, *14*(4), 331-340.

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Education Policy and Leadership

Program: Higher Education & Student Affairs

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I entered the career fair at my university's student center with my portfolio that

held several copies of my resume. The career fair was two weeks before graduation. I

distributed my resume to each recruiter and engaged in conversation about possible

employment opportunities. I became more discouraged with each conversation about my

prospects for employment. I did not have the prior experience or the preferred academic

background that recruiters were seeking from graduating seniors in attendance. I exited

the career fair, sat down, and looked at one of my printed resumes. I had student

leadership experience, graduated cum laude, and had completed my bachelor's degree in

four and half years. But I had only one internship, which was during my senior year. I

did not have substantive research experience or any other professional or career

development activities listed on my resume. My work experience included work-study

positions on campus during the academic year and manual labor jobs in the summer. I

left the career fair feeling defeated. I had not adequately prepared myself to transition

into the professional workforce.

My experience at the career fair influenced my decision to study the career-related

experiences of Black male collegians.   Specifically, I want to understand the process

through which Black male collegians make decisions about their intended

career choice. That is, what actors, factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g., major choice, out-of-class involvement).

People with only a high school degree or equivalent have access to fewer employment opportunities are more likely to be unemployed, and earn less money than college graduates or those with some college experience (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010; Carnevale, Jayasundera, & Cheah, 2012; Lockard & Wolf, 2012). Employment projections from 2010 to 2020 predict that occupations that require a master's degree will have the fastest rate of growth at 21.7%, and jobs that require some college education will grow faster than the average rate of all occupations (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Jobs that require only a high school diploma or equivalent will increase at a much slower rate of just 12.7% (Lockard & Wolf, 2012).

People with only a high school degree have a higher unemployment than people with a college degree and/or people with some college education. During the economic recession of 2008, people with only a high school education were three times more likely to lose their jobs compared to those with at least some college education; and employment actually increased for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree (Engemann & Wall, 2010). In 2009, the unemployment rate for high school graduates between the ages of 20 to 24 was twice as high as it was for college graduates. In 2010, there was a 10 percent gap in employment rates between males with a four-year college degree and their high school counterparts.

In addition people with a college degree or some college education have higher incomes than their peers who only completed high school. Employment projections for

the current decade estimate that occupations that require a bachelor's, masters, professional, or doctoral degree will have a median salary of $60,000, while the median salary for positions that require only a high school diploma is $34,000 (Lockard & Wolf, 2012). A report produced by the College Board (2010) states that bachelor degree recipients had median earnings in 2008 that were $21,900 higher than high school graduates. Bachelor's degree recipients based on current calculations and will earn 66% more in lifetime earnings.

The positive impact that higher education can have on quality of life has led to an increase in enrollment at colleges and universities (Baum et al., 2010). College enrollment for African American males has steadily increased over the recent decade (IPEDS, 2011). Currently, Black males who are 18 years and older comprise 5% of the population of college students which is representative of this group's overall population in the United States (IPUMS, 2010). From 1980 to 1990 the Black male enrollment in college increased 31% (484,198 to 635,345) (IPEDS, 2011). The enrollment of Black males in college from 2001 to 2011 tripled in percentage, an increase of 108.5% (693,044 in 2001 to 1,445,194 in 2011) compared to the overall enrollment of all students in the United States, which only increased by 12% (Toldson & Lewis, 2012).

However, college enrollment and graduation does not guarantee a smooth transition to employment in the labor market overall. Several news articles call attention to dismal conditions of the current labor market for new college graduates regardless of race, gender and other. A New York Times article (2012) stated that the unemployment rate for college graduates age 24 and younger in 2012 is 9.4%, which was the highest

recorded rate of unemployment since 1985. A separate article in the Chicago Sun-Times (2012) reported that almost 40% of recent baccalaureate graduates from 2006 to 2011 were either in graduate school, working part-time or unemployed. A report from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) stated that there would only be a 2 percent increase in the hiring of college graduates in 2013 compared to 2012 (Koba, 2013). An earlier forecast had predicted a 13 percent increase. One of the major reasons for later forecast of a smaller increase in hiring were employers' perception that college graduates were not ready for the transition to full-time professional employment (Koba, 2013; Moltz, 2009; Rose, 2010; Silverman, 2013).

Black male graduates are confronted with additional barriers to acquiring employment.   In 2012, the unemployment rate of Black male college graduates 25 and older was 8.8%, which was twice the unemployment rate of White male college graduates at 4.4% (Burgess, 2012). Another New York Times article reported that many Black male college graduates lack social capital in the form of relationships with people in positions of power that can provide access to prestigious employment opportunities not publicly posted (Luo, 2009). Other challenges include perceptions that people have of "ethnic sounding" male names like Jamal or Tyrone. Black men with non-traditional names receive 50% fewer responses for interviews compared to their peers who have traditional first names (Luo, 2009). Some Black males report using either a middle name or altered version of their first name to mask their identity hoping that it will increase their chances to get an interview. To gain employment, African American men also have removed civic organizations, fraternities, and other group memberships from their resume

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that would identify them as Black and/or interested in social justice issues for people of color.

Another major challenge that Black males experience in their job search and career advancement are experiences with racial microagressions.   Racial microagressions are subtle insults that directed towards people of color (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000a). Black males in a study that also included Black females viewed racial microagressions directed at them as a sign that they would not be considered for a job offer (Baer, 2011; Hardin, 2009; Luo, 2009).

In spite of these obstacles many Black males have successfully entered the job market in their desired career field. The development of a productive, satisfying career begins in with pre-collegiate experiences (Bethell, 2012; Gushue et al., 2006; Lease, 2006; Parmer, 1993; Savickas, 2012). Self-efficacy, internal locus of control, and social capital can facilitate professional success (Usinger, 2010; Luzzo, & Ward, 1995; Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007; Taylor & Popma, 1990). Therefore, it is imperative to conduct more research on the career-related experiences of Black males to inform educators, family, and community professionals of what is needed to improve the vocational experiences of this population in pre-collegiate and higher education settings. There are studies on career development experiences of Black students in secondary or higher education (Falconer & Hays, 2006; Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, & Clarke, 2006; Hendricks, 1994; C. C. Jackson & Neville, 1998; M. A. Jackson, Kacanski, Rust, & Beck, 2006; M. M. King & Multon, 1996; Lease, 2006a; Parmer, 1993). But, more studies are needed that focus on life-span career development of Black males from secondary and higher education.

Research on the experiences of Black male collegians in higher education has not focused much on their career-related experiences.   Scholarship has addressed Black male collegians' experiences with racial discrimination, isolation, and lack of academic support at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (Allen, 1992; Allen, 1985; Fleming, 1985; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000b). The lack of involvement in student organizations and other activities that support social integration has also been documented in research (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2009; Kimbrough & Harper, 2006).   Also, recent scholarship has called attention to challenges faced by Black male collegians at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) regarding graduation rates, and lower academic rigor and extracurricular involvement compared to their Black female collegians (Harper et al., 2004; Kimbrough & Harper, 2006; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011).

Several studies have highlighted factors that support Black male collegians' success generally. First, scholarship has described common characteristics of high achieving Black males, which include peer and familial support, proactive use of campus resources, involvement in leadership activities, and the development of relationships with faculty (Bonner, 2001; Fries-Britt, 1997; Harper, 2005). Second, other studies acknowledge the significance of grit and/or self-efficacy to strengthen resolve to overcome academic or social-related obstacles (Moore III, Madison-Colmore, & Smith, 2003; Strayhorn, 2013b). Last is involvement in extra-curricular activities that increase social capital, commitment, and overall satisfaction with college (Sutton & Terrell, 1997;

Harper & Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2010).

There are only a few studies that address the career-related experiences of Black collegians, and more specifically, Black males. Recent scholarship explained how Black collegians used spirituality as a source of resistance to attempts by students, faculty and staff to discourage their pursuit of career goals (Constantine et al., 2006). In another study, it was concluded that a positive relationship existed between the internalization of a healthy Black identity and confidence in achieving career goals (C. C. Jackson & Neville, 1998). Parks-Yancy (2012), in her study of career-related experiences of first generation Black collegians from low-income backgrounds, determined that students gain social capital through interaction with higher education and community professionals that exposed them to employment opportunities with higher salaries and more opportunities for advancement and information about graduate school.

There are numerous gaps in the empirical literature on the career development of Black students in college. Most studies do not disaggregate the experiences by gender. Current research on Black male collegians (Chung, Baskin, & Case, 1999; Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010) does not consider within-group differences even though scholars suggested it two decades ago (Parham & Austin, 1994). Career theories are criticized for their lack of fit with the experiences and history of Black people in America, but recent theories like career construction theory provide a suitable framework that acknowledges the impact of race and racism on career development (Savickas, 2012). Parham (1994) recommended that "rather than strictly devising new theories of career development for African Americans, the contributions, shortcomings, and

limitations inherent in existing theories must be recognized and adjusted to explain the experiences of African Americans" (p. 144). But, current research on the career-related experiences of Black students in high school and college has not included career theory within its framework (Falconer & Hays, 2006; Hendricks, 1994; C. C. Jackson & Neville, 1998; Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010). Also, most studies on the career development experiences of Black males or Black students overall is segmented in that it focuses solely on pre-collegiate (Gushue et al., 2006; M. A. Jackson et al., 2006; King & Multon, 1996; Lease, 2006; Parmer, 1993) or higher education experience (Chung, Loeb, & Gonzo, 1996; Hendricks, 1994; C. C. Jackson & Neville, 1998; Falconer & Hays, 2006; Owens et al., 2010) instead of examining the connection between both academic environments.

Intersectionality is an emerging discipline and analytical frame that examines "experiences of individuals and groups that occupy multiple social locations are powerfully shaped by interlocking systems of oppression and privilege" (Strayhorn, 2013a, p. 9). Black male collegians are not Black and male they are Black males, meaning that one identity cannot be separated from the other. So, there are a set of obstacles, negative perceptions, and other challenges uniquely experienced by Black males. A student that identifies as a gay Black male collegian may have similar experiences concerning racism, but may also face hostility from heterosexual Black male students. This study used an intersectional approach to examining the factors that influence career-related decisions through consideration of demographic and other

background characteristics of the Black males in the study.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the process through which Black male collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what actors, factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g., major choice, out-of-class involvement) that influence their career path/choice? Black male students at three public universities in a Midwestern state were sampled for this study. Information was collected through a demographic questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

Research Questions

The main research questions that this study addressed:

1. What do Black male collegians report as important influences on their intended career choice?

2. How do these important influences shape Black male collegians' career-related decisions in college?

Definitions

The following terms listed below will be used throughout this study. They are defined here to offer clarification and guidance for their use as it relates to this study.

The following definitions apply to this study:

- *Black or African American*: I used these terms interchangeably to refer to individuals of African descent, including Africans, West Indians, and others.

- *Career maturity* refers to an individual's level of engagement in career development experiences compared to the optimal level of engagement that a person in the same age range should have according to career theories to be able to make realistic and mature career choices (Savickas, 2002).

- *Possible selves* are an individual's depictions of his/her future selves marked by specific aspirations and fears (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Significance of Study

In this section, I addressed the significance of this study for practitioners in the field of education, scholars who are interested in research on the career-related experiences of Black male collegians and for testing and further development of career theories. Increased connectedness between each of these areas should produce effective results in how scholarship is produced, theory is developed and tested, and best practices are created. Detailed information about each of the aforementioned areas is provide in the following sections.

Significance for Practice

Research on experiences that influence career-related decisions of Black male collegians can benefit teachers, counselors, administrators in secondary and higher education settings, higher education practitioners who work directly with students, and parents and relatives that support the career success of Black males in the family. Middle and high school teachers and administrators can use the results of this study for formal and informal interventions with Black males in their classroom to encourage career

exploration. Black males who participate in interactions and programs geared towards their career development can lead to higher levels of academic and social engagement in high school and college.

Higher education practitioners can benefit from finding of this study. Instead of viewing Black males as a monolithic population, career counselors and academic advisors can use the results of this study to customize their services according to their specific background and experiences (Parham & Austin, 1994; Harper & Nichols, 2008; Strayhorn, 2009). The increased quality of programming and interactions with staff can provide students with more awareness and engagement with career services and use of resources that go beyond resume development and mock interviews (Carter, Scales, Juby, Collins, & Wan, 2003). For instance, heightened awareness of factors that influence career decision-making can decrease the amount of time deciding on a major and career, which can lower the time to degree completion rate.

Last, this study can provide parents and relatives with information on how they contribute to the career development of Black males in their family. Awareness of familial influence on career identity, aspiration, and possible selves can guide family members to provide young Black males in their family with substantive career-related experiences (Cheatham, 1990; Chung et al., 1996; Chung et al., 1999; N. J. King & Madsen, 2007). There are background factors like the environment of schools and neighborhoods that sometimes cannot be controlled or influenced by parents and other relatives. But the home environment and the career related-activities that parents, guardians, and or other family members can provide is under their control. Support from

family, friends, and members of the community can strengthen the career identity and aspirational possible selves of young Black males (M. A. Jackson et al., 2006).

Significance for Research

The current study had significance for future research concerning career development of diverse populations. Career development has mainly consisted of studies that have focused on the experiences of White people (June & Pringle, 1977; Cheatham, 1990; Parham & Austin, 1994). Some areas of future research that should be considered include 1) examining the career development and decision-making process of Black males in graduate and professional school; 2) a longitudinal study with multiple points of data collection throughout Black male collegians' undergraduate experience related to their career choices and behavior; and 3) career-related experiences of other male students of color especially at the intersection with other identities that include sexuality or disabilities.

The population of the United States will continue to become more diverse with each passing decade. People of color will be needed to replace a massive aging workforce that will eventually exit the workforce. On January 1, 2011 the oldest members of the baby boomer generation turned 65 (Cohn & Taylor, 2010). Regardless of the postponement of retirement for a significant percentage of this group to compensate for losses in the last financial recession, baby boomers will retire in mass numbers over the next two decades (Cohn & Taylor, 2010).   It is imperative that Black male collegians successfully navigate through the professional labor market.   Empirical research is needed to inform policy and practice that will advance this group's overall career

development and successful matriculation into the professional labor market.

The current study sought to encourage the production of more research that connects the career-related experiences of Black males from secondary education to higher education. Scholars have suggested the need for more studies that examine phenomena throughout the educational pipeline (Etwell, Jones & Kelly, 2003). Most research focuses solely on either secondary or higher education. The development of stronger partnerships between these two educational settings can create more effective programs and strategies that enhance the career development experiences of Black male students as they enter college and throughout their undergraduate career.

Significance for Theory

A goal of the study was to expand the theory of career construction, which has not been used in many research studies. More recent career theories like career construction theory, happenstance, and social cognitive career theory account for the unique experiences of diverse populations (Lent, Brown, Hackett, & Brown, 2002; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999; Savickas, Lent, & Lent, 2004; Krumboltz, 2009; Savickas, 2012). More research is needed to test and extend these contemporary career theories as it relates to the experiences of diverse populations (Parham & Austin, 1994).

Some of the concepts and related theories used to investigate experiences of Black male collegians include Tinto's theory of student departure (Tinto, 1993), social capital, peer support, campus climate, and student involvement (Hood, 1992; J. E. Davis, 1994a; Fries-Britt, 1997; Bonner, 2001; Harper, 2005; 2006b; Cuyjet, 2006a; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Smith et al., 2007; 2008; Palmer & Gasman, 2008a; Strayhorn, 2008c; 2010;

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Harper, Davis, Jones, McGowan, & Ingram, T. N. & Platt, C. S., 2011) . Career development as a topic and theory is underutilized in research on Black males in higher education to examine retention, persistence, and engagement.

Delimitations

This study had some delimitations. The data collected drew from the experiences of Black male collegians from only three higher education institutions. While the sites are large and mid-size state public universities, it does not account for the experiences that Black males would have had at private institutions, HCBUs, and smaller colleges and universities.

Data collection consisted interviews and completion of a demographic questionnaire. The data collection occurred at one point of time in their undergraduate experience. A longitudinal project would provide more information about the career development experiences of students, because of the multiple opportunities to collect data through a student's undergraduate career.

A qualitative approach incorporating grounded theory was used as the methodology for this study. While quantitative methods provide the opportunity to collect information from a larger number of students, qualitative methods provide a more detailed description of the individual process of each student to construct a career identity (Creswell, 2012). However, the smaller number of cases may not be viewed as generalizable by quantitative researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one provided an introduction of the study including the purpose of the study, significance of the study and the research questions. Chapter two provides a review of literature that is relevant to the study. The methodology that was applied to the study including a detailed account of the process used to sample, collect and analyze the data is included in chapter three. Chapter four reports findings that was produced from data collection and analysis. Last, chapter five consists of a discussion findings, the theoretical framework I generated from data analysis, limitations and implications for future practice and research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to understand the process through which Black male collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what actors, factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g., major choice, career, out-of-class involvement). Several research questions guided the present study including:

1. What do Black male collegians report as important influences on their intended career choice?

2. How do these important influences shape Black male collegians' career-related decisions in college?

Scholarship on Black male collegians has increased over the past decade in research journals (Harper & Quaye, 2007; Palmer & Gasman, 2008b; Strayhorn, 2011), edited books (Cuyjet, 2006), and national reports (Harper & Harris III, 2013; Toldson & Lewis, 2012). Research on Black males has covered many aspects of their experiences in higher education including of sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012; Strayhorn, 2008a), experiences of Black male collegians considered to be high achievers (Bonner, 2001; Fries-Britt, 1997; Harper, 2005), and the impact of campus environments on academic achievement and person wellbeing (Allen, 1985; J. E. Davis, 1994b; Palmer & Gasman, 2008). To further my understanding of career-related experiences of Black male collegians I explored three areas of scholarship. First, I investigated factors that affected

Black male collegians' persistence in higher education. Second, I examined studies that focused on career-related experiences of Black students overall in their pre-collegiate years, because of limited scholarship on single gender studies. Last, I reviewed scholarship on career theories and possible selves theory.

Black Males in Higher Education

I explored two areas of scholarship on Black male collegians that related to my research topic. The first was factors or issues that affect persistence for Black male collegians. Within this area of research I reviewed literature on the impact of campus environment; use of social capital, peer support, and social engagement; and direct persistence behavior. The second category I examined were studies that investigated career-related experiences of Black collegians.   Most career-related studies I examined focused on race and not race and gender. So, I had to closely analyze studies for findings that specifically addressed Black male collegians.

Factors that affect persistence. There are several factors that affect persistence to degree completion for Black male collegians (Allen, 1992; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2010; Strayhorn, 2013b). I examined literature on campus environment (Allen, 1992; Fleming, 1985), peer support and social engagement (Harper, 2006b; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008c), and acquisition and use of social capital (Palmer & Gasman, 2008a; Strayhorn, 2010). I also reviewed scholarship that explored non-cognitive behaviors used by Black male collegians directly related to persistence (Moore III et al., 2003; Strayhorn, 2013b).

Campus environment of PWIs. Scholarship has described the campus

environment of Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) for Black collegians and

specifically for Black males as hostile, alienating, and unwelcoming (Smith et al., 2007).

Fleming (1985) reported that Black males in their senior year at urban PWIs in the South

scored low on social adjustment and high on indicators of personal stress, academic

stress, and feelings of personal threat. Further, the Black male seniors became

increasingly demotivated by the accumulated stress caused by each successive act of

racial hostility on campus. Their lack of sense of belonging created, "a vast interpersonal

void that they must spend time and energy trying to fill – energy that has to be siphoned

off from intellectual pursuits (Fleming, 1985, p. 143)". Similarly, another study

produced findings about Black male collegians being negatively stereotyped,

marginalized, and subjected to hyper surveillance by campus police, faculty, and students

at the PWI they attended (Smith et al., 2007). The psychological stress suffered by Black

male collegians from enduring constant harassment was likened to battle fatigue

experienced by combat soldiers (Smith et al., 2007).

In separate study on campus environment, Solorzano et al. (2000) examined racial

microagressions targeted to Black collegians at a PWI. Racial microagressions are

derogatory, indirect forms of expressions towards people of color (Solorzano et al.,

2000a). One form of microagression students of color reported in the study was

challenges they faced about their academic ability. A Black male student in this study

remembers multiple conversations with students who assumed he was admitted to college

because he was an athlete or through use of some affirmative action policy (Solorzano et

al., 2000). Other students recall being excluded from study groups because other students doubted their academic ability. The culminating effect of racial microagressions convinced some students to drop out of class, change their major, or leave their university or college entirely (Solorzano et al., 2000). Racial microaggression can also negatively impact career aspirations, but scholarship is needed to empirically reinforce such claims. Research is needed to determine if racial microaggressions can discourage the pursuit of an academic major or career path.

Campus environment of HBCUs. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have been described by scholars to be nurturing, supportive environments for Black male collegians (Allen, 1992; Fleming, 1985; Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Davis (1994) concluded that Black males who attended HBCUs had a more positive perception of their institution and were more academically involved through engagement with faculty and use of support services than their peers at PWIs. Scholarship has also documented that Black males at HBCUs perceive that faculty and staff genuinely care about their academic achievement, are accessible for meetings and other forms of interaction, and encourage participation in student services (Palmer & Gasman, 2008a; Palmer & Young, 2009).

Within some of the results of studies of Black male collegians at HBCUs were findings related to career behaviors. One specific finding in a major study on Black and White students explained the difference in career aspiration for Black male collegians at two HBCUs (Fleming, 1985). Black male seniors attending Morehouse College had specific, detailed career plans to pursue careers in business and entrepreneurship.

Conversely, high achieving Blacks males at Clark Atlanta University were more likely to seek advanced degrees and careers in law. Interestingly, although Clark Atlanta University and Morehouse College are both HBCUs, Black males between the two institutions pursued divergent career paths because of the specific history and culture of each campus, which contributed to their socialization (Fleming, 1985). Black male collegians at Morehouse highly valued their extracurricular experiences, which reinforce the institution's goal of developing well-rounded men. At Clark Atlanta University, academic functioning was suggested to have the most influence on Black male collegians (Fleming, 1985). In a separate study, Allen (1992) confirmed the existence of a positive relationship between occupational aspirations and educational aspirations for students; and that HBCUs provide a more favorable environment to foster both types of aspiration.

The perception that students have of their campus affects their level of academic and social engagement (Allen, 1992; Davis, 1994). Campus environments appear to also influence career choice as indicated by Fleming (1994). However, Black males are not passive agents in their undergraduate career. In the next section I reviewed literature related to social behavior of Black male collegians including engagement, peer support, and social capital.

Social capital, peer support, and social engagement. Social capital is power triggered through active engagement with social networks and or relationships that can provide access to opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). Cultural capital in its fundamental state is "linked to the body and presupposes embodiment" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 48), meaning that the privileged knowledge is represented in the form of behaviors and

values an individual acquires from family or others. Social and cultural capital have

been used as theoretical frameworks to explain students' sense of agency, aspiration, and

persistence to overcome obstacles in college (Harper, 2006a; Palmer & Gasman, 2008;

Strayhorn, 2010). A quantitative study of Black and Latino male students measured the

influence of background characteristics, academic preparation and social capital on

academic success in college (Strayhorn, 2010). Findings from the study indicated that

Black male students from high-income backgrounds possessed social and cultural capital

that is more transferrable to academic achievement and extracurricular involvement in

college in contrast to their peers from low-income backgrounds. Additional findings

proposed that specific types of extracurricular activities in college can increase social

capital for low-income Black males collegians (Strayhorn, 2010).

Social capital can also be instrumental to retention efforts and increased career

aspiration. Scholarship has examined the persistence of low-income Black male

collegians and factors related to their retention in college (Strayhorn, 2008b). This same

study reported that students involved in extracurricular activities who aspired to pursue a

graduate degree were more likely to be retained six years later (Strayhorn, 2008b). It was

recommended that the attainment of social capital for low-income Black male collegians

through participation in learning communities, mentoring programs, and seminars

maintained or increased aspiration and strengthen persistence to stay in college

(Strayhorn, 2008b). In a separate study students acknowledged that they felt valued and

supported by faculty and staff that provided information on student support services and

challenged them to reach their academic potential (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Students in

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this study also commented on how relationships they formed with other Black males provided additional academic motivation and support (Palmer & Gasman, 2008).

Other scholarship on Black males in higher education have highlighted benefits of peer supportive relationships. Studies have determined that peer relationships Black males form with each other led to increased satisfaction with their undergraduate career, bolstered aspiration to serve in leadership roles, and created counter-spaces for Black males to cope with stress (Harper, 2006b; Strayhorn, 2008c). Similar finding were produced in a qualitative study involving high achieving Black male college students (Harper, 2006b). Furthermore, in two separate studies of Black male collegians at HBCUs, students credited their peer relationships as a core part of their support network (Kimbrough & Harper, 2006; Palmer & Gasman, 2008a). Last, peer support also served as a motivating force for extracurricular involvement (Harper, 2006b). Black male collegians identified as high achievers in Harper's (2006b) study felt more motivated to continue their involvement in extracurricular activities because they received encouragement and recognition from other Black male students.

Connected to and overlapping with the literature on social capital is research on social engagement or student involvement. Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement posits the expansion of a student's involvement in college will increase his/her personal development and learning. Scholarship on Black males has focused on social engagement regarding types of involvement (Harper & Quaye, 2007), the learning of competencies, attainment of social capital, and its impact on persistence and satisfaction (Harper, 2006a; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2010).

Harper and Quaye's (2007) study of Black males' student involvement experience produced two major findings. First, they confirmed that most participants in their study held leadership positions in predominantly Black student organizations. A major reason for involvement in Black student organizations was their desire to associate with groups that directly addressed the needs of Black students. In contrast, students involved in mainstream activities, expressed a need to add a different presence and perspective to organizations they perceived were lacking among its members (Harper & Quaye, 2007).

Social engagement through extracurricular involvement has several benefits for Black male collegians. First, there is the opportunity to interact with high-level administrators on campus as well as celebrities and other dignitaries (Harper, 2006a). Second, Black male collegians who come from low-income backgrounds are more likely to be retained if they participate are involved in campus activities (Strayhorn, 2008b). Third, students can increase their ability to manage priorities because of the significant time commitment required to be an active member of a student organization (Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008). Fourth, involvement in campus activities can lead to the development of communication, teamwork and leadership skills in small and large groups settings (Harper, 2006a). Fifth, social engagement can improve sense of agency and awareness in maneuvering in through politicized environments. Sixth, students involved in student organizations and other activities are more privy to scholarship and internship opportunities (Harper, 2006a). Last, student involvement increased sense of belonging, especially for Black male collegians that interact with people from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds (Strayhorn, 2008a).

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Direct persistence behavior. Scholarship has documented the efforts of Black males to persist against challenges and obstacles in their undergraduate career (Moore III, 2001; Moore III et al., 2003; Harper, 2006b; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Palmer & Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn, 2008c; Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009). Some of these obstacles consist of hostile campus environments characterized by acts of overt racism and racial microaggressions (Allen, 1992; Solorzano et al., 2000a; Moore III et al., 2003; Cuyjet, 2006a; Smith et al., 2007). Other obstacles include a lack campus activities or professional development targeted to Black male collegians (Sutton & Terrell, 1997), and academic under-preparation (Palmer & Young, 2009; Palmer et al., 2009; Palmer & Davis, 2012).

Empirical research using the concept of grit, which is resolve a person has to achieve a goal in midst of significant obstacles, to examine how African American males persisted in their goal graduate from the predominantly White institution they attended (Strayhorn, 2013b). In this study, students who scored higher on the Grit-S questionnaire were more likely to have higher ACT scores and grade point average in high school. This finding remained consistent after controlling for variables that includeed socioeconomic status, degree aspiration, and engagement activities (Strayhorn, 2013b).

Moore, Madison-Colmore, and Smith (2003), developed the "Prove-Them-Wrong-Syndrome" theory to explain how Black male engineering students "assumed a assertive academic posture and a stronger sense of purpose, commitment and confidence in their academic persistence and performance" (Moore III et al., 2003, p. 67). Students

in the study discussed their hyper awareness of being largely outnumbered by other racial groups in the classroom, and being ignored for in-class group projects or study groups. Students mentioned their dedication to engineering as a major motivation to persist through challenges while also being relentless in seeking advice and guidance (Moore et al, 2003).

Career-related experiences. Scholarship on Black males in college has investigated campus environment (Fleming, 1985; Allen, 1992; Kimbrough & Harper, 2006; Smith et al., 2007; Harper, 2009), use of social capital to achieve goals (Palmer & Gasman, 2008a; Strayhorn, 2008b; Strayhorn, 2010), persistence through grit (Strayhorn, 2013b), peer supportive relationships (Harper, 2006b; Strayhorn, 2008c) and involvement in extracurricular activities (Harper, 2006a; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008a). Another critical component in the experiences of Black male collegians is career development, which is not prominent in the literature on Black males in higher education. Scholarship on career-related experiences can also further validate findings from previous studies. For instance, the use social capital, peer supportive relationships, extracurricular involvement, and campus environment are possible factors that can shape the career-related decisions of Black male collegians.   In this next line of inquiry, I examined existing research on the role of socioeconomic status (Parks-Yancy, 2012), racial identity (Jackson & Neville, 1998; Tovar-Murray et al., 2012), religion and spirituality (Constantine et al., 2006), family perceptions and lived experiences (Lewis & Collins, 2001) have on the career-related experiences of Black collegians.

Scholarship has examined the career development experiences of Black collegians

that were first generation college students and/or came from low-income backgrounds (Park-Yancy, 2012). Specifically, this study investigated how students from low-income backgrounds used social capital from relationships with faculty, staff, and community professionals to obtain their career-related goals. Students who met with higher education or community professionals received valuable information about career advancement strategies for their occupational field. The information students received exceeded expectations they had of their post-baccalaureate plans.

Constantine et al. (2006) produced a qualitative study to explore how religion and spirituality influenced career-related behaviors of Black collegians. Four of the twelve participants in the study were Black male collegians. Participants who believed in a higher power felt that the purpose of their vocation was to serve other people. Strengthened by this conviction, students used prayer, bible study, meditating, and participation in choir to combat the discouragement and challenges they received related to their career choice or academic major. Also, students' commitment to service helped them to overcome racial discrimination they faced from students, faculty, and staff concerning their career aspirations (Constantine et al., 2006).

Two studies investigated the role of a students' racial identity development on vocational identity, hope, and career aspiration. The first study explored factors related to development of career identity and sense of hope in planning and achieving vocational goals for Black collegians (Jackson & Neville, 1998). The Vocational Identity Scale and the Racial Identity Attitudes Scale were used to determine issues that contributed to vocational identity and sense of hope in achieving career related goals. Students who

scored at the racial identity stage of internalization, which is a positive perspective of one's Black identity that is respectful of the racial identity of other groups, had a higher level of hope in reaching their career-related goals (Jackson & Neville, 1998).

Tovar-Murray et al. (2012) extended Jackson and Neville's (1998) scholarship on racial identity and vocational identity by measuring how racism-related stress and ethnic identity influenced career aspiration for African American college students. The results of their study suggested that racism-related stress combined with low ethnic identity development led to lower career aspiration. In contrast, students with a high level of ethnic identity development who experienced discrimination reported higher levels of career aspiration. In other words, the racial hostility they experienced raised their career aspirations (Tovar-Murray et al., 2012). This finding is analogous to the "Prove Them Wrong Syndrome" (Moore et al., 2003) in that students drew inspiration from pride in their racial heritage to succeed against low expectations of them set by other students, faculty, and staff.

Research has also explored the role of family in shaping the career path of Black college students. Fisher (1999) explored the influence that parents had on the career decision-making and career development of Black and Mexican American college students. Half of the students in Fisher's study reported that their parent provided support and had high expectations of their post-baccalaureate career. Sixty percent of students expressed a desire to have a career that fits their lifestyle preference, which is dissimilar to their parent's reality of long work long hours and meager income. Also, 40 percent of students described how unexpected life events that negatively impacted their parents

influenced their career choice. For example, if a student lost his/her father to an unexpected, fatal illness, it can greatly influence the student's decision to pursue a career in medicine to prevent the same traumatic experience from happening to someone else.

The final study I reviewed investigated how personal characteristics and institutional factors influenced career decision-making (Lewis & Collins, 2001). Data was collected from three in-depth interviews of Black collegians that described their career development from childhood to college. Two of the students in the study were males. The students' family background, personal experiences and perspectives, school, and lifestyle preferences were analyzed to determine how these factors shape their career decision-making process to pursue science and engineering-related careers (Lewis & Collins, 2001).

Two of the students in the study, had a surface level knowledge and appreciation of a career in science. One student was drawn to engineering because of his desire to earn a high salary, his talent in mathematics, interest in robotics, and encouragement from teachers. He decided to switch his major to business because it fulfilled his major concern – money. He became discouraged from pursuing engineering because it required long hours of study, while the work required to achieve a business degree was not as exhaustive (Lewis & Collins, 2001).

In contrast, the other male student remained committed to his career goal of being a pharmaceutical researcher. His career decisions were influenced by his idealism and activism. The student was highly active in his university's largest Black student organization. Also, as an idealistic person, he set broad long-term goals for himself. He

separated his coursework from his career path, which allowed him to focus on his vocational goals in spite of negative experiences with his classes. The other student did not separate these two areas (academic coursework and vocational goals), which led to his disillusionment with engineering. Further, the Black male collegian who remained committed to his science major, was motivated to use his career in pharmaceutical research to benefit society, which was connected to his values of activism and idealism (Lewis & Collins, 2001).

Career development is a lifespan experience as illustrated by Lewis and Collin's (2001) study and Super's (1980) theory of career development. Therefore, studies on career development of college students should include their pre-collegiate experiences. For instance, the socialization students receive from participation in religious and spiritual activities as children were used as a form of persistence to confront challenges of their career aspirations (Constantine et al., 2006). Further, a strong racial identity developed in childhood can be a source of resistance capital (Yosso, 2005) in fueling motivation to exceed beyond low career expectations set by students, faculty, and staff (Tovar-Murray et al., 2012).

Black Males – Career Development in K-12 Education

The literature on Black males and/or Black students in grade school is concentrated on aspiration including perception of barriers (McWhirter, 1997; Brown & Jones, 2004; Lease, 2006a; M. A. Jackson et al., 2006), parental support (Alliman-Brissett, Turner, & Skovholt, 2004; Gushue & Whitson, 2006), and social-cognitive influence on career development (Lease, 2006b; Quimby, Wolfson, & Seyala, 2007).

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There is a dearth of scholarship on the pre-collegiate career development experiences of Black students. In this section, I examined the roles that career aspiration, self-efficacy, and parental influence play in the career development experiences of Black students in high school.

Career aspiration. Two separate studies examined factors affecting career aspirations of African American juniors and seniors in high school (Parmer, 1993; Lease, 2006a). The first study tested components of how social cognitive career theory (SCCT), in how it explained the impact that context, personal characteristics, self-efficacy, and interests had on the range of occupations considered by Black high school students (Lease, 2006). Students in the study expressed interest occupations that had high and low levels of representation of African American professionals. The students' level of self-efficacy and interests strongly predicted the range of employment fields considered. Surprisingly, students had lower levels of perceived barriers to career advancement, which may indicate a lack of awareness with how institutional racism impacts employment opportunities for nonwhite adults (Lease, 2006).

The second study examined within-group differences of career dreams held by Black high school junior and senior students in (Parmer, 1993). In this study career dreams were defined as occupations desired by students 10 years into the future. A majority of students in the study were specific about their dream occupation and believed that they would be successful in their career. Students who attended vocational school provided the greatest detail of their dream occupation compared to students who attended a traditional high school or a specialized math and science school. Students who attended

the traditional high school provided the least detailed description of their dream occupation. A possible explanation for the difference in description of career dreams is that curriculum of vocational schools contains more information about occupations and careers compared to the broad-based education students receive from traditional high schools (Parmer, 1993).

Multiple studies have covered the negative impact of perceived barriers to career or academic achievement for students of color. Research has investigated gender and ethnic differences in how Mexican-American and White high school students perceived barriers to academic and professional success (McWhirter, 1997). Mexican-American students were more likely to perceive barriers to professional success because of sex and ethnic discrimination than their White counterparts. Mexican-American students in the sample also reported feeling less confident in overcoming career related barriers (McWhirter, 1997). These findings were supported by a separate study that investigated perceived academic and work-related obstacles of students of color from low-income backgrounds (McWhirter, 1997; M. A. Jackson, 2006). Students who express a stronger belief in barriers to education and work opportunities had lower academic and career aspirations than others in the study that had less daunting views of the same professional challenges. The research of this study suggested that students' attitudes about educational barriers could result from observations of dilapidated condition of their neighborhood and educational resources (M. A. Jackson et al., 2006).

In addition to the perception of barriers to academic professional achievement, locus of control was another concept used to explain the career-related behavior of Black

students in high school. Flowers, Milner, and Moore (2003) examined the impact that

Black high school students' locus of control affected their educational aspirations. Using

data from the National Education Longitudinal Study, they reported that higher levels of

educational aspiration were found in students who had a strong internal locus of control.

Additionally, students' perceptions of their parent's expectations, especially the mother's

expectations for their academic future, had a positive impact on academic aspirations

(Flowers et al., 2003).

The final study I reviewed on perceived barriers to career goals was a study that

examined the role of Future Temporal Orientation (FTO) in strengthening academic

perseverance in Black high school students (Brown & Jones, 2004). FTO is the belief

that a long-term goal is realistic to achieve.   For example, students rated high in FTO

perceived a long-term goal, like becoming a faculty member, as more realistic a goal to

achieve than individuals with a lower FTO score. Results indicated that a positive

relationship exists between FTO and academic achievement. A critical factor that

facilitated a positive relationship between FTO and academic achievement are

perceptions that students have of racism in school and society in general. Students who

had more negative views of racism's impact on career opportunities had a lower level of

intrinsic academic motivation and FTO (Brown & Jones, 2004).

Career decision-making self-efficacy and parental support. Career decision-

making self-efficacy has been used as a framework to study the career development

experiences of Black students in K-12 education. Self-efficacy is the degree to which

people believe that they can accomplish a specific task or perform at a certain level

(Bandura, 1997). Career decision-making self-efficacy is the level of confidence that a person can successfully engage in tasks associated with choosing a career and being committed to their career choice (Gushue et al., 2006).   Recent scholarship sought to determine if a relationship existed between career decision-making self-efficacy, vocational identity and career-related activities among Black high school students (Gushue et al., 2006). Results of the study suggested that students who have higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy are more aware of their career interests and abilities, and engage in more career exploration activities. A similar study examined the relationship among parental support and career decision-making self-efficacy (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). It was determined that parental support was positively related to career decision-making self-efficacy and career outcome expectations for Black high school students (Gushue & Whitson, 2006).

In a separate study, Alliman-Brissett et al. (2004) investigated the relationship between how parents provided children with information about self-efficacy and how they direct it towards their pursuit of education and career-related goals. The results of the study showed that males are more responsive to the modeling behavior of parents' instruction about self-efficacy, while females are influenced more by emotional support. An example of modeling behavior is parents who take their son to work and give a demonstration of some of the daily tasks they perform. Examples of emotional support are conversations that a girl would have with her father about concerns she has about achieving a career goal (Alliman-Brissett et al., 2004).

Research on career-related behaviors of pre-collegiate Black males is sparse.

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Most of the scholarship of pre-collegiate Black males aggregates the experiences of Black males and Black females (Flowers et al., 2003; Alliman-Brissett et al., 2004; Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Lease, 2006a; Quimby et al., 2007; Bhattacharyya, Mead, & Nathaniel, 2011). Moreover, a large percentage of the scholarship is focused on career aspiration (Parmer, 1993; Brown & Jones, 2004; Lease, 2006a; M. A. Jackson et al., 2006). Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was the only career-related theory used as a framework to explain career-related behavior for high school students (Lease, 2006; Quimby et al., 2007). In addition to SCCT, there are other career theories that explain career-related behavior. In the following section I examined career theories and possible selves theory. Then, I provide a more detailed summary of theories that served as guiding interests for my study, career construction theory and possible selves theory.

Career Theories and Possible Selves

Career theories provide useful frameworks to explain how people think and act upon decisions related to their choice, preparation and experience within a career field. Categories have been created to organize theories with similar frameworks. The categories of career theories are trait and factor, social learning and cognitive, development and constructivist.

Career Theories Overview. Frank Parsons is recognized as the founder of vocational guidance (Davis, 1969; Jones, 1994; McDaniels, 1994). Parsons (1909) created the first career theory, trait and factor theory, which emphasized the match between the traits of person and characteristics of an occupation. Parsons (1909) used this framework as the foundation for how he practiced vocational guidance.

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Parsons (1909) stated that there are three main criteria for selecting a vocation: 1) self-knowledge in the form of interests, abilities, limitations, available resources, 2) information about different career areas including requirements, opportunities, salary, and other benefits and 3) how personal traits and work requirements fit together. According to Parsons, "to win the best success of which one is capable, his best abilities and enthusiasms must be united with his daily work" (p.5). In addition to trait and factor career theory, other categories include social learning and cognitive career theories (Lent et al., 2002), developmental theories (Super & Jordaan, 1973), and constructivist theories (Savickas, 2002).

Social learning and cognitive theories focus on a wide range of variables that affect career choice and career-related behavior. The variables consist of traits, learned skills, contextual environment and lived experiences (Lent et al., 2002; Zunker, 2006; Krumboltz, 2009b). SCCT seeks to explain how variables such as interests, values, and abilities intertwine with contextual factors like socioeconomic status, race, and gender to influence career-related behavior (Lent et al., 2002).

SCCT has been featured in some empirical research (Gushue &Whitson, 2006). SCCT was used as a theoretical framework in a study of African American high school students to measure the impact of social support and ethnic identity development on career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). In a separate study SCCT was used to determine if social cognitive factors were an effective predictor for career interest in environmental sciences for African American high school students (Quimby et al. 2007).

Developmental theories view career development as a lifelong process that proceeds through several life stages (Super, 1980; Zunker, 2006). Donald Super's life-span life-space theory perceives career development to be a life-long process. Self-concept is a major component of life-space life-span career theory. Super stated that a person's self-concept is developed through mental and physical growth, observations, and general experience. A segment of self-concept, the vocational self-concept, shapes the career pattern that an individual will follow through life. The development of the vocational self-concept varies for each individual based on internal growth and external experiences.

The life-span life-space theory consists of developmental stages (Super, 1980). The first stage is growth, which is birth to 14 years and is defined by development of attitudes and interests. The second stage, exploratory, is from 15 to 24 years of age and is the period of time when a person narrows their career options. The third stage, establish, takes place from years 25 to 54 and is characterized by the achievement of challenges at work and initial stabilization of one's career. The fourth stage "maintenance" from years 45 to 64 is marked by advancements in one's career and further stabilization. Last, is the decline stage, which includes people age 65 and older. This stage consists of retirement planning, reduced workload, and eventual retirement.

Constructivist theories focus on the meaning that people attribute to their career-related experience (Savickas et al., 2004; Savickas, 2012). An individual's contextual environment, which includes their social and historical backgrounds, race, gender, and other demographic characteristics, influence the experiences they have and they meaning

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attributed to their experiences. Career theories developed several decades in the past did not consider the influence that race and other features of diversity can have on career development (Cheatham, 1990; June & Pringle, 1977; Parham & Austin, 1994). Recent theories like SCCT and career construction theory account for issues that impact diverse populations.

Career construction theory. Career construction theory is an updated and expanded version of Super's theory of career development, which described the mastery of career related tasks and goals over the period of an individual's life (Savickas, 2002). Career construction theory is focused on the meaning that people make of their career development process. This process is lifelong project that is multilayered and complex. Career construction views a person's career path as a narrative instead of career ladder or linear stages. Career construction theory also views development as being the primary result of adapting to the contextual environment (Savickas et al., 2004; Zunker, 2006; Savickas, 2012; Savickas, 2013). Some of the environmental factors that influence the construction of a career identity include family, school, neighborhood environment, race, ethnicity, group, gender and sexual preference (Savickas, 2002; Savickas, 2013).

Self-concept is a major component of career construction theory (Savickas, 2002; Zunker, 2006; Savickas, 2013). It asserts that people develop multiple self-concepts that relate with each of their roles in life (father, husband, Ph.D. student). The self-concept, if optimal, is stable in its management of relationships and facilitation of decision-making. A vocational self-concept is formed from a person's career-related experiences and his/her interpretation of those experiences. The characteristics of this type of self-concept

play a huge part in shaping career-related decision-making (Savickas, 2013). For

example, an individual with a specific, clear vocational self-concept will more likely

choose occupations that are in alignment with his/her self-concept (Savickas, 2002;

Savickas, 1985); whereas an individual with an unrealistic self-concept is more likely to

make career decisions that do not lead to the completion of his/her vocational goals.

Career construction theory, as an expanded version of Super's theory of

vocational development, also used developmental stages to explain an individual's career

development. It retained all but one of the development stages from Super's life-space

life-span theory (Savickas, 2002; Zunker, 2006). The four stages retained with minimal

revisions are growth, exploration, establishment, and disengagement. The maintenance

stage in Super's theory has been changed to become the management stage in career

construction theory (Savickas, 2002). People in Super's maintenance stage were faced

with the decision to improve their work performance, add innovation to their current

work practices, or maintain the status quo concerning effort and ideas. Super created the

maintenance stage in the mid 20th century when it was assumed that most people would

have only one employer and/or career (Zunker, 2006). The reality of the 21st century is

that many people will not achieve an uninterrupted path to the maintenance stage.

Through downsizing, the decline of certain industries, and a volatile economy, recycling

through the exploration and establishment stages is becoming the career norm as people

learn new skills, go back to school, and or seek employment in new career fields and

industries (Kamenetz, 2012; Savickas, 2002). Therefore, Savickas (2002) replaced the

maintenance stage with the management stage, which is more aligned with the current

conditions of the professional workforce which is highly dynamic, consisting of shorter periods of time in employment positions. For instance, a recent article reported that the average period of time a person stays in his or her job is four years (Kamenetz, 2012).

Career theories provide a wide range of concepts that explain career-related behavior. Career construction and possible selves are my guiding interests that influence my thinking of the career development of Black male collegians. Career construction theory seeks to explain how the people make meaning of experiences that shape their career-related behavior. Possible selves theory is more focused on the internal processes that individuals undergo in forming aspirant future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Possible selves. Possible selves is an individual's depictions of his/her future selves marked by specific aspirations and fears (Markus & Nurius, 1986). These future oriented self-concepts are connected to an individual's current self through perception of person's past history and everyday experiences of his/her current self. Possible selves are what a person aspires to become. An individual's thoughts, characteristics, feelings and external environment influence the formation of possible selves. The theory of possible selves is a significant factor to career development because "they function as an incentive for future behavior (i.e., they are selves to be approached or avoided) and provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of the self" (p.955). For instance, a person will evaluate the gap that separates his current self from his future self, and decide to narrow the gap between the present and possible self, dismantle the future self, or maintain the possible self without any action towards decreasing the gap. Studies on possible selves have covered a diverse array of topics including academic motivation

(Oyserman D, Bybee D, & Terry K, 2006), decision-making behavior of college students confronted with having to change their academic major and or career (Pizzolato, 2007), the benefits of having balance in possible selves concerning school persistence (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995), and career counseling strategies that account for within-group difference of diverse populations (Meara, Day, Chalk, & Phelps, 1995).

Scholarship on possible selves examined the coping behavior of students who had to decide if their career goals are unachievable. Students in this study who were faced with external challenges to their career goals that were outside of their control, focused on image maintenance (Pizzolato, 2007). For example, a student who was not admitted into his desired academic college selected a different major to avoid prolonging his/her undergraduate career. The student faced with this external obstacle became more concerned with his feared possible self, not graduating in time with his peers (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al., 1995). This behavior serves to hinder action towards developing an alternative strategy to acquire the desired vocational possible self, which required that he stayed with his current academic major.

There are two main reasons why I chose career construction theory and possible selves as my framework. Possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and career construction theory (Savickas, 2013) are similar because of their constructivist view of the self-concept. Both theories are cognizant of how career identity and aspirations are shaped by a person's interpretation of past experiences. Furthermore, career construction theory and in a limited capacity, possible selves, recognize the influence that a person's

experiences and background can have on his/her perceptions and behavior (Markus &

Nurius, 1986; Savickas, 2002).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of my study was to understand the process through which Black

male collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what actors,

factors, or conditions shape career-related decisions in college? I summarized the

literature on the experiences of Black males in higher education. I then specifically

covered the sparse research on the career development experiences of Black college

students. I also reviewed studies that examined the career development of Black students

in their pre-collegiate school environment. Last, I explored the literature on theories that

influenced the design of my study, career construction theory and possible selves theory.

I covered a broad range of topics in my review of scholarship on Black males in

higher education. I chose specific areas to study because of their possible connection to

career development. The topics I selected were the impact of the campus environment

(Fleming, 1985; Allen, 1992; Smith et al., 2007); use of social capital (Palmer &

Gasman, 2008; Strayhorn, 2010), extracurricular involvement (Harper, 2006a; Harper &

Quaye, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008a), and persistence (Moore III et al., 2003; Strayhorn,

2013b). Some studies had elements of career development as an indirect part of the

larger phenomena was being examined. For instance, Flemings (1985) used career

aspiration as a variable in her investigation of the experiences of Black students at PWIs

and HBCUs. Further, use of social capital (Palmer & Gasman, 2008a), involvement in

student organizations (Harper, 2006a; Harper & Quaye, 2007), and the ability to persist

through obstacles related to one's academic major is also related to career development (Moore III et al., 2003). For instance, social capital in the form of relationships with faculty and staff provide students with strategies for career advancement (Parks-Yancy, 2012).

There is a paucity of empirical studies that focus solely on career development or career-related experiences of Black collegians. There are even fewer single gender studies focused on the career-related behavior of Black male collegians. Additionally, most studies that examine career-related behaviors of Black collegians do not use career theories as part of their framework to explain findings (Constantine et al., 2006; Lewis & Collins, 2001; Parks-Yancy, 2012a; Tovar-Murray et al., 2012). This study on the career identity of Black males in college will begin to fill in this gap on empirical research of Black male collegians.

Last, this study extended the use of career theories and the theory of possible selves to explain the career development experiences of Black students and in particular, Black males. Career development theories developed in the early to mid twentieth century did not explicitly address the impact that race and racism can have on career development (Parham & Austin, 1994). This led to the creation of more contemporary theories like SCCT (Lent et al., 2002) and career construction theory (Savickas et al., 2004; Savickas, 2012) that acknowledge how race and other diversity topics influence career behavior. As it relates to research, SCCT has been tested empirically (Quimby et al., 2007), while career construction theory has remained mostly untested. Possible

selves theory has been used in scholarship to examine career development of college

students (Pizzolato, 2007) but not specifically were Black males were the sole population

of a study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand the process through which Black male collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what actors, factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g., major choice, out-of-class involvement) that influence their career path/choice?

Two research questions guided the present study including:

1. What do Black male collegians report as important influences on their intended career choice?

2. How do these important influences shape Black male collegians' career-related decisions in college?

Epistemology

The purpose of qualitative inquiry "is to illuminate and better understand in depth the rich lives of human beings and the world" (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006, p. 2). Qualitative research recognizes that individuals can ascribe multiple meanings to their experiences in life (Creswell, 2012). It consists of three components: data in the form of interviews, observations, and documents; organization and interpretation of data; and production of written or verbal reports of research for publication, conference presentation, and other scholarly activities (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Creswell states that researchers "start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry" (Creswell, 2012, p.6).

Epistemology is defined as the assumption that individuals have of how knowledge is acquired (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006). The type of epistemology I selected for this study was social constructivism. It assumes that people develop various, multiple subjective meanings of their everyday experiences. Knowledge is not viewed as a singular, external reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, reality is constructed through interactions with other people through context, and historical and cultural norms that operate in an individual's life. I used social constructivism is to examine the participant's point of view of situations and to make sense of the meaning they make of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2012; Schwandt, 2000).

Recent career theories, in contrast to older career theories from the middle to early 20th century, hold a stronger social constructivist epistemological stance of how people make meaning of their career-related experiences (Young & Collin, 2004). Theories such as career construction theory (Savickas, 2012) are sensitive to the influence that social and historical contexts have on how people interpret their career-related experiences. Savickas (2012) states that career construction theory "views careers from a contextualist perspective, one that conceptualizes development as driven by adaptation to an environment" (p. 147). Theories developed by Frank Parsons (1909) and John Holland (1959) placed less emphasis on the role environmental factors have in how people think of their career-related experiences.   Instead, the main focus of their theories was the level of compatibility between a person's individual traits and characteristics of their desired career field.   Issues such as race, socioeconomic status, and sex were not considered in their theories because as White middle class males, these demographic factors did not

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influence their career-related experiences (Parham & Austin, 1994).

Social constructivist epistemology is a suitable fit for my research study on what (and how) factors influence career-related decisions for Black male collegians. Research has documented how a college campus can impact feelings of insecurity and emotional well-being (Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000a), extracurricular involvement (Harper, 2009), and career choice (Fleming, 1985). For instance, Black male students showed a preference for careers in business or education based on the specific historical Black college and university (HBCU) they attended (Fleming, 1985).

Methodology

I selected grounded theory as my methodology because it provides a structured approach to data collection and analysis. Grounded theory methods (Glaser, 1965; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) refer to collecting and analyzing data simultaneously for the purpose of developing theoretical explanations to explain, compare, and trace the development of the researched phenomena. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) created grounded theory methods to provide a systematic approach to qualitative research that receives the same respect as a methodology as quantitative research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Grounded theory methods adhere to a common set of principles that include simultaneous process of data collection and analysis (Glaser, 1965), development of analytical codes and categories to organize data; constant comparison of data at various points of collection and analysis; creation of sub-theories to explain behavior or processes; writing of memos to summarize current interpretations of data; use of sampling to build theory, not representation; saturation of

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merging conceptual categories, and the completion of a literature review that proceeds independent analysis of data (Charmaz, 2001; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

There are variations to grounded theory beyond its core set of practices. Glaser and Strauss (1967) held a more positivist stance in viewing data as unproblematic and located in an external reality (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). I selected the constructivist approach to grounded theory developed by Kathy Charmaz (2006). The constructivist style of grounded theory proposes that the researcher's background and experiences influences how data is collected, analyzed, and developed into theory (Charmaz, 2006). As Charmaz stated, "researchers' own standpoints, historical locations, and relative privileges shape what they can see" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 44).

Conceptual Framework

Charmaz (2006), regarding her version of grounded theory, commented that "grounded theorists' background assumptions and disciplinary perspectives alert them to look for certain possibilities and process in their data" (p. 16). The researcher's interests and set of general concepts forms their interview questions, interaction with interviewees, and data analysis (Charmaz, 2006).   My guiding interests led to me consider career construction theory and possible selves theory as major influences in my development of interview questions and subsequent data analysis. Possible selves theory has been used in empirical studies to explain career development experiences (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007), but career construction theory has rarely been used in empirical research (Savickas et al., 2004).   Throughout the study I maintained awareness of my guiding interest, so that I did not attempt to force a fit between my assumptions and the emerging data.

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Career construction theory (Savickas, 2002) and possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) served as the guiding theoretical framework. Career construction theory seeks to explain the meaning making process that an individual has of his/her career-related experiences. The reflective process can consist of experiences like internships, research projects, or interactions with a professional mentor, and/or the interpretation that individuals have of their career-related experiences (Savickas et al., 2004; Savickas, 2013). Additionally, career construction theory seeks to explain the influence that cultural, social, and institutional factors have in shaping career identity (Savickas et al., 2004). Savickas (2002) explains that context is multilevel in nature, consisting of "the physical environment, culture, racial and ethnic group, family, neighborhood, and school" (p.157).

Possible selves represent several versions of a person's multiple, future selves that are shaped by an individual's fears and aspirations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The future selves have not been proven in the present. They are influenced by a person's perspective of his/her lived experiences and background. Possible selves provide an incentive for future behavior in terms of how an individual decides to narrow a gap between their current reality and desired future self. Possible selves that are specific and concrete are more likely to be attainable, and are a reflection of the substantive time and effort individuals invest in achieving a desired goal.   Similar to career construction theory, possible selves view a person's self-concept as critical to the shaping of vocational identity (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

The methodology, guiding framework, and epistemology are intertwined. The

guiding framework of career construction, possible selves, and epistemology of social constructivism seek to understand how people make meaning of their experiences. Strauss and Glaser (1967) created grounded theory methods to provide a structured approach to an investigation and explanation of phenomenon. The methodology is also focused on interpretation and making sense of the meaning people attribute to lived experiences (Charmaz, 2006).

Sampling

Participants in this study were undergraduate students enrolled at a large Midwestern university who self-identified as "African American or Black" and "male". Black males were selected for this study because of the specific challenges and barriers experienced by this population in higher education (Allen, 1992; J. E. Davis, 1994a; Carter et al., 2003; Johnson & Eby, 2011; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011; Strayhorn, 2008b) and post-baccalaureate experiences (Burgess, 2012; Cawthorne, 2009; Cornileus, 2012; Hardin, 2009; Luo, 2009). Some barriers and challenges included perceived lack of positive institutional support at predominantly White institutions (Allen, 1992; J. E. Davis, 1994), a steady increasing achievement gap with Black female students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011), lack of social capital for Black male collegians from low income backgrounds (Strayhorn, 2008b; Strayhorn, 2010), lack of knowledge about career development opportunities and occupations beyond business, medicine, and law (Burgess, 2012; Johnson & Eby, 2011), limited use of career services in college (Carter et al., 2003), and omission from executive or managerial positions within a company (Schwartz & Cooper, 2013).

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Convenience, purposeful, and theoretical sampling were used for this grounded theory study. Convenience sampling was used to "scope the phenomenon, to determine the dimensions and boundaries, as well as the trajectory of the project" (Morse, 2007, p. 235). The convenience samples consisted of undergraduate students at three public Ohio universities that self-identified as "African American" or "Black" and "male" and were upperclassmen. I define upperclassmen as students who are at least in their third year of college. First and second year students were not selected for this study because of their limited time in college, especially related to career-related decisions and behavior. This broad criterion allowed me to gather a wide range of career-related experiences from participants. To obtain a convenience sample, I used snowball sampling, which is the recruitment of additional participants through referrals from current participants (Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling consisted of asking participants to refer friends or other students who are male upperclassmen who self-identified as "African American" or "Black". If I relied only on the convenience sample, it is likely that I would have had a narrow range of factors that impact career-related experiences of Black male undergraduate students (Patton, 2002; Morse, 2007). For instance, there may be some experiences assumed to be rare occurrences that might actually be prevalent among many students, if I did not commit to further sampling.

Purposeful sampling in qualitative research "means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, p. 156). A purposeful sample was collected after I identified a wide range of factors that influence

career-related decisions of Black male collegians. The purposeful sample was based on coding from the convenience sample to collect data from additional participants to gain rich, detailed information to reinforced findings from the initial analysis (Charmaz, 2001; Charmaz, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The purposeful sample led to the identification of categories that documented specific experiences.

Last, I used theoretical sampling to add clarity to the description of my categories (Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical sampling is purposeful sampling, but at the level of categories instead of codes. I sought out Black male collegians who were part of the convenience or purposeful sample and/or new participants that could add to my categories based on their experiences, or "in whom particular concepts appear significant" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 240). If a participant in this stage of sampling responds to an interview in an unanticipated way, it is called a negative case. Grounded theory methods suggest that negative cases be included in an emerging theory. For example, if I did not anticipate that a third year student from an upper middle class background would have a small amount of career exposure, I did not discard the information. Instead it was used to further develop categories.

A total of 20 students participated in this study. A specific sample size was not determined before the recruitment of participants, but was established through the three aforementioned forms of sampling. Scholarship on qualitative inquiry has suggested that five to twenty-five is an appropriate sample size for qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

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Instrumentation

Data collection consisted of a demographic form and semi-structured interview. The form collected information consisting of intended academic major(s), characteristics of high school attended, parent's level of education and career goals. The demographic form primed students for the interview, which inquired about their family, educational background, and career aspirations. It was also used to triangulate similar information that was collected from interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Semi-structured interviews allowed for use of an interview protocol with flexibility to include probing questions to acquire further information (Leech, 2002).

As stated before, career construction theory and possible selves theory were major guiding interests I held to explain how factors influenced the career decision-making process of Black male collegians. I used concepts from these theories to develop my interview protocol. For example, some of the questions I asked were about student's educational and familial background of students and how it influenced their career choice. How people interpret their career-related experiences is the core definition of career construction theory (Savickas, 2002).

I also developed a specific order to the type of questions that I asked participants as described by Charmaz's (2006) approach to constructivist grounded theory methods and other scholarship on qualitative research (Leech, 2002; Patton, 2002; Whyte, 1960). The interview began with questions designed to build initial rapport with students to put them at ease with the interview process. Research on qualitative methods has noted that establishing rapport with participants in a study can lead to more focused and detailed

responses to interview questions (Leech, 2002; Patton, 2002; Whyte, 1960). The comfort level of the interviewee takes precedence over the quality of data that can be collected (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, I designed the final questions in my interview to elicit affirmative responses from interviewees as a strategy to bring the interview to a close at a positive level (Charmaz, 2006).

Data Collection Procedures

This study is part of a research project that examined the educational experiences of Black male collegians (Moore and Suddeth, 2013). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study before data collection occurred. Multiple steps were taken to recruit students for this study. At each stage of sampling, Black male collegians were solicited for participation through email. Directors of various student service and support offices were contacted to help identify prospective student participants. Snowball sampling was also used to recruit students during the recruitment of the convenience sampling.

Students were contacted and given an explanation of the purpose of this study. Once students agreed to participate in this study, a code consisting of numbers and letters was used to identify them; this code replaced their names on all documents permanently. Access to raw data was restricted and stored according to Human Research Protection policies

At the scheduled time of the interview, participants were given an information sheet (Appendix D) that provided information about study, a consent form (Appendix C) and a demographic form (Appendix E). Participants were given time to read the

information sheet and consent form. I answered any questions that participants had about

the forms. After students completed the demographic form and signed the consent form,

I began the interview.   All interviews for this study were conducted face-to-face and

were digitally recorded. The average length of each interview was between 45 minutes to

1 hour and 15 minutes. Interviews occurred in a private office or conference room.   All

information obtained from participants (e.g., memory sticks for digital recorders,

transcripts, consent forms and brief demographic questionnaires, etc.) were kept in a

locked filing cabinet.   Each participant was giving a pseudonym as further protection of

his identity and participation in this study.

Data Analysis

In following Charmaz's (2006) approach to grounded theory, I viewed data

analysis as a set of flexible guidelines instead of a required list of activities to be

followed. To claim that I am doing grounded theory study, basic tasks were completed.

I completed the simultaneous process of data collection and analysis, coding of data that

resulted in categories, use of constant comparison of data at different stages of analysis,

and the writing of memos to organize and develop concepts from the data.

"Coding of data is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an

emergent theory to explain these data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46).   I coded each line of data

because it encourages open-mindedness to data through detection of nuances that may not

be noticed by only coding of perceived incidents.   Line-by-line coding also assists with

comparing interviews at the end of data collection with interviews at the beginning of a

study. Next, I used focused coding to organize my initial line-by-line coding by selecting

what I perceived as the most significant and frequent codes. I used these codes to develop categories of experiences that shared common traits.

Axial coding as developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was my third type of coding strategy to gain greater clarity of the factors that influence career-related decisions of Black male collegians. The process of axial coding was developed by Strauss (1987) to provide specific steps that qualitative researchers can follow to develop categories from empirical data. First, I designed the properties and dimensions of each category. Second, I connected categories to their subcategories based on statements I made of how they were connected. Last, I searched for information to determine how categories might share a relationship to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I selected axial coding because it provides a clear strategy to connect structure with process, meaning that it can be used to illustrate how contextual issues that set the stage for a problem (structure) - like how a student failing a class in his/her academic major is related to how the student responds to the problem (process) – hasty decision to change his/her academic major. Associating structure and process strengthened my understanding of contextual issues that shape career-related behavior for Black male collegians.

Coding is not a strict linear process. Although open and focused coding need to occur to have categories for the axial coding phase, sole focus on axial coding can neglect the development of new codes. As I conducted axial coding, I remained open to new information through focused coding.

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis I wrote memos for various purposes. Memo writing was helpful in detecting gaps in data collection of my

purposeful and theoretical sample. Second memo writing assisted me in organizing my thoughts about codes I developed and relationships I formed between categories that emerged from the data. Memo writing also kept me from forcing pre-conceived ideas and concepts onto data. Last, I used memo writing to organize how I reported my findings (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Validity/Reliability or Accuracy of the Data

Quantitative inquiry, or conventional research methods, requires internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity to establish trustworthiness of the data collected. Internal validity is recognized when the difference in the dependent variable can be attributed to a controlled change to the independent variable. External validity is defined by the generalization of a presumed causal relationship across various settings. Reliability is confirmed when similar findings or results are reproduced from studies that use the same methodology and experimental settings. Objectivity is the consensus of some type of experience by many observers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Forms of reliability and validity are just as critical to qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1984). However, conventional methods of trustworthiness are not adequate for qualitative inquiry because a different type of phenomenon is being studied. Qualitative methodology recognizes the existence of multiple realities, while quantitative inquiry assumes the existence of a singular reality. Conventional internal validity is impossible to attain in a qualitative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, "all data are shaped by the circumstances of their production and different data produced by

different procedures cannot be treated as equivalent for the purpose of corroboration"
(Bloor, 2001, p. 384).

Therefore to increase the relevancy of validity and reliability in qualitative
inquiry, alternative measures were designed. The four alternative measures that served as
compliments to the conventional factors of trustworthiness were credibility,
transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following
paragraphs explain how I used various strategies to ensure the credibility and
transferability of this study.

Prolonged engagement, the investment of time with participants in a study to
learn more about their environment and everyday experiences, was used to establish
credibility. I had prior interactions with some of the students, which gave me more
information about their daily experiences and environment.   However, I had to be
sensitive to my own biases and potential distortion of data collected because of my
familiarity with some of the students in this study. This could affect the trustworthiness
the data (Bloor, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my position as a higher education
administrator, I had to be cognizant of the power I held in the relationship with students I
interviewed. To combat any potential power dynamics, I established rapport with
students at the beginning of interviews to make the data collection process seem less
formal (Leech, 2002; Whyte, 1960).

Multiple triangulation techniques and member checking were also used to
strengthened the credibility of this study. I used methodological triangulation, which is
the use of multiple of qualitative or quantitative methods to achieve trustworthiness. This

form of triangulation was achieved by using a demographic form and individual interviews to collect data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Investigator triangulation was applied through debriefing sessions I had with a research partner that assisted in the detection of bias, blind spots, and or selective perceptions I had during data collection and analysis. The research partner is an African American female doctoral candidate that has taken qualitative research courses and received information about the study prior to the completion of data analysis and debriefing sessions. The research partner read through the transcripts independently and met with me to discuss codes, categories and themes. Demographic information of my research partner is in Appendix F.

Data triangulation was gained by having a diverse sample of African American college students in the study. Through review of data collected from the demographic form I confirmed that I had a diverse group of Black male collegians concerning parental level of education, communities, high school environments (size, private or public, geographic location), extracurricular activities, and career interests (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Last, I gave participants the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the codes and categories I developed through data analysis (Bloor, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

External validity cannot be achieved in qualitative inquiry because it is not possible to replicate the behavior of people within space and time in another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, the goal of the qualitative researcher is to establish transferability, which is the development of hypotheses and detailed information about

the setting and time in which the hypotheses was situated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thick descriptions, or detailed information of the behavior of participants including its context, will be gathered from interviews to increase the likelihood that "another researcher facing the data would reach a conclusion that falls in the same general 'truth space'" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 22).

This study was approved by The Ohio State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research was conducted according to the IRB's policies and procedures. I completed and renewed my Collaboration Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification, which is required to conduct IRB approved research. My research partner, who analyzed data in this study and had debriefing sessions with me on data analysis, completed their CITI certification.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents a summary of the findings from individual interviews and completed demographic forms collected during this study. Previously stated, the purpose of the study was to examine the process through which Black male collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what actors, factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g., major choice, career, out-of-class involvement)? Two research questions guided the present study including:

1. What do Black male collegians report as important influences on their intended career choice?

2. How do these important influences shape Black male collegians' career-related decisions in college?

Demographic Characteristics

A summary of the demographic characteristics of participants in this study is outlined in this section. There were a total of 20 participants in this study, which is part of a larger qualitative study conducted by an academic unit in a large Mid-western university. All students in this study self-identified as African or African American and were traditional undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24. Only five of the 20 students were first generation students, defined as students who neither parent graduated from college. Also, students, at the time of their interview were enrolled

in three of the 13 public universities in Ohio. Tables 1 and 2 present demographic

information describing participants.

Table 1

Participants' rank, major and minor

Name	Rank	Major	Minor
Jermaine	3rd Year	Architecture	
Jason	3rd Year	Psychology	Molecular Genetics
Bruce	3rd Year	Integrated Social Studies	Geography
Sheldon	3rd Year	Criminal Justice	
Antonio	3rd Year	Painting and Drawing	
Eric	3rd Year	Anthropology	History
Kevin	3rd Year	Public Affairs	Urban Policy & Management
John	4th Year	Marketing	Music, Media Enterprise
Kendall	4th Year	Neuroscience	Music
Troy	4th Year	Accounting	Economics
Quentin	4th Year	Sports Industry	General Business
Frank	4th Year	Graphic Design	Business
Louis	4th Year	Special Education	
Carl	5th Year	Agribusiness & Applied Economics	Industrial Design
Michael	5th Year	Criminology	Sociology
Patrick	5th Year	Mechanical Engineering	Design
Matthew	5th Year	Electrical Engineering	
Larry	5th Year	Film Studies	Video Art
Greg	5th Year	Sports Industry	Business
David	5th Year	Industrial & Systems Engineering	

Table 2

Parent's level of education

Name	Rank	Highest level of education by Mother	Highest level of education by Father
Jermaine	3rd Year	Some Graduate School	Four Year Degree
Jason	3rd Year	Graduate or Professional Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Bruce	3rd Year	Four Year Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Sheldon	3rd Year	Some College	Some College
Antonio	3rd Year	Graduate or Professional Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Eric	3rd Year	Business or Trade School	Four Year Degree
Kevin	3rd Year	Some College	Middle School
John	4th Year	Some graduate or Professional School	Graduate or Professional Degree
Kendall	4th Year	Business or Trade School	Business or Trade School
Troy	4th Year	High School Diploma Equivalent	
Quentin	4th Year	Four Year Degree	High School Diploma Equivalent
Frank	4th Year	Some College	
Louis	4th Year	High School Diploma Equivalent	High School Diploma Equivalent
Carl	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Four Year Degree
Michael	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Four Year Degree
Patrick	5th Year	Graduate or Professional Degree	Four Year Degree
Matthew	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Four Year Degree
Larry	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Some Graduate School
Greg	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
David	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree

Career Construction and Possible Selves as a Guiding Framework

Career construction theory and possible selves theory served as the guiding framework of this study. Career construction theory states that the interpretation people have of their career-related experiences influences career-related decisions and actions. It

consists of multiple career developmental stages and tasks that span a person's entire life (Savickas, 2002). Possible selves are multiple perceptions a person has of what he or she either desires to become or wishes to avoid. The development of possible selves is influenced by a person's background, experiences, and aspirations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The guiding framework was only used as a reference. The codes and themes that emerged from analysis were not forced into the framework.

Presentation of Findings

The remainder of chapter four presents findings from data collected from students who participated in this study. Participants in this study were candid about how their pre-collegiate and higher education experiences including parents, peers, role models, and career-related activities influenced their choice of career and other career-related decisions and behavior. Direct quotations from students along with descriptions of how I interpreted their responses to interview questions and information collected from the demographic form were used to explain how their background and experiences have influenced their career-related decisions and behaviors in college.

Eight major themes arranged into three categories emerged from data analysis with consensus from a research partner. The three major categories are (1) family influences, (2) experiences in high school and (3) experiences in college. Family influences had two major subthemes including (a) parental/familial support of career exposure and (b) career control/early career development. Experiences in in high school had two major subthemes including (a) career-related experiential activities and (b) role models. Last, experiences in college had four subthemes including (a) career maturity,

(b) academic courses and programs, (c) extracurricular activities, and (d) post-

baccalaureate preparation. These themes revealed information about what participant's

perceived as significant influences on their choice of career and how it impacted their

career-related decision and behaviors in college. These categories, themes, and codes are

organized into a codebook (see Appendix G) and table listed below.

Table 3

Eight Major Themes

Name	Support	Control	Role Model	HS Career
John	Y	Y		Y
Carl	Y		Y	Y
Jermaine	Y	Y	Y	Y
Michael	Y			
Jason				
Patrick	Y	Y	Y	Y
Matthew				
Bruce	Y		Y	
Kendall		Y		
Larry			Y	Y
Greg				
Troy			Y	Y
David	Y	Y	Y	
Quentin	Y			
Eric				Y
Kevin				
Louis			Y	
Frank	Y	Y		Y
Sheldon				Y
Antonio	Y	Y		Y

Table 3

Eight Major Themes (cont.)

Name	Maturity	Academic	College Inv	Postbac
John		Y	Y	Y
Carl	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jermaine		Y		Y
Michael	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jason		Y		Y
Patrick		Y	Y	Y
Matthew	Y			Y
Bruce	Y	Y		Y
Kendall	Y	Y		Y
Larry			Y	Y
Greg	Y			Y
Troy			Y	Y
David			Y	Y
Quentin	Y	Y		Y
Eric	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kevin			Y	Y
Louis	Y		Y	Y
Frank	Y			Y
Sheldon				Y
Antonio				Y

Family Influences

Career construction theory is composed of life stages, each with associated tasks or activities that an individual participates in as indication of progress in his/her career development (Savickas, 2002). The first developmental stage is called growth and takes place between ages four to thirteen. The major purpose of this stage is the creation of one's career identity (Savickas, 2002). For example, people with education as their career identity are drawn to learning and teaching others, and eventually pursue a career in education as a high school teacher, professor, or higher education administrator. The passion or strong interest in education begins in this stage through interactions with family and significant others in the community and/or school (Savickas, 2002). The four major tasks of career development in the career growth stage are concern about one's future as an employee, increased control over vocational activities, establishment of criteria to reference when making educational and career-related decisions and increased confidence to implement career choices (Savickas, 2002). Participants gave accounts of their experiences in this stage including parental/familial support and early career development through activities at home or in their community.

Parental/familial support & influences. Parents and other family members served as major influences on students' choice of career. Some students discussed how their parents provided various activities to stimulate their interest in a hobby, vocation, or type of activity that became a career goal in college. Conversely, some students in this study did not have early exposure to potential career-related activities because of

instability in their family environment, which provided less opportunity for engagement in career-related activities.

Career exposure. Children and adolescents that establish positive relationships with their parents or guardians develop a sense of security in their external environment, which allows them to "explore the work world and daydream about their place in it" (Savickas, 2002, p. 168). This was evident in the stories shared by students who grew up in supportive family environments. Michael, a fifth year senior criminology major, reflected on his childhood fascination with firefighters and fire trucks and how his mother was proactive in finding ways to expose him to this occupation. He commented, "when I was little in Michigan, my mother would take me to a lot of the firehouses around the city. They would let me slide down the pole. I thought that was really cool." Another student, Patrick, discussed how participation in cub scouts with his father developed his interest in engineering:

> Building power derby cars was one of my favorite experiences as a kid. So, I spent one summer making a couple of power derby cars in my Cub Scout troop with my dad. And that was kind of exciting to me because I got to use some power tools. I also got to design the shape of cars and decide what would work and what wouldn't.

David, a fifth year industrial engineer major, talked about his early career-related learning experiences:

> My mom was always exposing us to different things and getting us around, taking us places, she was foreign. She did her best to get us out to see some places that I was fortunate to be able to see.

John, a fourth year marketing major and music and media enterprise minor talked about how his father influenced his decision to choose music and media enterprise as a minor:

He (father) comes from a small town in Florida, didn't really have much. He worked hard to make sure that I could have what he didn't. Whenever I was interested in music or playing instrument, he made sure that I could take lessons. In terms of being able to take various trips, he allowed me to go on a trip to DC in 8th grade. Growing up as a single parent I know it was hard on him, things he had to give up. But he never showed it.

Role modeling. Family members also influenced career-related decisions and behaviors of Black male collegians in this study through role modeling. Role modeling is one of the four activities that can increase an individual's self-efficacy, which is the belief and individual has of his/her ability or capacity to achieve a desired outcome (Bandura, 1977). Kendall, a fourth year neuroscience and music minor recounted a role modeling experience with his brother:

My brother is two years older. I would always look up to him. The first time I heard him play in a band concert, it was like a concert in high school. So I heard the high school symphonic band play, and I said, "I want to do that". And so I wanted to get into music and stuff like that. I was in the 4th grade at the time.

In another example of role modeling, Patrick decided to enroll into graduate school instead of entering the workforce after finishing his undergraduate degree because of the example and expectation set by his mother:

My mom went back to get her master's, so that was her expectation - that I at least go that far as well. So that was in the plans. But I think now I am looking a little bit farther. I plan on getting my master's at OSU. I have been accepted into the combined masters-bachelor's program for mechanical engineering. And eventually I want to get my Ph.D. whether in engineering or in a more creative discipline like design or art and technology.

Carl, a fifth year Agribusiness and Applied Economics student, has not wavered in his desire to be an entrepreneur after graduating from college. His role model is his

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mother who owns a bakery. He views the freedom she has to create her own work

schedule as a huge influence on wanting to be a business owner. Carl described the

impact his mother had on his career goals:

> It came from my mom and the bakery. Just watching the difference
> everyday between my mom and dad, just operational. I remember like
> trying to like skip school and go home, and then my mom would be there.
> Like some days she will wake up and she will be like "I don't feel like
> doing this today", and she will put a sign on the door. Where my dad is
> like I don't want to do this but I don't have no choice. I gotta to show up.
> It is a what you kill you eat mentality. So she works harder than my dad,
> but it's the freedom.

> ***Inconsistent cases.*** Unfortunately not all men in the study were positively

influenced by their family in terms of career decisions. There were some students who

came from unsupportive family environments that provided few opportunities for early

exposure to careers and/or role models. Troy, a fourth year accounting major, spent

most of his childhood in homeless shelters and foster care, gave this description of his

childhood:

> From there it was just getting my head in the books staying out of trouble.
> Pretty much did that, I wasn't the most popular kid growing up because of
> the hard times that I had. I didn't have a real childhood like most kids. So I
> didn't really have the opportunities like – I didn't get to play football. I
> didn't get to do recreational sports or most things that kids would do. So I
> was behind the 8 ball.

In addition to not playing football, Troy also did not have parents who provided career-

related activities and/or served as vocational role models. Troy had to rely on people and

opportunities outside of his home environment to facilitate his early career development

and creation of desired possible selves.

Similar to Troy, Louis also experienced a challenging home life. Much of

Louis's time outside of school was dedicated to caring for his younger siblings. Louis

gave this description of his family situation:

> In total I have eight siblings – yeah, big family. It was just my mom. None of the fathers were involved it was just myself being the oldest, having to really step up and be that kind of authority figure because my mom worked for a number of years. She worked pretty much around the clock. So a lot of responsibilities with helping everyone get ready for school and then at the end of the day getting everyone settled in after homework…Honestly I didn't have a lot of time for things growing up…I really spent a lot of time with my siblings. I didn't really have a lot of opportunities to develop hobbies.

As a result, Louis did not have to explore activities outside his home and/or to cultivate

hobbies and explore career-related interests at home.

Career control/early career development. Besides exposure to career

opportunities by parents and other family members, students in this study also shared

information about activities and hobbies they participated in that connected to future

career interests. Participants, instead of their parents, initiated their own participation in

activities related to future career goals. Participants often initiated the activities instead

of it being facilitated by parents or family members. However, an environment

conducive to self-started career development activities is needed for career control

experiences. Parents, family members, and legal guardians were responsible for creating

this type of learning environment.

Some of the students in this study were able to determine their choice of vocation

from activities they took part in during their adolescent years. Jermaine discussed how

his interest in putting together furniture at home influenced his decision to pursue

architecture as a career:

> I was 12 years old when I decided to do some form of architecture. My
> parents would buy a lot of stuff from IKEA. I would take it up to the attic
> and put it together. I always liked building things, and I was good at math.
> Done some artwork too. I think that was the main reason, I was just
> putting together a dresser together for my parents. And I started thinking
> about my future and what I want to do. My first thought was construction
> worker, but it does not pay a whole lot. But then like, architecture is pretty
> sound it has construction in it, as a construction manager. I can draw, my
> math work is pretty good. So I was building and then thought what would
> be a higher goal than architecture? After that, then I set my sights on
> architecture and haven't really wavered from it.
> Similar to Jermaine, Patrick recalled a similar experience from his childhood.

One of Patrick's hobbies was tinkering with toys and other devices. He recalled how it

influenced his decision to later major in mechanical engineering:

> I was always a really hands-on kind of creative guy. I remember I wanted
> to take apart the little DVD player, taking apart the TV. I remember
> making little sculptures and things to play with. I remember taking a broke
> stapler and turning it into a skateboard for a little alien thing out of a coin
> machine…And then looking at dream jobs. I didn't have any concept of
> engineer at the time. But I remember really liking Battle Bots and Myth
> Busters. They were two shows that really caught my attention that I was
> really into and said I want to do that one. That was what kind of drew me
> to engineering eventually.

Likewise, John's pre-collegiate years of learning how to play instruments and

produce music influenced his decision to minor in music and media enterprise in college.

He began playing musical instruments at the age of eight. John's first instrument was

snare drums, and then he played guitar briefly before "falling in love with the piano in the

seventh or eighth grade." After piano lessons, he began to produce music. In explaining

his interest and participation in music, John said, "I guess it's just been a culmination of things throughout, yes, just music has been a part of life."

Antonio is another student who at an early age developed a strong career interest from a self-initiated activity. He is planning for a career in art education that includes a career in the professoriate and then traveling abroad to teach in China. In describing his early interest and engagement in art and drawing, Antonio stated:

> I've been drawing since I was a kid. I never took lessons or anything, it just kind of came to me, so that's it. I actually got kicked out of a drawing class. When I was in Arkansas, my dad was like, "You know, we're going to put you in some drawing lessons." So I was there for maybe like a week. I went with my sister. We'd be drawing these still life images and I would finish early and start drawing whatever I wanted and she of course got frustrated or whatever. She kicked me out of class. I just drew whatever I wanted to. It got to the point where during parent-teacher conferences they'd ask how my drawings were rather than how my schoolwork was.

In total, 9 of the 20 or close to 50 percent of the participants in this study reported some type of pre-high school career development experience. Not all students' early career development experiences directly relates to their future career choice. Michael, a criminology major who is a pursuing a career in law enforcement, was interested in dentistry and orthodontics as a kid and shadowed his orthodontist. Quentin, a fourth year sports industry major who plans to work for a professional sport organization, began acting at an early age and was featured in a couple of local commercials.

Experiences in High School

The majority of participants shared information of how their years in high school had a significant influence on their career choice. Students reported that involvement in

extracurricular activities; support received from teachers and mentors; and experiential

activities like internships and other projects shaped their career-related decision-making

and behavior. These experiences are part of the career exploration stage of career

construction theory, which occurs between ages 14 - 24. The developmental tasks within

this stage include further development of a vocational self-concept, a narrowing of career

options by comparing one's interest and abilities to occupational fields, and development

of skills and knowledge about desired occupations (Savickas, 2002).

Career-related experiential activities   All participants in this study participated

in some type of extracurricular activity during their time in high school. Extracurricular

activities as described by students include high school clubs, sports activities, community

programs and community service. Three of the participants (15%) in this study were

involved in structured programs that provided information about their desired career

choice after college. An additional six students (30%) participated in activities that

indirectly connected to either their academic major or career choice in college. In total,

nine of twenty students (45%) were involved in activities geared towards their vocational

interests. All nine students acknowledged that their experiential activities in high school

influenced their academic major and career choice in college.

High school experiential activities. Jermaine, a third year student majoring in

architecture, discussed how an extracurricular program in high school provided him

detailed information about what was required to become an architect. Jermaine said that

because of his involvement in the program "he knew the amount of work that goes into it

and the time you spend is a lot." Because he knew of the commitment it takes to be an

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architect and the benefits he will gain once he enters the field, Jermaine knows "that it is going to pay off eventually."

Troy, a fourth year accounting major, did not have any prior exposure to accounting until he participated in an internship through high school. He was assigned to work with the finance director of a non-profit organization. Troy described how the experience influenced his decision to pursue a career in accounting:

> I was working with the finance director and she was showing me some of the accounting stuff and finance stuff and I got some hands-on experience with some numbers. That made me like, I kind of like this field. That is when I switched to accounting. And I wanted to be, come here (college) and be an accountant.

Students who participated in specific career-related programs did not always choose to pursue the same occupation after college. However, these types of programs can still influence their career choice. Sheldon, a third year student, participated in a criminal justice program in high school and did not pursue a career in law enforcement. Instead, he wants to be firefighter, which is also a public service occupation.

The classroom can provide opportunities for students to explore careers through participation in projects assigned by teachers. Larry, a fifth year film studies major, stumbled upon his career path because of a project assigned by his teacher. He described his class project and new career interest:

> Senior year in high school I had a class in film history. And, it was a teacher I really enjoyed. I often talk to him as much as I can now. We had a project at the end of that class. We had to create a short film and it was the first thing I had ever done. It was a great experience for me. I had found something I truly enjoy doing…I kind of saw it as something I could actually do.

Creating a short film in his high school class shaped Larry's possible self as a film producer. Larry stated, "I kind of saw it as something I could actually do".

Community experiential activities. Eric, a third year student majoring in anthropology, participated in numerous community service activities. He discussed how volunteering was highly valued by his family when he said, "my mom stressed the importance of volunteering. My sister had already gone through the process and went off to college. So I volunteered a lot with American Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity and the Catholic Church where I went." At the time, Eric's community service participation had not held much meaning to his career development or vocational identity. While in college Eric connected his volunteer experience in high school with his participation at the same community service site during the past summer as a college student:

> I mean since I was a little bit younger back then they didn't allow us to do too much. But now that I got experience with actual adults, I really enjoy it. I did some volunteering for social work over this past summer. And I really like helping people. It was a lot of fun. I really enjoy helping people; I found a lot of joy in helping other people…

Patrick had the opportunity to participate in a college preparatory program for students interested in engineering. It was sponsored by a local graduate chapter of a Black Greek-lettered organization. Patrick described the structure of the program and how it fostered his career exploration in the field of engineering:

> It was a weekly lecture series where they would teach the group about some field in engineering or some aspect of the field. So I did that weekly. It was really good because I got to see what I liked and what I didn't like about it. And it helped me hone in onto which discipline I wanted to go through. It also put me in touch with a lot of good community leaders, which led me getting my scholarship to attend college.

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The presenters in the program were Black male engineering professionals, supplying

Patrick with a multiple role models. Similar to Jermaine, Patrick received specific

information about what was expected to enter his profession. In addition to learning the

expectations to become an engineer, Patrick knew what field of engineering he would

choose as his academic major.

John, a fourth year marketing major, and his friend from high school decided to

organize a concert to highlight local artists. John recounted how this experience

influenced his decision to major in marketing:

> The marketing major came about after my junior year in high school. My
> best friend and I decided to create a concert… and one of the things I was
> in charge of was the marketing.   What I did was pretty much the
> advertising for it. Whether it was word of mouth or through Facebook.
> And we even had little flyers we used to pass around town. I just really
> enjoyed doing it. I guess trying to sell people on an idea or product in a
> sense. And I said I could actually do this for my career or the rest of my
> life.

Carl, who wants to be an entrepreneur after college, worked over 40 hours a week

at his mother's bakery. In describing the large number of hours he worked in the bakery,

Carl commented, "so, like my typical summer I worked from 8 – 6…And then on

Saturday you just worked from 10 – 6." Carl during his time in high school didn't

appreciate the long hours he worked at his mother's business, but it gave him a realistic

expectation of the work ethic needed to be an entrepreneur. Carl understands that

working long hours is the cost of having the freedom to set his own work schedule as an

entrepreneur.

High school role models. Participants in this study discussed how people in their lives during high school who served as role models and/or mentors influenced their career choice. Bruce, a third year student, entered college as pre-business major. He changed his major to education with plans to begin his career as a high school social studies or history teacher. When asked, Bruce credited two male teachers in high school as major influences on his decision to pursue education as a career goal:

> Mr. Ray and Mr. Stow. One was an English teacher. One was a social studies teacher. But they were both really cool guys who have a passion for what they were doing. They made learning fun. I want to be something like that – were the kids actually enjoy school.

Bruce, through the role modeling he received from two male high school teachers, envisioned a possible self as teacher. He viewed a career in education as a realistic goal. Bruce commented, "My favorite high school teachers were males. And I could see myself being one of those favorite male teachers."

Mentors in and outside of the classroom played a huge role in the future career planning of participants in this study. Troy acknowledges that his mentor, a community leader, is a major reason why he is in college. Troy provided this account of how his mentor contributed to his academic achievement and goal of civic engagement after graduation from college.

> He mentored me, basically like a father figure…He is real good at working with kids like me that come from hard backgrounds and circumstances. He helped me stay focused on school and stuff…So having that relationship with him is part of the reason why I am at where I am right now. Why I want to give back to other kids that don't have the same opportunities.

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Troy aspires to be an accountant and he also wants to dedicate a significant amount of his time to supporting youth that come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Two students reported that staff at their high school influenced their decision to pursue engineering as their occupation. Patrick attributed his early interest in engineering to his guidance counselor in high school. Patrick had met with his guidance counselor to discuss the results of a career self-assessment inventory. Patrick remembers the counselor saying he should be an engineer based on how the test assessed his interests in various occupational fields. David mentioned that one of his teachers was the first person who suggested that he should consider engineering as a career path because of his academic achievement in math classes:

> I did have a teacher in high school I remember talking to about engineering. He was one of the physics teachers and I told him I was thinking about school and I asked what I should study for or look at…And just in that conversation he said I should give this (engineering) a go and see how you like it and go from there.

Experiences in College

The pre-collegiate years provide students with opportunities to develop their vocational self-concept and explore career options through classroom activities, internships, and other extracurricular activities. The college environment offers a different set of experiences that shape career-related decisions and behaviors of participants in this study. Students discussed how academic courses/programs, extracurricular activities, internships and other experiential activities, feared possible selves, and perceptions about their post-baccalaureate preparation influenced their choice of academic major and career goals.

Career immaturity. Career maturity is included in a list of propositions to describe career construction theory. It refers to the level of vocational development reached by an individual compared to what the person's level of vocational development should be at their age (Savickas, 2002). Traditional-age college students, which include all of the participants in this study, are in the career exploration stage of career construction theory. Therefore, their level of career exploration in high school and college is the measuring criteria for their level of career maturity at this stage. This section will how career maturity impacted decisions that students made about their academic major.

Michael, a fifth year criminology major came into college as a biology major with plans to become a dentist. He chose dentistry as his career goal because of the time he spent with his orthodontist. He describe his career decision-making process for dentistry:

> I thought it was really cool, like braces and stuff. Moving people's teeth
> and fixing people's mouth and stuff. It was really interesting. I think it
> still is. I just don't want to be in school that long to do that.

Michael chose to major in biology to prepare for the field of dentistry because he enjoyed his appointments at the orthodontist's office. He did not research the educational expectations and commitment to become an orthodontist, or he would have known the time commitment to become an orthodontist and as a result, he might have chosen a different academic major.

Eric, a third year anthropology major, and Bruce, a third year integrated social studies major entered college with similar experiences of choosing a major not based their prior experiences or related to a strong interest or passion. When Bruce was asked

why he chose to engineering as his major as a freshman Bruce explained, "I was looking at job opportunities after college and I was good at math so I chose engineering." Eric made a similar surface-level decision in his first year of college in selecting business as his major. When asked why he chose business as his major, Eric replied, "Just seemed like something that was interesting, I didn't really have any basis for why. I had no absolutely no idea going into college and I figured might as well try out business." Neither Bruce nor Eric had past influences including career exposure or role modeling by parents, other role models, or involvement in activities that connected to their choice of major.

Louis, a fourth year special education major had to decide if he should keep his biology major or change his major and/or career goal. He admitted that when he chose biology as a major it was not an "educated informed decision". Louis's low-income, unstable family background did not provide opportunities for him to explore occupational interests in his pre-collegiate year. Louis explained his decision-making process in choosing biology as his major:

> When I first came I was a biology major because I had enjoyed biology in
> high school it was something that I did well in so I thought I would stick
> to my strengths. When I started originally I thought maybe I would do
> marine biology because I had a very strong interests in animals and just
> reading a lot about them and different things. Okay, I will go to college
> and get a degree in that and I will go get a job somewhere that was pretty
> much the extent of, you know, how I saw my outlook after college. Most
> of it was based on, okay, I am good at bio I want to go to school, and I
> know I need to maintain my GPA. So what is going to allow me to
> maintain my GPA, something that I am good at and enjoy – bio. I like
> science.

Carl, an Agribusiness and Applied Economics major, recalled his selection of Computer Science and Engineering as his major when he entered college. Similarly to other participants in this section, Carl had a limited amount of career exploration in his pre-collegiate years. Most of his time outside of school was spent as an employee of his mother's bakery. Carl gave an account of his realization that seeking a career in computer technology was not a good fit for him.

> When I came in I wanted to build computers…So yeah, freshman year comes in and I always thought I was going to build computers and I thought I was going to have my own computer company, just because I like playing on computers. But I found that that was not my true passion. I am good with technology, but there's a difference at being good at something and wanting something.

Often, as in the case of Eric and Bruce, students will declare an academic major instead of admitting that they are undecided about their academic major and career goals. Quentin's decision to major in psychology is another example of this situation. Quentin gave this explanation of his decision to major in psychology:

> I thought I wanted to do psychology just because I feel like you know I have some good people skills, communication skills, social skills, and I feel like I am good listener and learner. I thought I wanted to do something with psychology, but then the more I thought about if there was a career for me in psychology, I didn't think I wanted to be a psychologist or a psychiatrist…I just kind of jumped right into it. Because it sounded good…I really didn't know what career I would be getting into with a psychology degree or in that field.

Quentin explained that in choosing to declare a major he had not fully explored, he chose psychology because of "the pressure to have a major".

Academic courses and degree programs. Over half of the students (12 out of 20) or 60 percent of the student participants in this study confirmed that experiences

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within their academic classes or academic programs influenced their selection of either an

academic major or career goal. Some students changed their major and/or career path

because of misperceptions they had about their academic program. Below average and/or

failing grades was another major influence for students to change their major and/or

career choice.

Academic difficulty. In addition to a lack of career maturity, participants in this

study also changed their academic major and/or career aspiration because of low or

failing grades they received in courses that were requirements in their academic program.

For some participants, a lack of career maturity was connected to low academic

achievement in classes connected to their major.

Eric and Bruce, mentioned in the previous section, came into college as business

and engineering majors. Bruce commented that he "did good in everything but the

engineering classes" and subsequently switched his major to anthropology. Likewise

Eric changed his major from business to integrated social studies and is now pursuing a

career in education as a high school teacher. When Eric was asked why he decided to

change his academic major he replied, "math and economics."

Similarly, Michael struggled during his first two years of college in his biology

and chemistry classes in college. As a result, he had to decide if he would remain

committed to biology and his aspiration to become an orthodontist. Michael gave this

description of the dilemma he faced:

> Bio and chem classes were horrible. Like, in high school bio wasn't that
> hard and it was interesting. But here it was really boring stuff and the tests
> were hard. They are still getting sanctioned for being too hard on people

and stuff. They have a problem. I just didn't want to do it anymore. So I tried to find something else.

Carl entered college as a computer science and engineering major without any substantial career exploration in computers and engineering. He was not aware of the expectations of engineering majors including the rigorous academic course schedule. He talked about his lack of preparation and the challenges he faced in his first semester as an engineering major:

> First off they gave me a horrible schedule when I first got here. They threw me in chemistry and calculus 2 the first semester and it's funny because it is the only class I cheated in in high school all the way through was chemistry. I didn't do none of my work…I did horrible in chemistry here because I didn't do nothing. Calculus - what happened was I took calculus and pre-calculus my senior year. And you know in your senior year its like whatever. So I got Cs in both of those, which got me credit here…My first semester here I had a .8 GPA so that was kind of like a hint like maybe you are not because even if you were somewhat good at it you would have something but to have all Fs is like…Especially when you graduate from high school with nothing less than a C.

Louis had a comparable experience as a biology major. He was not aware of the expectations including the level of competency required to be successful in his prior academic discipline. Louis's situation was similar to Carl and Michael in deciding to change his academic major and career goal:

> When I came here again, the first thing I learned to get a degree in biology is that you don't just take a bunch of bio classes. I learned about the prerequisite system all the math and chemistry courses. It became something that was daunting because it was new to me, I hadn't experience it before. I really didn't do so well my first couple of quarters, so that you know I had to sit down and really humble myself and decide on making a change.

Adjustments to career path. There were two participants who reported that their coursework led to contemplation about their major and/or career plans. They had a high level of career maturity – demonstrated by their involvement career-related activities from childhood to high school. They did not completely overhaul their career plans. Instead, their rumination about their vocational interests encouraged the pursuit of other academic majors, minors, and additional occupational interests.

Both participants did not expect that the majority of their course material would be focused on theory instead of learning how to transfer their learning to performance in their desired career fields. Jermaine, a third year architecture major, discussed his comfort with having a career that facilitates a hands-on approach to work when he said, "I have always been more of a practical person when it comes to building things". He described what he learned about architecture being less of a hands-on career:

> I would say…spring semester of my freshman year. We didn't have studio that year. We were just applying to get into the program. We were researching what entailed in the program, and what goals they are trying to set for you. And, I learned that…there is not a lot of personal effort into the actual architecture of the building. The people in construction management make it possible. Yeah…being an actual architect requires a lot of sitting at a desk and drawing, sketching, diagramming.

Jermaine still intends to begin his career as an architect, but his classroom experience and additional knowledge he received about the occupation has caused him to consider other career options connected to architecture:

> If I have to find another career it would a lot more hands-on…But right now I do like construction management. A lot of it is hands-on. You go to the site and you interact with the actual building of the project, which is what I found really interesting to do.

Likewise, Patrick, a fifth year mechanical engineering major, had expected more of his courses to focus on the actual work performed by engineers. He had extensive knowledge about engineering from the community program he participated in during his high school years. He stated, "Engineering was cool but it wasn't what I expected. I expected it to be hands-on…not as theoretical." As a result, Patrick began to explore other careers. He described his thoughts about engineering and his decision to choose design as a minor:

> I caught onto design and it showed me some new possibilities. It was more about coming up with ideas for people and creating a device or an experience or a space for those people for addressing that problem. I went into engineering for solving problems, but instead I was solving math problems. So I kind of saw that and kind of got discouraged a little bit, by I ended up picking up design as a minor. I was able to supplement both the technical and theoretical but also have the creative component as well.

Extracurricular activities. In addition to academic courses and degree programs, students also described how their participation in extracurricular activities shaped career-related behavior and choices. In this study, 10 out of the 20 participants stated that participation in extracurricular activities significantly influenced their choice of academic major and/or career path. For students in this study, extracurricular activities include internships, research projects, student organizations, sports clubs, and community service. Participants described how experiences outside the classroom had a direct impact on their career-related decisions and behavior. Also, participants described how peer interactions through extracurricular activities influenced their choice of academic major and/or career path.

In addition several of the students in this study participated in some type of

internship and/or experiential activities. For some participants these experiences served

as validation for their choice of occupation. Other students reported that their

experiences gave them insight into a career field they had not previously considered.

     Peer interactions. Three of the students in this study in this study gave accounts

of the role their undergraduate peers had in their choice of academic major. David, a fifth

year industrial engineering major, discussed how his involvement in the National Society

of Black Engineers (NSBE) student organization, provided him a mentor who gave him

advice on the type of engineering major he should choose:

> I had a mentor when I was a freshman in NSBE. He was in industrial
> engineering. He talked to me about it. When I came there were all these
> different engineering majors…And he was talking about how with
> industrial engineering you become technically competent but in a lot of
> ways kind of like you keep your options open. I want to keep my options
> as open as possible. Make the best decision. The way he described it as,
> when you're working you got to be able to know your numbers but a lot of
> time you have to work with people.

> Carl chose his current major because of advice he received and trusted from a

friend. Carl gave this account of the conversation and his decision to change his major:

> First off James was in that major. And so he told me about it. At the time
> before I got into the major I was in construction management…James was
> in agribusiness and he told me to check it out. He said there were lot of
> jobs in agribusiness and agriculture. And so I went to their website and
> looked up some stuff and it said that their graduates find jobs in six
> months. And so I was like okay, I can do that because I need a job. Plus it
> was business, so like I said I had already been doing that design as a
> minor. I already know I was going to do marketing…

Carl and James have known each since their first year in college through participation in

an early arrival program. Carl's participation in the program gave him the opportunity to

meet and develop a close relationship with James. As a result, Carl trusted the advice

that James gave him about his academic major.

Kevin's decision to change his academic major was also because of interactions he had with another undergraduate student. Kevin and the other student, Richard, attended the same university and travelled together to a conference. Richard gave Kevin detailed information about his academic major. Kevin said that the conversation with Richard convinced him to switch his academic major:

> When I went to the colloquium in the Virgin Islands I talked with Richard,
> I was telling him that I was through with constructions systems
> management. He told me to check out Public Affairs. I was like okay,
> cool. On the plane ride back I emailed the guy he told me to set up a
> meeting with. He was telling me what the major has to offer. I really like
> my specialization – urban policy management, which is the study of urban
> areas and different things that come with that. I am taking urban teaching
> and learning class. The stuff they are talking about in that class. I am like,
> 'I experienced that in my high school.'… I like what I am learning.

Source of validation. Experiential activities like internships, community service, and student organizations can validate or disprove a student's academic major and/or career choice. Either outcome contributes to career maturity because it provides students with an opportunity to explore their vocational interests. Five out of the 20 students credited their experiential activities for validating their choices of academic major and/or career path.

Michael, a fifth year student, changed his major to criminology in his third year and participated in ride-alongs with police officers on patrol to gain more knowledge about working in law enforcement. Michael's childhood job shadowing experiences with his orthodontist increased his level of career decision-making self-efficacy, which influenced his decision to pursue career exploration in law enforcement. He stated how

the job shadowing experiences supported his decision to have a career in law

enforcement:

> And after switching (academic major) I started seeing where you can do
> ride-alongs and one of my classes required ride-alongs with the police in
> Columbus. I got to go to prisons and stuff and it all really interested me.
> Really cool stuff. And something I could see myself doing for a long time
> after graduating. I definitely knew that I picked the right major.

In addition to being a source of validation of his career choice, the experiential activities

strengthened his possible self of becoming a police officer after graduation. Michael

said, "I could see myself doing this (police officer) for a long time after graduating".

After deciding to major in film studies, Larry began searching for experiences to

add to his resume and increase his competence as a videographer. He decided to create a

documentary of his experience as a teammate of club football team at his university.

Prior to this documentary, Larry had completed a film project for one of his high school

classes, which inspired him to choose a career in film and video production. The high

school project served as impetus for the documentary. Larry provided an overview of his

project and how it led other opportunities:

> Last February, actually over a year now, I began to work on a
> documentary combining my love for football and film. So it is
> documentary of a club football team that I am member of here...That has
> actually opened up a lot of opportunities for me. I have been in contact
> with the film studies advisor. I have gotten class credits from this
> documentary. He approached me about study abroad opportunity that I
> jumped on immediately. I was able to go to Prague for several weeks and
> learn from their film school overseas. So I mean, that was something that
> would have never come up had I not decided to actually jump on this idea
> I had since I have been playing for football here, and the love for film that
> I have. I am meeting a lot of people, making connections and saw things
> that just wouldn't have happened.

Even if an activity was not completely positive, it can still be a reaffirming experience. For example, Carl, a fifth year agribusiness and applied economics major, commented on how his internship experience further encouraged him to become a business owner after graduating from college. When asked how his internship experience affected his goals of becoming an entrepreneur, Carl said, "If anything I want to do it more just because I don't like to be micromanaged." Carl's early and long-term exposure to his mother's life as an entrepreneur has significant on how viewed his internship. Carl commented about his internship:

> I had a lot of freedom with the internship; I could do what I want, like take a long lunch break. You know things like that. In sales all they are worried about is quotas and numbers so it doesn't matter how you do it, just get it done. And there is still like someone who is like "what did you do yesterday or da da da da." And I am like "don't worry, I did my job, you don't have to check me every so often". And it kind of gets annoying.

For Carl, flexibility concerning when, where, and how he works as a professional was what made being an entrepreneur his career goal. The control or micromanagement he felt at his internship experience further reinforced Carl's negative views being an employee instead of an employer.

Insight to new career possibilities. Some of the students in this study indicated that they learned of new career opportunities because of participation in experiential activities. John, a fourth year student majoring in marketing, is planning to pursue a career in his field of study after college. However, he has also expressed interest recently in a career in higher education because of his participation in extracurricular activities on campus:

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When I first came in I wanted to do brand management and get an MBA. Now, I actually wouldn't mind doing administrative work through the university. So I like to do my professional career first – something in marketing and brand management. If I had a chance maybe come back to OSU and/or any other university and help with diversity and inclusion – I would love to do that. That really came about by doing work with the Bell Resource Center (BRC) and diversity ambassadors. And being an ambassador with the BRC for the past three years and being in the Early Arrival Program my freshman year. I just see the effect it has on people.

Troy, a fourth year accounting major, thought about how he could combine his career in accounting with his passion for working with youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Troy reflected on his desire for community service as the result of his involvement on campus:

My first thought after college was like get your master's and go and get your Ph.D. That was what I have been told by a lot of people. Strive for the top. But then like as I go through the years seeing leadership and stepping into leadership positions and given the opportunity to mentor and this opportunity to lead. I am like, I feel like I need to be more involved in my community. Like my community is not very good there is a lot of poverty…

His desire for civic engagement, which came from his experiences of homelessness, foster care and his involvement in community service in college, has created a new possible self:

…as far as working in the community now there is opportunity to do both. You can volunteer and work. Especially talking with an administrator yesterday about the program, My Brother's Keeper. He told me about what they are going to do with the project next month and I was definitely interested doing that. And he was telling me that they are paid positions. I figured like I can do both even after school.

Similar to Troy, Kevin found his career and/or lifelong commitment to service through his involvement in outreach programs on campus. Kevin knew that his

vocational identity was centered upon supporting diverse, disadvantaged populations,

which is core part of his identity. He described what he feels is his calling:

> That is where my heart is at for the most part – helping black folk or
> diverse groups, not just black people but LGBTQ, everybody. Providing
> access support and services for that group so that we can excel as a people.
> I know that sounds cliché. I want to help people.

Kevin realized through his work with various outreach programs that a career in public

affairs can help him with establishing a service-oriented career:

> It was different experiences on campus to gauge what I wanted to do and
> what major was right for me. I was a peer leader for the Early Arrival
> Program and with YSP students. I also was a tutor counselor for Upward
> Bounds students. With those two jobs I was building relationships and my
> communication skills. Just different aspects of both jobs had helped me
> get…like I feel better about like the work I am doing…Especially when I
> did the Upward Bound a lot of the kids came from the same neighborhood
> I used to ride around and hang out with my friends… Just different
> experiences like that I am able to help somebody else…that drove me to
> public affairs.

David was progressing through a traditional undergraduate engineering path of

internships and co-ops to prepare for a career in manufacturing. He decided to pursue an

alternative path after reflecting on his recent experiences at a conference on Black males

in education, participation in summer research program and classes that he took. David

discussed how these activities influenced his decision-making process about his plans

after graduation:

> It definitely has changed. I have taken a couple of co-ops and couple of
> internships. I had been looking at joining the workforce and preparing for
> that…I feel like I have positioned myself to go into some companies if I
> like to…but I kind of like been taking some classes. There are some
> different ways to look at manufacturing and just the bigger picture…like
> the effect that manufacturing has on the energy sector and things that can
> be done and new materials and different processes or different ways to

look at it. I found that a lot more interesting. And I started thinking, like
okay that's not a major.

David's choice to pursue a different career path motivated him to participate in activities

that increased his level of self-efficacy to pursue employment in an emerging career field.

David explained his new career path selection:

> So the last couple of years through my involvement with an office on
> campus and going to a conference about Black males in education and
> seeing all those people with there doctorates it was really cool. That
> and…experiencing the Summer Research Opportunities Program and
> really understanding that what you want to do, you can do, you just have
> to be willing to take a step out there. So that's kind of what's got me
> ready to pursue something in the field that I am not even to sure what's in
> that field – the energy field. So that along with, you know I took a seminar
> on sustainability and they all just kind of seem to mesh…That's something
> I at least like to pursue and see where it goes. I feel like working in a field
> related to that or maybe doing research.

Post-baccalaureate preparation. In this final section, I summarized responses

that participants provided of their decisions, perspective and behavior related to post-

baccalaureate preparation. In addition to discussing their strategy to successfully

transition to the professional workforce, participants also discussed their plans for

graduate school. Included within their responses are the pre-collegiate and collegiate

influences that have shaped their post-graduate plans. Responses ranged from detailed

plans that are being implemented to vague ideas about what students think they will

complete leading up to or after graduation. Only a small number of students, five out of

the 20 participants, provided detailed plans for their pursuit of an advanced degree or

entry into in their desired career field.

John, a fourth year student, discussed his plans to transition into the field of

marketing:

> …really what I have been trying to do is get experience and that ties into
> the workforce. I had the opportunity to have two internships during my
> college career. For AT& T the summer after my sophomore year and this
> past summer I interned at GE Capital.... The customer experience (at GE
> Capital) was more of a marketing position and that was amazing… the
> position itself was great, I got to interact with customers and interact with
> other employees in terms of trying to create packages about how to market
> things to customers, which I thought was great. Other things that I have
> done in terms of prepping myself for an MBA program, I have been taking
> GMAT prep in terms of going over vocab and looking over practices tests
> and practice questions. Also, other than that I have also done research on
> the various programs that I am interested in – I tried to narrow my
> schools…

John's detailed career plan was the result of reservoir of self-efficacy that he obtained

throughout his life that includes early career exposure and role modeling he received

from his father, a concert that he planned and promoted in high school, and his

involvement in extracurricular activities in college.

Similarly, Patrick discussed his post-graduate plans, which include graduate

school. When asked about his post-baccalaureate plans, Patrick gave the following

account:

> I have done a couple of different internships, so I have interned every
> summer except one time since I have been at my college. I worked at this
> company for three summers. That gave me some experience with the
> automotive industry and also with engineering related activities in general.
> I also worked at this research institute. That kind of gave me more of
> a…research and development spin to things. They are mostly a
> government contractor so I got to see a different approach to engineering
> and industry. Then lately, I have started doing some research to kind of
> really help prepare me for graduate school. So this past summer I got a job
> at the assistant technology center at the university's medical center. And I
> am working with a professor on helping to optimize power wheelchairs for

people with disabilities and isolate some of the vibrations associated with them. Also I am trying to look into some prosthetic devices for solutions for people with upper extremity amputations. So that is kind of what I will be focusing on when I roll into the master's program at my university.

Patrick, similarly to John, had a vast amount of career exploration experiences from early childhood through college. The building of power derby cars, participation in an engineering program targeted to Black males in high school, and involvement in the National Society of Black Engineers and or extracurricular activities were instrumental in the formation of his detailed preparation and planning for life after college.

Larry, who is a graduating senior, also has a specific set of tasks that he plans to complete to accomplish his goal of having career in film after college. When asked if he feels prepared for school or entry into the workforce, Larry stated, "I feel prepared definitely…I have the work ethic I have enough experience where I can jump on board with something and keep things rolling". Larry described his post-baccalaureate plans and actions:

> After college, I plan to take some time off. I don't know exactly how much time. I am graduating in December. I plan on staying in my college's city until maybe the end of next summer. Right now, just making connections, finding work at the moment to build my portfolio. This past summer I took a trip to California. I have a friend who just graduated from USC. I kind of took a mini tour I stayed there for a week to kind of see what is like for a student at USC. So I have looked into that. That is one of my top options I am now looking into. Columbia College in Chicago is a great option for film. That's close to home I wouldn't have to worry too much about rent hopefully.

Larry's film project in high school was the catalyst for his career exploration activities in college, which further supported his goal of having a career in film

and video production. His plans are not as detailed, which may be evident of the fact that his most of his career development experiences occurred in college.

In contrast, other students did not express well-defined, comprehensive post-baccalaureate plans. Matthew, a fifth year senior in engineering, when asked about his post-graduate plans remarked:

> I guess as far as career goals the thing I most...is pursuing or getting opportunities that will help and I am still working on that. But, I know I will get it done. To get where I want to be I have to have a little bit deeper experience. I know my work ethic is there. But I need to get the experience to help build my resume. And, its really tough to do especially when your context that you have in there is not readily available or just don't know. So I am trying to get more. So I have been going to networking seminars trying to get these opportunities. And, that's kind of where I am at with that.

As a student athlete, most of Matthew's time revolved around practice, games, and coursework. He did not have much time to for involvement in extracurricular activities that could provide career-related experiences. In addition, Matthew did not have any prior exposure to engineering before entering college and has not participated in an internship during his undergraduate career.

Two of the participants acknowledge that they have not put forth much effort and thought into their post-baccalaureate plans. Greg, a fifth year senior has begun to research graduate school programs in sports administration, and recognized his lack of preparation for employment opportunities. Greg explained, "As far as work that's where I need to do more because I haven't really got my foot in the door as far as like building connections so I need to do more on that." Comparably, Quentin, a fourth year student majoring in Sport Industry, recognized opportunities he missed to get more involved in

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extracurricular activities that could have prepared him for law school and/or employment

in the sports industry after college. Quentin candidly commented on why he does not feel

prepared for law school or employment connected to his academic program:

> I don't feel prepared honestly. Because I haven't done as much research as
> I could have done so far. I am currently seeking to get into some pre-law
> involvement groups to get more research. Actually, on the other hand I did
> for one of my Intro to Sports Industry classes. We were required to
> interview people for the profession that we want to break into. I got into
> contact with about 5 or 6 people in that field... But other than that I
> haven't done research or gotten involved extracurricular groups as much
> as I could have done.

Greg and Quentin, comparable to Matthew, had a limited amount of career-related pre-

collegiate and higher education experiences that influenced their choice of career.

Therefore, the post-baccalaureate plans are vague and incomplete.

Conclusion

So recall the purpose of this study was to examine the process through which

Black male collegians make decisions about their intended career choice. That is, what

actors, factors, or conditions shape their within-college career-related decisions (e.g.,

major choice, career, out-of-class involvement)? Two research questions guided the

analysis:

1. What do Black male collegians report as important influences on their intended

   career choice?

2. How do these important influences shape Black male collegians' career-related

   decisions in college?

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This chapter presented results from the study. First, Black male collegians identified several significant influences on their career decisions including family, peers, role models, and career-related activities from early childhood through college. Second, participants revealed through their words how these influences shaped their career decisions. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of findings in the context of existing literature, along with implications for policy, practice and future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

This grounded theory study, guided by the framework of career construction theory and possible selves, examined the factors that influenced the career-related decision-making and behavior of Black male collegians. Eight major themes were identified: (a) parental/familial support of career exposure and (b) career control/early career development, (c) career-related experiential activities high school, (d) high school role models, (e) career maturity, (f) academic courses and programs in college, (g) extracurricular activities in college, (h) post-baccalaureate preparation. Ultimately, this study sought to determine major influences on career choice for Black male collegians in this study and how those influences affected their career-related behavior and decision-making process.

Findings from this study provided answers to the research questions, and informed implications and suggestions for parents, K-12 teachers and administrators, and higher education faculty and administrators.

Discussion

First, results revealed what Black male collegians perceived to be major influences on their intended career choice. Significant influences were early exposure to occupations and career-related role modeling by family members. In high school, students recalled that role models in the form of teachers, community members, and

experiential activities like internships, extracurricular activities, and class projects had a huge impact on their career choice.

Early exposure to occupations and other forms of career-related support provided by parents were instrumental to the early career development of some participants. Several participants commented on how their parent(s) introduced them to activities that became connected to their career goals in college. For example, some participants who are pursuing a career in engineering recalled participating in activities like building power derby cars with their father or doing experiments with chemistry sets purchased by their parents.

Participants also discussed how family members served as role models and shaped their career-related possible selves. For example, one of the students had a parent that owned a bakery store, which influenced his decision to be an entrepreneur. Another student stated that his minor in music, media, and enterprise was the result of observing his father's masterful playing of various instruments during his childhood.

Family structure also seemed to influence Black males' career decision-making in the present study. For instance, participants that I interviewed who came from disadvantaged backgrounds had little to no career exploration experiences in their pre-collegiate years. I defined disadvantaged backgrounds as home environments that provided minimal to no support or resources for academic achievement or career development either because family members were not available, limited resources at home and/or school, or a lack of career-related role models at home and/or in the community. Additionally, students from this type of background also had to assume a

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caretaker role for other family members, which served as another barrier to participation in career-related activities. As a consequence, many of the participants did not recall having career aspirations during their early childhood and early adolescent years.

Beyond role models and personal influences, the study revealed how career-related experiential activities consisting of classroom projects, internships, vocational programs and other extracurricular activities shaped Black male collegians' choice of academic major and/or occupation. Some participants talked at length about how class projects became the starting point of their current career path. In relation to the classroom, some participants identified internships, required by their school district, as activities that exposed them to careers they had not previously considered.

There were other findings related to the second research question. Black males in this study were candid in explaining how people and experiences in their life affected their career-related decisions in college. The choice of academic major, formation of desired and feared possible selves that motivate career-related behavior, involvement in extracurricular activities, and perceptions and behavior about post-baccalaureate preparation were ways that their career choice affected their career-related decisions and behaviors in college.

One major finding from this study was the role that pre-collegiate involvement in career exploration activities played in helping Black males' choose an academic major as a incoming first year student.   Most students who had a low level of participation in pre-collegiate career exploration activities were uncertain of their academic major and career path in their first and second year of college.   On the other hand, participants who

engaged in substantive career exploration activities before coming to college, kept the same academic major or chose an academic program closely related to the major they declared as a freshman. Also, this same group of students who had in-depth career exploration experiences gave more detailed responses to questions about their career goals after college, compared to their peers who had less pre-collegiate career exposure.

Further, involvement in extracurricular activities also influenced decisions about career-related activities to pursue in college. Some of the activities that students pursued in college were internships, community service and involvement in student organizations. These types of activities either validated career-related decisions made by students or provided insight into new career paths and/or occupations.

Participants who displayed career maturity in their high school years, which included involvement in extracurricular activities, continued their participation in student organizations, campus programs, and other activities in college. Participants who chose to be involved in extracurricular activities gained access to social capital in the form of relationships with other students, faculty, staff and community professionals who served as role models and advisors concerning career development and exploration. Some of the participants reported that it was their peers who persuaded them to enroll into their current academic program.

Last students discussed perceptions about their post-baccalaureate planning including decisions they made to prepare for the transition to the professional workforce or graduate school. Again, students that demonstrated career maturity as incoming freshmen provided more details about their post-baccalaureate plans. This group of

students reported a higher number of decisions and actions they have taken to prepare for entry into the labor market or pursuit of an advanced degree.

Figure 1

Constructing Careers, Constructing Mazes Framework
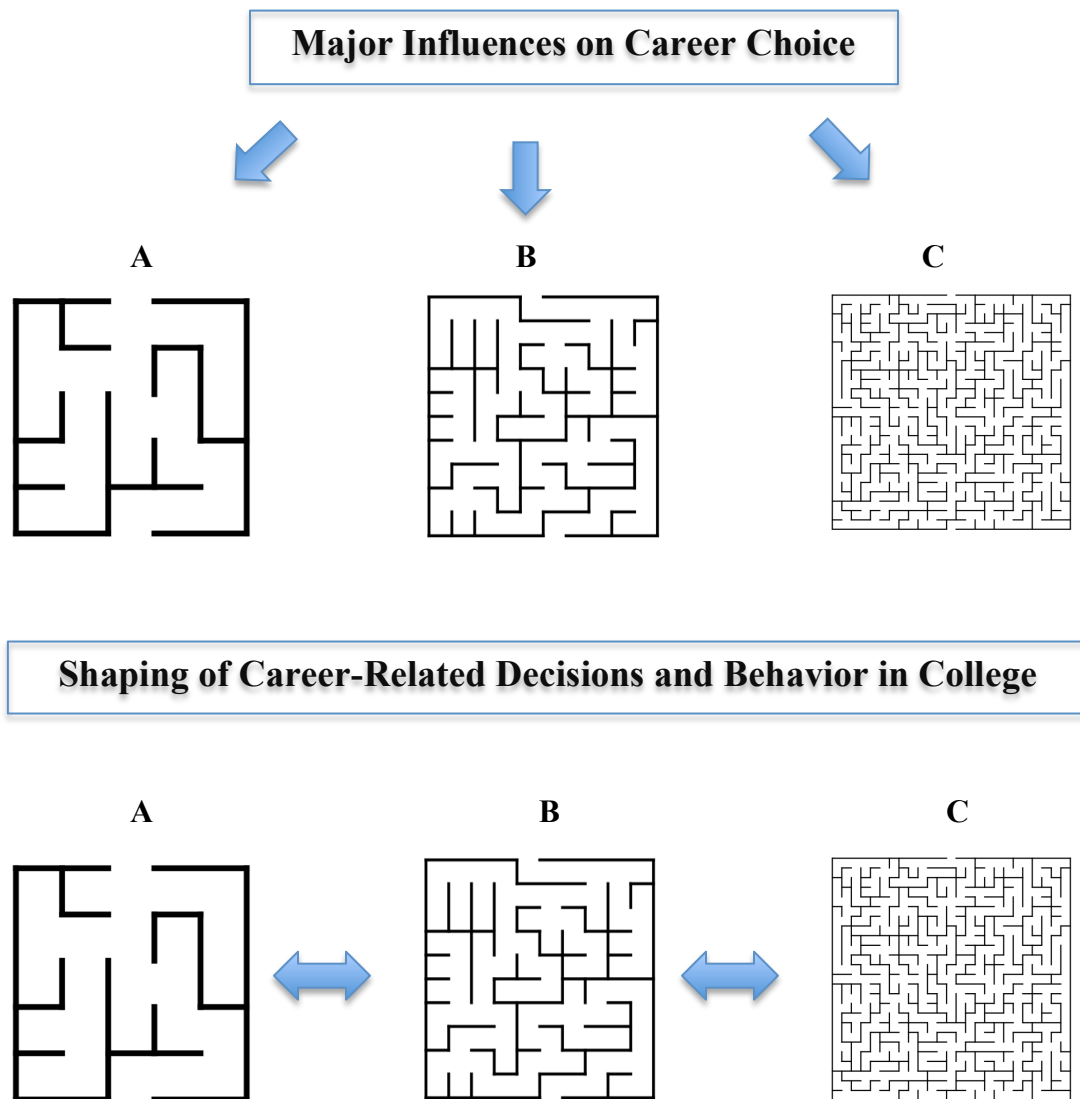
Theoretical Framework: Constructing Careers, Constructing Mazes

The students' accounts of their career-related decisions and experiences throughout their entire life provided the foundation for a theoretical framework that summarized the findings of the discussion section.   The framework, "Constructing Mazes, Constructing Careers", illustrates the intertwinement of Black male collegians' pre-collegiate and higher education career-related experiences and how it affects progress towards occupational goals or actualizing their career-related possible selves. Although the framework is simplistic, the career development process itself is highly complex**.**

Major Influences on Career Choice

The first phase of the model, "Major Influences on Career Choice", is related to the findings on how students were influenced by career-related support received from family and significant others in their childhood. Also, participants initiated their own career development experiences through experiments with chemistry lab sets or the building of derby cars. In addition, students recounted career exploration activities in high schools including internships, volunteer activities, and classroom projects. Conversely, some participants had a marginal amount of career-related experiences because of unstable home environments or other factors.

The mazes themselves symbolize an individual's career path. The first set of mazes represents the students' level of career maturity and amount of detail in their career-related possible selves before entering college. The major influences on choice of career for students were a culmination (or lack of) career-related experiences and decisions during their childhood and high school years. The three arrows coming from

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the "Major Influences on Career Choice" box that point to each maze represents the creation of a career path based on an individual's pre-collegiate career-related experiences. The maze with the least amount of obstacles (Maze A) represents students who demonstrate a high level of career maturity and gave detailed descriptions of their career-related possible selves. The path to their academic major and career choice has only a few twists and turns compared to the other mazes. Students represented by Maze B had an average level of career maturity; they have some pre-college exposure to career and college related activities. Students in this group could provide some details of their career-related possible selves. The most complex maze or Maze C represented students with a low level of pre-collegiate career exploration, or career maturity, and could only offer a vague account of their career-related possible selves.

The career maturity and possible selves for each student begins as a complex maze because of the dearth of mentoring, exposure to careers, and participation in career-related activities. Each career-related experience adds more clarity to career goals and removed some of the barriers from the maze. Students with a minimal amount of career development have more obstacles to overcome and need more engagement in career exploration activities in order to form a vocational identity.

Shaping of Career-Related Decisions in College

The second phase, "Shaping of Career-Related Decisions and Behaviors in College", consists of the experiences of participants during their undergraduate career. Students who enter college with a low level of career maturity and vague possible selves struggled with choosing an academic major and/or career. The complex maze that they

constructed from their lack of career-related experiences negatively impacted their selection of an academic major that is alignment with their interests and abilities. Students coming into college with a complex maze or vague career path may exhibit a low level of self-efficacy and do not seek vocational resources and service either because of lack of awareness or motivation. Contrarily, students entering college with high level of career maturity as represented by the simpler maze are able to navigate through their college campus and wisely choose student organizations, experiences, and other resources that will support their career development.

The type of career maze that a student has in college is not static. Students can compensate for their low level of career-related experiences by getting involved in extracurricular activities and developing relationships with students, faculty and staff. These types of decisions and behaviors removed obstacles from their maze and they gained greater clarity of their career-related possible selves. The arrows added to the second row of mazes illustrate how career-related decisions and behaviors of students can make their maze (career path) more or less complex. It was more likely for students in this study, over the course of their undergraduate career, to transition from the most complex maze (C) to a simpler maze (A or B). However a few students moved from the simple career maze (A) to a more complex career path (B or C) because of a low participation in career-related extracurricular activities in college, or a willingness to complicate their career path because of their high level of career maturity and career decision-making self-efficacy.

Ultimately, a career path that is clear and direct as represented by Maze A is the preferred career path. However, students who are willing to complicate their career path may have higher level of satisfaction with their career because of their willingness to explore vocations that strongly connect to a passion and/or life purpose. Eventually, students who ventured out into the most complex career mazes will eventually return to the simpler career maze as they gain experience and knowledge related to their career goal, and more clarity of their possible selves.

This theoretical framework further tests and extends in the theories of possible selves and career construction theory. Students who had role models and career-related experiences had more detailed career-related possible selves. As a result, their career goal(s) were more realistic with a clear path or set of steps needed to complete these goals. This group of students represent Maze A, the simplest career maze which symbolizes the knowledge that students have of what is required to achieve their career goal(s).

The decision that some students, who had high levels of career maturity and career decision-making self-efficacy, made to pursue vague career goals or occupations provides a challenge to the notion that specific, concrete possible selves are more likely be achieved than less defined possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves theory posits that agency can help to prevent the formation of negative possible selves. The students in this study with high career maturity and career decision-making self-efficacy possess agency. However, unlike the current version of possible selves theory, their agency is not interpreted as an ability to develop more concrete, defined possible

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selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Instead, some participants in this study with agency chose to complicate their career-related possible selves by choosing career paths and goals that are ambiguous. These students have determined that the rewards outweigh the risks in choosing the more complicated career maze instead of the simpler career maze. The willingness to endure ambiguity in a one's career path is a reality of today's labor market and desire for this generation of college graduates (Kamenetz, 2012), which sometimes does not align with theories like possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) or Super's (1980) life span life span theory that were developed in prior decades.

The constructing careers constructing mazes framework provides a more concise theoretical framework to specifically highlight career development from birth to college, especially the role of career maturity in determining how pre-collegiate career-related experiences shape career choices and behaviors in college. Focusing on a shorter life span also provides greater opportunity additional research to test, expand or challenge this framework. As a result, career development and career construction theories can increased attention from scholars and practitioners.

Relationship of Findings to Prior Research

Several students reported exposure to career-related activities and role modeling by their parents. Most students who received information about careers from their parents did not change their academic major and/or career choice during their first two years of college. Conversely, a majority of peers who did not have career development experiences in their childhood either were uncertain about their academic major and career goals or switched academic programs during their first year of college. This

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finding is consistent with scholarship that states that parental support increases the level career decision-making self-efficacy in children (Alliman-Brissett et al., 2004; Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Savickas, 2002). For example, a study that examined career self-efficacy in African American high school students concluded that a positive relationship existed between career decision-making self-efficacy and parental support (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Additional scholarship reported that 50% of the variance of African American boys' belief to make good career-related decisions was predicted by their parents' career-related role modeling (Alliman-Brissett et al. 2004).

There were participants who did not engage in career-related activities during their childhood. As a result, this group of participants had, at the most, a limited amount of pre-collegiate career development experiences. Their lack of career maturity led to uneducated decisions on their choice of academic major and/or career goal. Most of the students in this group changed their career goals during their first or second year of college. Likewise, research has shown that youth who do not have a healthy bond with their caregiver(s) are less likely to explore career options at an early age and think about their career as an adult (Savickas, 2002).

Several students reported involvement in high school career-related activities consisting of classroom projects, internships, and community programs. Most students who were involved in activities connected to their career aspirations have either kept the same major throughout their undergraduate career or changed it based on increased awareness of their interests and abilities and/or other career options. Similarly, research has shown that African American high school students who participated in career-related

activities demonstrated higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy and increased awareness of their vocational interests and abilities (Gushue et al., 2006). On the contrary, most students in this study with a low level of involvement in career-related activities in high school either have changed their major after their first year of college or have not participated in an internship, research project or other career development experiences in college.

Career maturity represents an individual's degree of career development based on his/her engagement of developmental tasks compared to what is expected for their chronological age (Savickas, 2002); deep engagement that meets or exceeds what is expected of one's chronological age is generally accepted as career maturity. Participants in this study who participated in a limited amount of career exploration activities had a low level of career maturity. Students who lacked career maturity had to make unexpected changes to their academic major and/or career at the beginning of their undergraduate career. This same group of students also admitted that their choice of academic major and career was centered on potential income and/or perceived strengths in a vocational area. Likewise, previous research on the career-related behaviors of Black collegians illustrated that students who changed their academic major had used income preference and perceived academic strengths as the main criteria for their choice of occupation (Lewis & Collins, 2001).

Most of the students who changed their academic major within their first two years of college also experienced academic difficulty in courses related to their academic discipline and/or career interest. Similarly, research that examined the decision-making

process of three Black collegians interested in science-related careers concluded that the one student who remained committed to his incoming major had a better understanding of his academic discipline compared to the two other students in the study (Lewis & Collins, 2001). The student who remained committed to his science-related career goal of pharmaceutical research compartmentalized his coursework and expectations for the work he would do in his career. Having this perspective allowed the student to endure through obstacles he faced in some of his classes and stay focused on his occupational goal (Lewis & Collins, 2001).

Participants in this study reported that peer relationships had a strong influence on their choice of academic major and career path. These relationships served as social capital in that students gained access to and used information they received from highly valued relationships with other students. Comparably, scholarship on Black males collegians found that students viewed their relationships with peers as a form of social capital for motivation and social and academic support (Palmer & Gasman, 2008).

Furthermore, students from low income and unstable home environments were able to compensate for their lack of pre-collegiate career development experiences through their involvement in extracurricular activities in college. Students discussed how their involvement in research programs, educational conferences, and community-based initiatives provided clarity of their career-related possible selves. Likewise, scholarship on Black and Latino males in college stated that involvement in extracurricular activities in college can "overcome academic and socioeconomic disadvantages" (Strayhorn, 2010, p. 322). This finding is also supported by research that concluded that low-income, first

generation Black students can expand and achieve their career goals by taking advantage of social capital on campus in the form of relationships with faculty, staff, and community professionals (Parks-Yancy, 2012).

Students in this study who provided more details about their possible selves also exhibited a higher level of career maturity through participation in high school and/or college in internships, research projects, other extracurricular activities and specific classroom activities mentioned by participants. Similarly, possible selves serve as an incentive for future behavior to either avoid undesirable possible selves to achieve a desired future self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). For some students in this study career development experiences added complexity and ambiguity to their possible selves, which as explained in the section on framework, should not be viewed as negative outcome as could be perceived by how possible selves theory is framed.

Research on career-related experiences of Black high school students from low-income backgrounds focuses mostly on their low career aspirations because they perceive that discrimination and their socioeconomic conditions will limit their opportunities for career advancement (Lease, 2006; M. A. Jackson et al., 2006), and fixation on the goal of being a professional athlete (Parmer, 1993). However, I was surprised to find out that some of the students in this study from middle to upper-class socioeconomic background, compared to some of their lower income peers, also had a minimal amount of career exploration experiences from childhood to high school and were just as unaware of their vocational identity and/or career goals. I assumed that their access to social capital represented by parents who could provide career exposure and role modeling, better

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resourced schools, and other powerful social connections and relationships would provide career development experiences that would shape their career identity.

Implications for Future Practice, Research and Policy

Future Practice and Policy

Results reveal pre-college activities that seem to influence Black males' choice of academic major and career. Parents, family members, and legal guardians should use these findings to make decisions about career-related involvement for the young Black male in their care. Some common strategies include taking the young Black males to work and encouraging them to participate in internships and externships as ways to nurture their career aspirations.

Parents, other family members, and legal guardians should have regular conversations about career development with the young Black male in their care. Conversations can consist of asking him about his dream job and/or what he sees himself doing as an adult; and then providing him with additional information about occupations he has shown interest by using magazines, television or video, and Internet. Caretakers should ask young black males under their care what he perceives are his natural talents, which can then be matched with specific occupations. Another topic of conversations should highlight how the average person now has more than one career, which can encourage young Black males to have multiple career aspirations. Caretakers should pay attention to what television shows, videos, movies and other forms of media the young Black male in their home watches. It can provide information on potential career interests, which the caretaker can bring up in conversation. For example, if parents

notice that their son watches shows about science like *Cosmos*, they can use this information to provide further information on astrology, astronomy, and astrophysics in language that is easier to comprehend. Last, caretakers should show young Black males under their care Black male professionals in various occupations and career fields through Internet, magazines, and books. Caretakers should also discuss with them that that it is okay to pursue a career in a field that does not have a high number of Black professionals.

Findings in this study showed that caretakers of young Black males who were active in supporting their career interest increased his career decision-making self-efficacy. There are multiple strategies that caretakers of young black males can employ to facilitate career exploration. Caretakers can engage their young black males in activities at home that include building a model airplane or conducting experiments on a chemistry set, which could spur interest in a vocation not previously considered. Caretakers should also be proactive in researching community-based after school and summer program that can provide educational and career enrichment for their young Black male. Examples of community-based program include activities through the Urban League; local mentoring programs; science, math, art and technology programs; national youth programs through the local chapters of Black Greek-lettered organizations; and outdoor summer camps through organizations like Big Brother Big Sister. These types of programs are rich in career-related role models for young Black males, especially if their home environment lacks professional role models. Caretakers of young Black males should also review vocational information provided through their state's department of

education. For example, the Ohio Department of Education has OhioMeansJobs K-12 (2014), which is a website that provides information about occupations and their educational requirements and expected salary, and career assessment tools.

Research that examined the career aspiration of Black high school students concluded that students who attended a vocational school were more knowledgeable about occupations than their peers who attended a general high school (Parmer, 1993). Therefore, high schools should be more mindful of how they can be more innovative in how they educate students about career development. High schools should create a class on career development as a core requirement for graduation, so that all students can benefit from vocational education taught in technical schools. The career development class will stress the importance of career exploration and provide students with opportunities to explore careers in and outside of the classroom. The course will also provide students with information about how their career development experiences influence their choice of academic major in college and best practices for students to attain internships, research projects, and other career-related activities.

Additionally, public schools should require that students complete an internship before graduating from middle school. In addition to participation in the internship, students should also be required to complete a written reflection about their experience and how it added to their career development and influenced their career choice. The reflection will be more informative and useful to students if they have the opportunity to learn about career development in a class taken before or during the internship

experience. This can create an educational reinforcement loop about career development, between the internship and class.

There are resources that high schools can attain to develop innovative career-related programs and services for Black male students. High schools can partner with local chapters of 100 Black Men and Black Greek-lettered organizations and career services office of local colleges and/or universities to develop vocational programs targeted to Black male high school students. These programs can consist of panel discussion or roundtables about careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), law, and education. The partnership with higher education institutions can develop mentoring programs for Black male high school students that would be based on the similarity between the college student's academic major and the high school student's career goals. Higher education institutions can also provide career counseling interns and career services practitioners to provide coaching and occupational self-assessments to Black males in high school. In addition, high schools can contact Black male alumni who live in or near the high school's district to facilitate individual or group meetings with Black males that have career aspirations similar to the alumni's occupation.

High schools with large Black male populations should also take advantage of funding opportunities with the federal government. The High School Redesign program (High School and Career Readiness, 2014) provides funding to support the creation of partnerships between higher education institutions, business and industry, community organizations, and non-profits to provide career-related opportunities for students in high poverty and rural school districts. Use of these funds can develop collaborative efforts

between a diverse set of organizations and businesses that can provide internships, job shadowing experiences, career counseling support from local colleges, and other activities to provide Black males with career exploration opportunities.

There a several strategies higher education administrators can implement to assist Black male collegians with decision-making and behaviors that will help them identify and achieve their career goals. Career services should have a major presence at orientation through presentations with students and parents about their services and programs. This collaborative effort can be organized between career counseling and/or career services, the office that manages orientation, and a department that provides services to diverse and/or underrepresented students. Workshops facilitated by career services staff should also be a component of pre-enrollment programs that are targeted to Black male collegians. Last, a process should also be developed to detect if poor academic performance is related to a mismatch between a student's abilities and the academic major he has chosen. This collaborative effort should be forged between career services staff, academic advisors, and other practitioners that work with Black male collegians.

Technology can also be used as an effective strategy to provide instruction on career development and post-baccalaureate preparation. For example, The Ohio State University has developed Buckeye OnPace (2014), an interactive website with a series of modules that provides students with information about career exploration, acquiring internship and research experience and post-baccalaureate preparation strategies. The website monitors the progress students make in completing modules that consists of

videos, articles, quizzes and assessments. Higher education practitioners can provide reinforcement coaching related to the modules that students complete. This type of technology should be a requirement for students to complete especially if it can be linked to a scholarship or participation in a program targeted to Black male collegians.

A sustained collaborative relationship should also be formed between the multicultural affairs department or diversity and inclusion office on campus, and career services office. The relationship can be used to set up a referral system between practitioners that work primarily with diverse student populations. Further, assessments can be developed between the two departments to determine the usage rate of career services and the type of services used by Black males that can inform strategies to ensure that optimal use of resources related to their career development. This partnership should also be extended to Black Greek-lettered organizations and other student organizations and groups that support Black male collegians to provided career-related programs and workshops to Black male collegians. Similarly, the University of Notre Dame created the Breaking Through Barriers program, co-sponsored by Notre Dame's College of Business, Career Center, and multicultural office to provide workshops and other programs to develop career preparation skills for its diverse student population (Notre Dame Career Center, 2014).

Black male collegians can be a career-related resource for each other. Career services offices have created peer advising programs to decrease the advising load of career services staff. The average ratio for career services staff is 1 staff member to 1889 students (NACE, 2013). A potential successful strategy to increase the usage of career

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services by Black male collegians is to recruit them to serve as peer advisors. The Georgia Institute of Technology is using this strategy with its Career Peer Advisors (2014) initiative. In addition to promoting career services to other undergraduate students, the career peer advisors also assist with workshops and other programs.

Future Research

Findings from this study have several implications for future research. There is a dearth of scholarship solely on the career development experiences of Black male collegians. Often, scholarship on career-related experiences does not disaggregate the experiences Black males and females in data collection and analysis (Constantine et al., 2006; Parks-Yancy, 2012). Empirical research is needed to examine the life-span career-related experiences of Black males. In other words, researchers should investigate the career development of Black male collegians from their childhood years through their years in college, which may also include graduate or professional school. The career-related decision-making process and behavior of Black male collegians is influenced by their pre-collegiate experiences (Savickas, 2002). I will offer specific implications for future research on the career-related experiences of Black males in childhood, high school, and college in the following paragraphs.

Career development theories state that people begin to form their vocational identities during their childhood years (Savickas, 2002; Zunker, 2006). Therefore, research is needed to further examine the factors that influence the early formation of vocational identity in Black male collegians. Since Black males are not a monolithic population (Harper & Nichols, 2008), researchers should investigate how differences in

socioeconomic status; rural, urban, and suburban communities; single and two parent households; and other environmental factors influence development of a vocational identity for Black males in their pre-adolescent years.

In addition, research should focus on the role of self-efficacy, specifically the impact that role modeling and vicarious learning have on the career development of Black males in their childhood years. Prior research has demonstrated that career-related role modeling by parents had a significant affect on career decision-making self-efficacy of Black males (Alliman-Brissett et al., 2004). This study has also produced similar findings about role modeling and vicarious learning. Additional scholarship can support previous findings or provide new insights into the effectiveness of role modeling on career development.

There are several opportunities for future areas of research on career-related experiences for Black males in high school. Most studies on the career-related experiences of Black males in high school do not examine differences by gender, socioeconomic background and school type. Most scholarship is focused on male and female Black high school students from low-income backgrounds (M. A. Jackson et al., 2006; Lease, 2006; Parmer, 1993). There is a critical need for research on the career-related experiences of Black male high school students. Also, research should examine how socioeconomic status, family, structure and school impact their career-related experiences of Black males. Research that investigated the career aspirations of Black high school students by grade level, type of school attended, and athletic participation, produced a significant finding that students who attended vocational school provided a

more detailed, clear description of their career dream than students who attended a general high school and technical high school (Parmer, 1993). Research should expand on this type of scholarship to determine if certain types of school structures are more effective in providing instruction on career exploration and development for Black males in high school.

Additional research on Black males in high schools should focus on how students from challenging backgrounds have displayed a high level of career maturity. Some of the current scholarship on low income Black students in high school is focused on limitations they place on their career aspirations because of the lack of role models in their environment, under-resourced schools, and unstable home environments (M. A. Jackson et al., 2006; Kenny et al., 2003; Lease, 2006). This type of scholarship can inform practices that can be utilized by school administrators.

Scholarship on college choice examined through the use of career development theory can provide evidence of a student's career maturity. The decision-making process in choosing a college can be viewed as a career-related decision, because of the impact that higher education can have on a student's career path. The decision to choose a college to attend or career field to pursue have similar influences: family background, peers, role models and school environment (Alliman-Brissett et al., 2004; McDonough, 1997; Parmer, 1993; Savickas, 2002). Research can be conducted to determine if a student's decision-making process related to choosing a college mirrors how they approach decisions about their future career.

Most higher education scholarship does not examine differences in the career-related experiences of Black males and females (Constantine et al., 2006; Hendricks, 1994; C. C. Jackson & Neville, 1998). Therefore, research is needed that focuses solely on Black male collegians including within group differences such as socioeconomic status, family background, type of community (rural, urban and suburban). Often, career-related research that examines Black students with specific demographic characteristics focuses on students who are first generation and/or come from a low-income background (Owens et al., 2010; Parks-Yancy, 2012). Research should also focus on Black male collegians from upper income and middle class backgrounds to determine the salience of race and class on career-related decisions and behaviors.

Additional research should investigate what resources Black male collegians use to gain experience and knowledge of their desired career field. Prior research has stated the importance of mentors, networking, and peer relationships as major types of support in the career development of Black collegians (Falconer & Hays, 2006). Scholarship has also examined racial differences in the referral and use of career service offices by college students (Carter et al., 2003). More empirical research like the two aforementioned studies are needed to learn more about the career resources that Black male collegians seek to achieve their vocational goals.

Future research should also investigate the career maturity of Black males who are new incoming freshmen. Findings in this study concluded that students who were not knowledgeable about their academic major and career goals as incoming freshmen struggled academically during their first year of college. Additional scholarship on the

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relationship between career maturity and academic performance of Black male collegians in their freshman year can support this particular finding.

Possible selves theory posits that the desired or feared future selves that people perceive could happen operate as a method of self-evaluation or incentive for future behavior (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This study concluded that unemployment, financial stability, and lack of fulfillment with their career were the feared career-related possible selves that students stated in this study. Prior research has addressed the influence that feared possible selves have on college students who are faced with the decision to change their academic major and/or career choice because of near insurmountable barriers to their career goals (Pizzolato, 2007). Future research could examine how these two types of motivators can influence career-related decision-making and behavior among Black male collegians.

Limitations

There are multiple limitations to this study. My past experience as a Black male undergraduate student, that includes my pre-collegiate experiences and career-related decisions and behaviors in college, could influence how I collected and analyzed data. Even with a research partner my personal biases may have influenced the development of codes and themes that emerged from data analysis they may diverge from how another researcher may interpret the data.

A second limitation is that this study was only conducted at three higher education institutions. All three of the institutions were public universities in the state of Ohio. One of the institutions is a large research university while the other institutions are

mid-sized universities. This is a multi-site study but it fails to reflect the diversity of students enrolled across the diversity of institutions in this country. All of this limits transferability of findings.

Last, another limitation may be the study's sample size. It is important to remember, however, that qualitative research is focused on providing a more in-depth description in hopes of yielding transferable findings, not maximizing sample size to produce generalizable results (Creswell, 2012). Still, this study had only 20 participants enrolled across 3 institutions. Findings are limited by the insights provided by these informants whose experiences may admittedly differ from other Black males at their institution or enrolled elsewhere.

Conclusion

This study examined the major influences on their career-related decisions and behavior of Black male collegians is significant and timely. The twenty-first century professional workforce provides many challenges and/or opportunities. The current labor market is extremely competitive and needs highly skilled workers who need a minimal amount of training to perform exceptionally at their job. Also, careers in the twenty-first century are more dynamic. Currently, the average tenure in an employment position is four years (Kamenetz, 2012). In addition to these new changes in the workforce, Black male college graduates will have to persist through longstanding issues of racism and discrimination that can affect opportunities for career advancement (Burgess, 2012; Luo, 2009; Schwartz & Cooper, 2003).

The new features of the twenty-first century labor market combined with age-old issues of racism requires that Black males must have substantive career development experiences from early childhood through college in order to thrive in the professional workforce. It is likely that some of students from this study will face challenges with securing employment, gaining employment in their field of study, and developing a long-term career plan. However, this study has shown that only a few students had a consistent amount of career development experiences through their pre-collegiate and undergraduate career.

Findings from this study have also highlighted how career-related decisions and behaviors of Black male collegians from their pre-collegiate and undergraduate years have given students clarity about and belief that they can achieve their career goals. Students recounted participation in career-related activities in childhood that connected to the future occupational goals. Other students discussed how internships, classroom projects, or mentors in high school shaped their career-related possible selves. Last, participants of this study described how their pre-collegiate experiences provided them knowledge of what was expected of their degree program and self-efficacy to participate in activities that offered insight of alternative career options or provided validation of their current career choice.

The United States needs competent, highly skilled, career savvy Black males in its professional ranks. Effective career planning is a necessity for success in today's labor market. "Theory without practice is meaningless, but practice without theory is blind" (Unknown). A continuous reinforcement loop is needed between practitioner knowledge,

this study, and other related research to inform best practices on career development

strategies for Black males throughout the pipeline and especially for preparation of their

career-related experiences in college.

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Appendix A:

Recruitment Email Message

RECRUITMENT E-MAIL MESSAGE

<u>Subject Line:</u> The Black Male College Student Project

Dear Student:

Warm greetings and salutations! I hope this e-mail finds you in good health, strength, and spirits. In other words, I hope that you are doing well.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study involving African American male undergraduate students at public universities in Ohio. I am interested in learning about your *preK-12* schooling experiences and relationships and how you think they have helped shape you as a person and undergraduate student. In essence, this comprehensive study will focus on African American males' preK-12 schooling, college preparation, and expectations and experiences in college in general and your higher education institution in particular.

In addition to completing brief demographic questionnaires, your participation will involve taking part in several individual interviews (i.e., face-to-face or telephone) and/or focus group interviews (i.e., face-to-face) throughout the year. Your participation will also consist of member checking for all individual interviews (i.e., face-to-face or telephone) and/or focus group interviews (i.e., face-to-face) that you partake in. Further, all individual and focus group interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed in verbatim. Both types of individual interviews will last 1 hour to 1.5 hours, and the face-to-face focus group interviews will last 2 hours to 2.5 hours.

To be selected for this study, you must an African American male undergraduate student at one of the public universities in the state of Ohio. Gift cards (e.g., Subway, Cane's Chicken, or Chipotle), in the amount of $5.00, will be offered for student participation in the study each year.

Confidentiality will be protected per IRB and ethical guidelines, and you will have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact the co-investigator, Todd Suddeth, via e-mail (suddeth.1@osu.edu) or telephone (614.247.4765).

Thanks in advance for considering this request!

Respectfully,

James L. Moore III, Ph.D.
Professor, Counselor Education
Director, Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center
  on the African American Male
Associate Provost, Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Appendix B:

Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about your background and what it was like growing up?

2. Tell me about your process of choosing to come to college?

3. What do you believe is possible for yourself after college and has this always been the same or has this changed over time?

4. What kinds of possibilities are you afraid of that could happen to you?

5. Have you chosen a major and what is it? If so, why did you choose that major and who or what influenced your decision?

6. As of now, what is your career goal?

7. Has your academic major or career goal changed since you entered college? If so, what led to this change?

8. What strategies have you used to overcome any challenges/barriers that you have faced in your undergraduate program and/or pursuit of your career goal(s)?

9. What planning have you done for graduate/professional school or entry into the workforce after college? Do you feel prepared for either? Why or why not?

10. Anything that you want to add that we haven't discussed?

Appendix C:

Informed Consent Script

Study Title: The Black Male Project

Researcher: Dr. James L. Moore III

Sponsor: The Office of Diversity and Inclusion

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Black males in their PreK-12 schooling, college preparation, and expectations and experiences of college in general, and your higher education institution in particular.

Procedures/Tasks:

This research project will require a four to six year commitment (depending on when you graduate), consisting of face-to-face (and/or telephone) individual interviews and face-to-face focus group interviews. Each individual interview will require about 1 hour to 1.5 hours of time in total, including the completion of the informed consent form (written), brief biographical questionnaire, the actual individual interview, and member checking once aggregated themes are identified.

Duration:

You will be individually interviewed (via face-to-face or telephone) 2 to 3 times your first-year at your university and minimally once your second year, once your third year, and once your fourth year. There will also be face-to-face focus group interviews that will last 2 – 2.5 hours, including the completion of the informed consent form (written), a brief biographical questionnaire, the actual focus group interview, and member checking once aggregated themes are identified. Additionally you may be asked to participate minimally in one focus group interview each year (i.e., first year, second year, third year, fourth year, etc.).

You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with your higher education institution.

Risks and Benefits:

The information collected will inform the development of efforts to engage students to facilitate their overall success in college.

Participation in focus group discussions cannot guarantee confidentiality since you will be in the presence of other students participating in the study. The information recorded from the focus group discussion will be kept in a secure location and pseudonyms will be used as a replacement for the names of students.

Confidentiality:

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;
- The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.

Incentives:

For each interview completed you will receive a $5.00 gift card over the 4 to 6 year period of the project.

Participant Rights:

You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at your university, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

Contacts and Questions:

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact **Dr. James L. Moore III at moore.1408@osu.edu or Todd Suddeth at Suddeth.1@osu.edu.**

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

If you are injured as a result of participating in this study or for questions about a study-related injury, you may contact **Todd Suddeth at <u>Suddeth.1@osu.edu</u>.**

Signing the consent form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form**.**

Printed name of subject	**Signature of subject**
	_____ **AM/PM**
	Date and time
Printed name of person authorized to consent for subject (when applicable)	**Signature of person authorized to consent for subject (when applicable)**
	_____ **AM/PM**
Relationship to the subject	**Date and time**

<u>Investigator/Research Staff</u>

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

Printed name of person obtaining consent	**Signature of person obtaining consent**
	_____ **AM/PM**
	Date and time

Appendix D:

Study Information Sheet

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Background
Much of the popular and scientific literature has focused on African American males' educational pitfalls and shortcomings in American society. Very little research, particularly qualitative, has examined the *early* learning experiences and relationships of African American males as they transition to competitive universities/colleges, and even less has explored their learning experiences and relationships, once they have begun their college/university careers at selective, four-year institutions. This qualitative study will focus on African American males' preK-12 schooling, college preparation, and expectations of college in general, including your higher education institution. Further, this study will include qualitative data collections (i.e., face-to-face or telephone individual interviews and face-to-face focus group interviews) at various points throughout your undergraduate career.

Participation
Participation is voluntary and based on the screening criteria you submitted. You are free to withdraw at any time without penalty, and can do so by contacting the principal investigator (PI: Dr. James L. Moore III; moore.1408@osu.edu) or the co-investigator (Co-I: Mr. Todd Suddeth; suddeth.1@osu.edu) using the information at the end of this document. If you opt for the face-to-face individual interviews, you will be required to complete a hard copy informed consent form, and, if you opt for the telephone individual interview, verbal informed consent will be obtained before the interview. *However, all focus group interviews will be conducted face-to-face. Before your scheduled focus group interview, you will also be required to complete a hardcopy informed consent form.* For the face-to-face or telephone individual interviews and the face-to-face focus group interviews, you can refuse to participate or decide to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Incentives
A gift card ($5.00) will be used as an incentive for student participation in the study. More specific, participants will receive a gift card of $5.00 for each interview he participates in. ***Even if you withdraw from the study before completing the schedule interviews, you will still receive the gift card.***

Confidentiality and Privacy
You will be assigned a code that will be used in place of your name on all transcripts and documentation from this point forward. Only the Dr. James L. Moore III, Mr. Todd Suddeth, and their research team will have access to the linked names and codes. Any identifiable information in the transcripts will be removed or replaced. All data will be stored in a secure location at one of the investigators' offices and destroyed after the minimum IRB record keeping requirement of 3 years.

Time Requirements
Your participation will also consist of member checking for all individual interviews (i.e., face-to-face or telephone) and/or focus group interviews (i.e., face-to-face) that you partake in. Further, all individual and focus group interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed in verbatim. Each of the individual interviews will last 1 hour to 1.5 hours, including the completion of the informed consent form, brief biographical questionnaire, the actual individual interview,

and member checking once aggregated themes are identified. It is expected that you will be individually interviewed 2 to 3 times if you are a first-year at your university and minimally 1 time your second-year, 1 time your third-year, and 1 time your fourth-year. Each face-to-face focus group interview will last 2 hours to 2.5 hours, including the completion of the informed consent form, brief biographical questionnaire, the actual focus group interview, and member checking once aggregated themes are identified.

Data Collection
Upon submission of the screening document, eligibility will be determined, and you will be contacted either way. If eligible, you will be contacted to schedule your individual interview (based on your preferred method). All face-to-face or telephone individual interview questions are semi-structured and open-ended. This is also true for all face-to-face focus group interviews.

Data Analysis
Analysis common to qualitative research will involve coding for themes across individual and focus group interviews. A research team, including the principal investigator and his research assistants, will analyze all data collected from the study (i.e., interview transcripts and brief demographic questionnaires). Once aggregate themes are found, they will be sent back to you for review and comments.

Potential Risks and Benefits
No more than minimal risk is expected. You may disclose negative experiences, which could cause discomfort. If extreme discomfort occurs, you are able to withdraw from the study or suspend any schedule individual interviews or focus group interviews until a later time. Confidentiality will only be broken if a participant threatens harm to another individual, harm to themselves, or is being physically harmed by someone else. Benefits include the expression of experiences, revealed common and supportive themes, and implications for University policy, practice, and implementation.

Disclosure
The PI (Dr. James L. Moore III) is a full professor in the College of Education and Human Ecology and director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male at Ohio State University. The study's results will be used for reports, journal articles, and scholarly presentations, and direct quotes will be used to support the findings; confidentiality will always be upheld.

Contact Information
For questions, concerns, complaints, or if you feel you have been harmed as a result of study participation please contact the principal investigator, Dr. James L. Moore III, or co-investigator, Mr. Todd Suddeth. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1.800.678.6251.

Appendix E:

Demographic Form

**Brief Demographic Questionnaire (Year-Two, Year-Three, Year-Four, Year-Five and Year-Six)
Telephone and/or Face-to-Face Individual Interviews/ Face-to-Face Focus Group Interviews**

ID#_____
Completed by research team
member

Directions: Please answer the following questions. Feel free to skip any questions that you may feel uncomfortable answering.

Current Major(s) _____ Current Minor(s)
_____

Total Number of College Credits Earned while at your institution? _____

Are you receiving a full or partial scholarship from your institution?   Yes   No

If yes, what is the total amount? _____

Are you receiving a full or partial scholarship from other sources outside of your institution?   Yes   No

If yes, what is the name of the sources and the total amounts?
_____

Check (√) the best estimate of your cumulative grade point average?

_____ A (3.75-4.0) (93-100)
_____ A-, B+ (3.25-3.74) (87-92)
_____ B (2.75-3.24) (83-86)
_____ B-, C+ (2.25-2.74) (77-82)
_____ C or lower (less than 2.25) (less than 77)
_____ Other
(Specify:_____)

Check (√) the highest educational level completed by your parents (while at your institution):

	Mother:	Father:
No school	_____	_____
Elementary School	_____	_____
Middle School	_____	_____
High School Diploma Equivalent	_____	_____
Business or Trade School	_____	_____
Some College	_____	_____
Two Year Degree	_____	_____
Four Year Degree	_____	_____
Some graduate or Professional School	_____	_____
Graduate or Professional Degree	_____	_____

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What are your current educational/career goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are they the same as before? Yes or No

If yes or not, why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

Are happy that you selected to attend your institution? Yes or No

If yes or no, why or why not?

_____

_____

List all the extracurricular activities that you are currently involved in on- and off-campus (and any leadership positions).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F:

Research Partner Information

Research Partner:

The research partner is a 43 year old Black female student currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the Department of Educational Studies-Cultural Foundations program at The Ohio State University. She is a doctoral candidate. The research partner also has extensive experience as a higher education practitioner including work related to preparing students for post-baccalaureate options.

Appendix G:

Codebook

Emerging Themes

Family Influences

- **Parental/Familial Support of Career Exposure**
  - CAREXP: Career Exposure
  - PFRM: Parent/Familial Role Modeling
  - DISADV: Disadvantaged Family Background

- **Career Control/Early Career Development**

Experiences in High School

- **Career Experiential Activities**
  - HSEA: High School Experiential Activities – student's participation in career-related activities in high school
  - CEA: Community Experiential Activities – student's participation in career-related activities in the community

- **High School Role Models**
  - HSRM: High School Role Models – role models that students had during their years in high school

Experiences in College

- **Career Maturity**
  - CARM: Career Maturity – student only minimally explored career area before make decision on academic major or occupation

- **Academic Courses and Programs**
  - ACDF: Academic Difficulty – student's challenges with academic courses
  - ADJ: Adjustments to Career Path – student made adjustment to his career path

- **Extracurricular Activities in College**
  - PEIN: Peer Interaction – student choice of major and/or career influence by their interaction with other students

- o VAL: Source of Validation – career-related activity affirmed student's career choice
- o INS: Insight to New Career Possibilities – career-related activity provided new information about career field not previously considered

- **Post-baccalaureate Preparation**
  - o PBP: Post-baccalaureate Preparation – discussion about planning for life after college or comments about participation in preparatory activities related to graduate or professional school, workforce entry

Appendix H:

Participant Demographic Information

Table 4

Participants' rank, major and minor

Name	Rank	Major	Minor
Jermaine	3rd Year	Architecture	
Jason	3rd Year	Psychology	Molecular Genetics
Bruce	3rd Year	Integrated Social Studies	Geography
Sheldon	3rd Year	Criminal Justice	
Antonio	3rd Year	Painting and Drawing	
Eric	3rd Year	Anthropology	History
Kevin	3rd Year	Public Affairs	Urban Policy & Management
John	4th Year	Marketing	Music, Media Enterprise
Kendall	4th Year	Neuroscience	Music
Troy	4th Year	Accounting	Economics
Quentin	4th Year	Sports Industry	General Business
Frank	4th Year	Graphic Design	Business
Louis	4th Year	Special Education	
Carl	5th Year	Agribusiness & Applied Economics	Industrial Design
Michael	5th Year	Criminology	Sociology
Patrick	5th Year	Mechanical Engineering	Design
Matthew	5th Year	Electrical Engineering	
Larry	5th Year	Film Studies	Video Art
Greg	5th Year	Sports Industry	Business
David	5th Year	Industrial & Systems Engineering	

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Table 5

Parent's level of education

Name	Rank	Highest level of education by Mother	Highest level of education by Father
Jermaine	3rd Year	Some Graduate School	Four Year Degree
Jason	3rd Year	Graduate or Professional Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Bruce	3rd Year	Four Year Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Sheldon	3rd Year	Some College	Some College
Antonio	3rd Year	Graduate or Professional Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Eric	3rd Year	Business or Trade School	Four Year Degree
Kevin	3rd Year	Some College	Middle School
John	4th Year	Some graduate or Professional School	Graduate or Professional Degree
Kendall	4th Year	Business or Trade School	Business or Trade School
Troy	4th Year	High School Diploma Equivalent	
Quentin	4th Year	Four Year Degree	High School Diploma Equivalent
Frank	4th Year	Some College	
Louis	4th Year	High School Diploma Equivalent	High School Diploma Equivalent
Carl	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Four Year Degree
Michael	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Four Year Degree
Patrick	5th Year	Graduate or Professional Degree	Four Year Degree
Matthew	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Four Year Degree
Larry	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Some graduate or Professional School
Greg	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
David	5th Year	Four Year Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree

Table 6

Eight Major Themes

Name	Support	Control	Role Model	HS Career
John	Y	Y		Y
Carl	Y		Y	Y
Jermaine	Y	Y	Y	Y
Michael	Y			
Jason				
Patrick	Y	Y	Y	Y
Matthew				
Bruce	Y		Y	
Kendall		Y		
Larry			Y	Y
Greg				
Troy			Y	Y
David	Y	Y	Y	
Quentin	Y			
Eric				Y
Kevin				
Louis			Y	
Frank	Y	Y		Y
Sheldon				Y
Antonio	Y	Y		Y

Table 6

Eight Major Themes (cont.)

Name	Maturity	Academic	College Inv	Postbac
John		Y	Y	Y
Carl	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jermaine		Y		Y
Michael	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jason		Y		Y
Patrick		Y	Y	Y
Matthew	Y			Y
Bruce	Y	Y		Y
Kendall	Y	Y		Y
Larry			Y	Y
Greg	Y			Y
Troy			Y	Y
David			Y	Y
Quentin	Y	Y		Y
Eric	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kevin			Y	Y
Louis	Y		Y	Y
Frank	Y			Y
Sheldon				Y
Antonio				Y

Appendix I:

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

November 29, 2012

Protocol Number:	**2012B0433**
Protocol Title:	**THE BLACK MALE STUDY PROJECT, James Moore, Todd Suddeth, Office of Diversity & Inclusion**
Type of Review:	Initial Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact:	Jacob R. Stoddard
	Phone: 614-292-0526
	Email: stoddard.13@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Moore,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB **APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW** the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

Date of IRB Approval:	**November 29, 2012**
Date of IRB Approval Expiration:	**November 29, 2013**
Expedited Review Category:	7

In addition; the research was approved for a waiver of documentation of the consent process (for phone interviews).

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for **one year** from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University's OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378.

All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Steve Beck, PhD, Co-Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board

hs-017-06 Exp Approval New CR
Version 01/13/09

Office of Responsible Research Practices
300 Research Administration Building
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1063

Phone (614) 688-8457
Fax (614) 688-0366
www.orrp.osu.edu

October 20, 2014

Protocol Number:	2012B0433
Protocol Title:	**THE BLACK MALE STUDY PROJECT, James Moore, Todd Suddeth, Office of Diversity and Inclusion**
Type of Review:	Continuing Review with Amendment—Expedited
Approval Date:	October 17, 2014
IRB Staff Contact:	Amanda Thompson Phone: 614-688-1059 Email: Thompson.2024@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Moore,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB **APPROVED** the Continuing Review of the above referenced research.

Date of IRB Approval:	**October 17, 2014**
Date of IRB Approval Expiration:	**October 17, 2015**
Expedited Review Category:	**7**

In addition; the research has been reapproved for a waiver of documentation of the consent process (phone interviews only).

In addition; the IRB **APPROVED** the amendment request to amend the research dated September 07, 2014 – Remove Patricia Cunningham and Tamera Butler from the study team on **October 17, 2014.**

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for **one year** from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University's OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Michael Edwards, PhD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board