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Academic Motivation Of African American Male Students At Indiana State University

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ACADEMIC MOTIVATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENTS AT
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Higher Education Leadership

Indiana State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctorate of Philosophy

by

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May 2024

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ABSTRACT

African American student academic performance is a topic of much concern in the U.S. (Allen, 1992; Cokley, 2000, 2002, 2003; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Cokley et al., 2015; Harper et al., 2012; Harper, 2015; Steele, 1992). Thus, the task of closing the academic achievement gap between Black and White students is a worthy assignment undertaken by many researchers.

The purpose of this study is to perform a qualitative inquiry to learn more about the African American male psychological motivation of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept. Literature about African American student self-esteem and self-concept exists yet based on my observations, it appears that few studies focus solely on either of these constructs for African American men. (Allen, 1992; Awad, 2007; Black & Allen, 2017; Cokley, 2000, 2002, 2003; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Cokley et al., 2015; Harper, 2015; Steele, 1992; Styles, 2017). Thus, this study's purpose includes examining the African American male psychological motivation of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept.

The overall goal of this study was to perform a qualitative study to determine if legitimate relationships exist between self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept and if these relationships contribute to Black male educational attainment.

This study uncovered relationships between the four psychological constructs: academic self-concept, self-esteem, racial identity, and academic performance. This study pursued relationships which could be relevant to ideas and solutions for Black male higher education students (Allen, 1992; Awad, 2007; Black & Allen, 2017; Cokley, 2000, 2002, 2003; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Cokley et al, 2015; Harper, 2015). Studying these constructs included how Black

men's educational achievement is influenced by discriminatory issues, which are covered in the literature. Thus, findings may show how Black men confront discrimination in their quest to succeed in college (Brundage, 2020; Cappelli, 2020; Congressional Caucus on Black Men and Boys, 2013). It is important to grasp better how Black male students succeed in higher education environments where perceptions of them may be compromised by society's uninformed tainted depiction of Black males.

Though Black male students continue to achieve, equitable approaches needed to close the achievement gap between Black and White male students are still sought. Though the life of this dilemma has aged, barriers that impact it have also. Thus, some may anticipate a more significant role for higher education to play in providing more equitable services to Black male students, providing greater leadership in actively uncovering Black male student needs, and then addressing them.

Moreover, the study's findings indicate that growth mindset may possess promising potential in impacting what motivates Black male students to achieve despite the barriers they face. Yet, there is much more to learn which leaves a need for further research on this topic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. Psalm 27: 1-5

I thank the Lord Jesus for continually allowing me to experience His love and mercy through others.

I am grateful for my research committee, who have continually encouraged me, and who stayed faithful along this journey:

Dr. Kandace Hinton, PhD, Dr. Mary Howard-Hamilton, PhD, Dr. Kelley Woods-Johnson, PhD, with special thanks to Dr. Hinton.

I thank God for this group of people who contributed to my educational aspirations:

Mrs. Betty (elementary school Art teacher who gave me good advice as a young Black male art student)

TRIO Upward Bound changed my course of life.

Mrs. Pinner (Upward Bound staff member who gave me heartfelt encouragement as a high school and college student)

Dr Turner (Upward Bound Director when I was a participant, who was a good role model)

Murice Daniele (Upward Bound Staff Member when I was a participant, who convinced me to say in the program)

Dr. Warren (Assistant Director of Upward Bound when I was a participant, who earned a doctorate degree a late age)

I thank God for the acts of love that I received from these people. Acts that contributed to my character:

Mom & Grandma who helped to mold me in so many different ways – who taught me components of integrity that I “understood better by and by” throughout my journey.

My Wife (Who lives life without hesitation, whose love is made clear through her actions, who fights against her own will to please me, who prayed and prayed and prayed throughout the latter part of this journey).

Dad (how he showed me how to be a man while he was sick and dying)

Deacon Atkins (who evidently would come get us and take us to church, when I was very young)

To my children, Nathan, Caran, Jon, Noah (of whose, indirect nurturing, helped learned how to be a dad)

To all of my siblings who (who helped me to better my walk with God)

I am inspired by the memory of:

My Daddy, Joseph Harris Jr, and My Grandma Ada Bell,

Grandma Lilian Harris (for her strong prayer and support)

Pastor Rev. Bennie A, and Sister Rosy Lee, and Pastor Rev. Ralph and Sister Izetta Edwards, and many other brothers and sisters in Christ.

Reverend Sammy and Sister Gate (for his deep southern heart felt encouragement)

My oldest brother Barry (who packed me and my stuff along with his family in a small AMC Gremlin, and took me up Lafayette Road, to Purdue University for my first official day on campus)

Last, I thank God for allowing the work of these teachers to enhance my personal growth:

I am grateful for bell hook's book "Teaching to Transgress" – which helped to instill self-pride in our Black vernacular, and lifestyle. And also, for Dr. MLK and many other distinct leaders whose work, activism, and thoughts helped to strengthen my character and determination along this path.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

African American student academic performance is a topic of much concern in the U.S. (Allen, 1992; Cokley, 2000, 2002, 2003; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Cokley et al., 2015; Harper, 2015; Harper & Davis, 2012; Steele, 1992). Thus, the task of closing the academic achievement gap between Black and White students is a worthy assignment undertaken by many researchers. Despite the magnitude of this task, relevant statistics regarding Black students are missing from research studies, as past researchers settled for more convenient and more plentiful nonBlack group data instead of using within-group African American data which possess a greater capacity to produce more precise and more relevant African American academic achievement research results. This dilemma may potentially leave weak findings that lack generalizability applicable for African Americans, which may leave data deficiencies within this research topic.

A focus of this study is academic prediction research, pursued through seeking relationships between psychological constructs and academic performance (Metofe et al., 2014). Certain psychological factors have been shown to predict academic performance. In the past, similar African American studies which sought to examine academic performance through psychological variables, self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and conscientiousness, obtained some positive results. Unfortunately, Cokley and Moore's (2007) work shows that even though psychological motivation through academic self-concept revealed promising predictive results on the academic performance of Black women, it lacked optimistic results for Black men.

In Cokley and Moore's work, he explained that the discrepancy between the Black women and men results could be attributed to the difference between the larger female participant sample versus the smaller male sample. Thus, this claim seems to reveal a gap that provides some justification for additional research about African American men's academic performance. Therefore, of the variables mentioned, the principles of psychological motivation and the construct, self-esteem, were relied on for direction in the study's search to learn more about the impact of these and other related constructs that potentially influence how African American males are motivated in their pursuit of educational success.

African American Motivation

Cokley and Moore's (2007) work, which considered the work of Cokley (2000, 2003), was vital African American literature that assessed academic self-concept, ethnic identity, disengagement, racial centrality, and self-reported grade point averages. This literature also happened to uncover differences between African American women and men. Deficit related results, along with others, revealed the lack of literature that exhibits the existence of strong psychological construct relationships which impact African American male academic performance (Cokley & Moore, 2007). Along with the encouraging academic self-concept literature on African American females, this study seeks to learn more about African American male academic self-concept and academic performance in search of relationships between the two constructs.

This study gives each of its Black male participants the opportunity to engage with the question: "Who are you as a person"? Although general data already exist regarding this question, additional data are needed from Black males themselves, through their voices. Thus, by

producing data directly from the voices of Black male students, more accurate literature about Black male students can be made available to stakeholders seeking data about Black males.

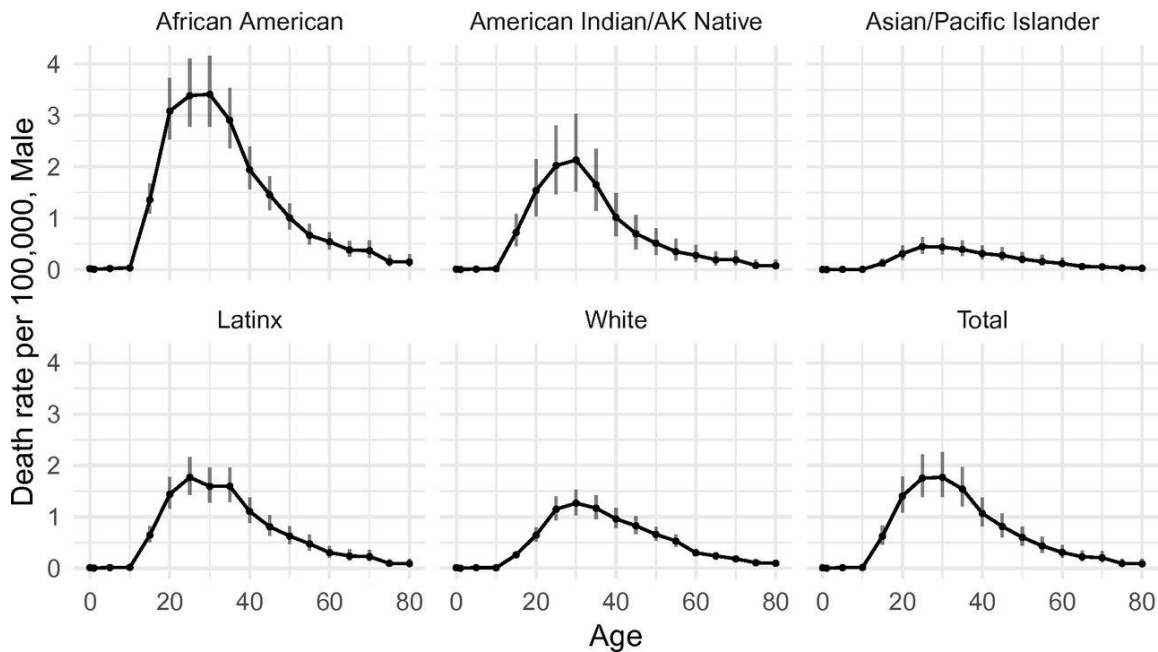
So, to consider barriers that Black men encounter, though not necessarily real to others, Black men possess heavy discrimination-related realities that they carry during, and potentially following, higher education (PBS, 2019; Harper & Davis, 2012). According to PBS (2019), race is the most significant determinant that impacts a man's ability to progress in the United States. Thus, Black men suffer higher unemployment, incarceration, and death rates than White men (Brundage, 2020; Violence Policy Center, 2020). The derogatory perceptions of society can also leave Black men as targets of stereotypes that depict societal and educational failures (Harper & Davis, 2012). These unwarranted views can leave Black men typecast as inequitable images that other individuals in society may use to justify their decisions to deny Black men the opportunities that nonBlack men typically receive. Despite the reality of the discrimination burden and the potential of its impact on Black men, Black men persist in college anyway, and at its highest levels. This persistence may reveal a level of determination and grit uniquely displayed by Black male students. Moreover, amazingly, Black men believe in the power of education despite their knowledge of the discouraging racial inequality that exists in higher education. Although the work of this study includes the task of learning more about Black male academic achievement, this study may also learn more about what motivates Black males and how Black males navigate the potential liability of discrimination while earning a college degree. Thus, in this study, major past and current discriminatory events are highlighted to provoke a sense of what impacts the world of Black men and the significant unfairness that they tolerate along their journey in order to achieve success in education.

Discrimination / Racism

To begin, the risk of being killed by the police is a horrific product of racial discrimination which African Americans face as Black men (Edwards et al., 2018). Edwards et al.'s (2018) work used an independent source of police-involved deaths called Fatal Encounters in order to estimate police-involved mortality risk in the U.S. Edwards et al. determined that Black men have between a 3.2 to 3.5 times higher risk of being killed by police than White men. Latino men have a 1.4 to 1.7 times higher risk of being killed by police than White men. These eyebrow-raising data showing higher rates of harm to Black men (minority race) over White men (majority race) only reflects just one of many areas of discrimination that have the potential to distract Black male students whose focus of attention needs to be their educational pursuits. Displayed below in Figure 1 are aged-based male rates of death by police force.

Figure 1

Age Based Male Death Rates by Police Force, Categorized by Race-Ethnicity



Note. The 90% posterior predictive uncertainty intervals are shown by dashes. The sources are Fatal Encounters (n.d.), and the National Bureau of Economic Research (2021).

Recently, during the summer of 2020, the disturbing number of Black men killed by police brought moods to a boiling point. These killings brought about protests seeking change, which may have created fear and opposition from some. Yet, the protests may actually contribute to efforts in gaining the attention needed to help prioritize the urgency of addressing this issue. That summer's controversy began following the deadly force-related death of George Floyd (who could not breathe while a police officer's knee was on his neck for more than nine minutes), which followed a series of other Black men and women who died from police brutality (Cappelli, 2020). Then, anger and outrage spread across American cities because of this unacceptable level of persecution against Blacks. Multiple demonstrations took place that

included individuals from different walks of life, including the famous organization Black Lives Matter. The protesters reacted in rage and demanded recognition of Black human rights, as well as changes to the structural and institutional racism in society. The people's reaction through protest helped to draw attention to the police brutality and the overall racial justice debate. The victims (daughters, sons, moms, dads, husbands, and wives) of these shameful killings were not forgotten as citizens rose in protest. The hope is that the pushback of the people will help to usher in a stronger dialogue that will help defeat the normalization of gross discrimination and enhance the potential for real reform and tangible change. Relevant change has the potential to help ease the minds of Black male students who are at an elevated risk of police encounters due to the color of their skin.

The many different discriminatory issues impacting the lives of Black men may indicate a greater need for applicable practical solutions that have the potential to impact Black male circumstances more directly. Yet, during a time in society while misperception and ignorance seem convenient, not much is known about Black male students who enter college and complete undergraduate and graduate degrees (Harper & Davis, 2012). Thus, more accurate information is needed. Therefore, while seeking to learn more about Black men's education success through the targeted research topic focus of academic performance motivation, effective findings that may contribute to Black male student success may be revealed. Yet, in lieu of this opportunity throughout the study, it is critical to continue to consider the effect of discrimination on Black male student performance.

Moreover, Harper and Davis's (2012) work included providing positive narratives to oppose negative narratives often written about Black men. Harper and Davis shared that among the negative literature, there is little known about Black men who persist past undergraduate and

graduate to professional careers. Despite naysayers who may question whether Black men prioritize education, Harper and Davis sarcastically asked, why do these persistent Black men care so much about education? Moreover, Harper and Davis's fight against negative portrayals of Black men also included dealing with the traditional education model's impact on Black men, and Black men's psychological struggle with the predominant race's educational model since slavery, a model that exhibits oppressive tendencies/discrimination that Black men feel and reject.

The task of equitably addressing the issues faced by Black male students is enormous. Thus, first, it is necessary to develop a better understanding of the symptoms of Black male discrimination in order to understand what impacts the Black male student experience. Moreover, being burdened by the discouraging statistics on Black men, I was left with an accelerated need to reach positive solutions. Also, Griffin et al.'s (2010) work which covers Black male self-confidence, strongly rejects deficit-driven viewpoints about Black men's inherent abilities. It asserted that Black men possess as much intelligence and inherent abilities as other student populations. Thus, despite literature that takes different paths in revealing the conditions of disparity throughout the lives of Black men, Black male students continue to aspire, striving through discriminatory obstacles through psychological motivation sources that I seek to understand better in this study.

Problem Statement

The Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee (SBHUAC, 1991) literature, covered on C-SPAN, produced following the Rodney King police brutality incident of 1991, revealed many disturbing negative societal issues (e.g., unemployment, incarceration, education rates) that Black men undeservedly inherit. The root of many of these negative issues

are entrenched in societal perceptions that are channeled through the stereotyping of Black men (Harper & Davis, 2012; Patton et al., 2016). Yet, the quest to make society more equitable to Black men may need to begin with a strong commitment to examine the discrimination-related dynamics that seem to hinder Black men's success as students (SBHUAC, 1991). Despite the setting and early time period of the historic SBHUAC hearing of 1991, the incident that triggered its occurrence is similar to incidents that happen too often today. The hearing is useful to an understanding of the burdens that Black men face because it was a rare legislative event where the main objective was to address issues that are troubling to Black men and boys in our country. Also, the hearing provided a lens to compare its issues to today's and to seek lessons learned. So, looking back at the hearing may shed light on lessons learned, and also inspire our generation to build on what the hearing was trying to accomplish, including convening more hearings and prioritizing needed actions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to perform a qualitative inquiry to learn more about the African American male psychological motivation of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept. Literature about African American student self-esteem and self-concept exists, yet based on my observations, it appears that few studies focus solely on either of these constructs for African American men. (Allen, 1992; Awad, 2007; Black & Allen, 2011; Cokley, 2000, 2002, 2003; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Cokley et al., 2015; Harper, 2015; Steele, 1992; Styles, 2017). Thus, this study's purpose includes examining the African American male psychological motivation of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept. The overall goal of this study was to perform a qualitative study to determine if legitimate relationships exist between

self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept and if these relationships contribute to Black male educational attainment.

Significance

The significance of this study is how it uncovered relationships between the four psychological constructs: academic self-concept, self-esteem, racial identity, and academic performance. This study pursued relationships which are likely relevant to ideas and solutions for Black male higher education students (Allen, 1992; Awad, 2007; Black & Allen, 2018; Cokley, 2000, 2002, 2003; Cokley & Moore, 2007; Cokley et al, 2015; Harper, 2015). Studying these constructs includes how Black men's educational achievement is influenced by discriminatory issues, which are covered in the literature. Thus, findings may show how Black men confront discrimination in their quest to succeed in college (Brundage, 2020; Cappelli, 2020; Congressional Caucus on Black Men and Boys, 2013; Edwards et al., 2018; Harper & Davis, 2012; PBS, 2019). Table 1 provides common discrimination issues that Black men manage when pursuing their educational aspirations. Discriminatory institutional environments and stressors can form barriers for success, learning and development, and can also be considered oppressive structures when systemized in organizations (Patton et al., 2016). It is important to grasp how Black male students succeed in higher education environments where perceptions of them may be compromised by society's uninformed and tainted depiction of Black males.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement of Black male students?
2. What is the relationship of self-esteem and academic achievement of Black male students?

3. What is the relationship between racial identity and academic achievement of Black male students?

Personal Statement

As I look back on my development as a young man, I now see the influence that my community had on me through a more mature lens. I resided in a low-income, high-crime neighborhood, attended an urban Indianapolis public school, participated in the TRIO Upward Bound program, was informally educated by a community- and street-smart dad (who was entrenched in the Black male struggle of the 1960s and 1970s), and was informed by a strong local African American radio station. All of these key learning experiences contributed to my identity as a Black man today. Although I did not always fully discern the subtle blessings of my environment, I am proud of where I grew up and of our community's social togetherness, and I now realize the positive impact it had on my personal growth through adulthood. Also, our rich community culture of childhood fun shielded me from the depths of our poverty, and left me with a deep appreciation of life, now seen through an adult lens.

For a closer look at my life as a youth, here are memorable personal and social experiences from that period. As a child, I remember learning to fear visits from the rent lady, whose visits we dreaded because we did not always have enough money to pay what was due. Also, in our neighborhood, there were robberies and shootings, and we were once terrorized by an abductor. My dad, using his own type of justice, lightly strategized how he could catch him. Moreover, as I entered preteen and teenaged years, some of us (who began thinking about high school) were apprehensive about attending our local high school because we had heard that its location was racist. There were race riots on campus, along with discrimination incidents that involved campus security, teachers, and administrators. While in high school, I participated in

the TRIO Upward Bound Program which boosted my educational aspirations and provided me the opportunity to have contact with racial justice-minded instructors who often shared their family and college experiences with us. Also, in our community we enjoyed a strong locally owned and operated Black radio station who played life impacting songs like, "I'm Black and I'm Proud," and "What's Going On." Moreover, my mom and dad often shared racial, poverty, justice, and crime-related experiences (through encounters with neighbors, business, utilities, and other entities) during individual and group conversations with us.

As I approached high school graduation and postsecondary education, the college readiness that I received from Upward Bound had mentally prepared me such that I felt relatively comfortable about going to college. Yet, despite the blessing of growing up in a socially rich community, along with experiential learning that prepared me to serve, I craved higher income and an escape from poverty. As a result, I chose a manufacturing career path because it offered the potential for a lucrative salary. I pursued manufacturing technology undergrad degrees at Purdue University, and a business administration graduate degree at Anderson University. Following college, I was employed by the Indianapolis Power and Light Company (IPL) which offered me a nice salary, along with experiences of social justice and human service while working with moderate- to low-income customers. Also, through volunteering in IPL's community engagement initiatives, I received additional human services opportunities, which included leadership at an inner city African American boy scout troop. During my time at IPL, I also volunteered at the local juvenile center where I mainly assisted with coordinating a basketball competition and victim offender mediation initiatives. Following my career at IPL, I worked at Indiana University Purdue University (IUPUI) Upward Bound where I was blessed with the dream job of managing low-income students who were full of life and who had the gift

of creativity – I learned that young lives are better understood by those who loved them. During this period, I matured in my ability to manage young staffers and in serving low-income African American students and parents. I also gained valuable experience facilitating faculty and staff who worked with and near our program who possessed sometimes mixed feelings about our students. I additionally learned more about conflict through difficult times, and I learned from stakeholders who both supported and discouraged us. All of this left me with a greater appreciation of institutional group harmony.

Moreover, I cherish the meaningful transformative experiences that affected my personal growth such as working with young marginalized Black men (at FedEx and Amazon) and employing young Black men in my own insulation business. I also engaged with diverse populations in various community activities at public schools, the juvenile center, on campus, and at church. I was touched by some of these experiences, as they influenced my life and contributed to my identity as a Black man. Furthermore, as my journey continues, so does the need for social justice, human service, and a passion to engage in environments among individuals who may both embrace and reject my passion.

Moreover, my experiences throughout my illustrious path have broadened my leadership abilities. I feel influenced mainly by kind and key acts that I have been touched by along my journey. Thus, I typically lead with care and kindness, similar to what Kouzes and Posner (1995) said is expressed in Bolman and Deal's (2017) structural frame.

My heartfelt hope is that my service is guided by relevant passion, and that God will order my steps in my advocacy for Black men. Despite discrimination's broad presence and one's inability to escape its influence, we (Black men) must neither give in, nor concede our

positive expectations, and we must keep fighting for more opportunities that empower us to become experts and leaders in our educational pursuits, careers, and life.

Moreover, throughout my experiences over time, I have developed an appetite for observing how social dilemmas are addressed. I have observed society's traditional approach to governing marginalized people, and I have found little change in Black male racial equity. Lower income Black men still seem to have lower access to opportunities. Thus, I am more moved as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a claimed devotee of social justice, to seek and pursue what is right for Black men. Moreover, having benefited from social justice related acts in various ways along my journey, my social justice lens has expanded. Thus, from observations along my journey, the social justice harvest is plenteous, yet there never seem to be enough people to provide the social justice intervention that is needed in our communities. So, I charge those who aspire to be champions of justice and equity to rise to the challenge, and to seek out ways to advocate for Black men. Yet while advocating, be aware of this about our strong Black men: they may not be quick to conform to society's traditions that may be harmful to them. So, be open to their voice and be understanding of their choices. Their reasoning may be driven by protective instincts as family/community leaders whose experiences have taught them to protect themselves and gate keep for their loved ones.

Prepare yourselves and be strong in your attempts to combat the adversary (discrimination) in your quest for true equity and reform for Black men—prepare yourselves with greater knowledge, and resist being deterred by temporary setbacks, but be motivated by them to push harder.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the effects of academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity on Black male students' motivation to graduate from college. The purpose includes qualitatively exploring Black male psychological motivation through academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity, which, based on my research, seems needed because existing studies on this topic typically do not focus primarily on Black men.

Thus, my literature review path began with a return to the past, through the use of an historic event (a congressional hearing) that addressed the former state of Black men, which possessed similarities to the current state of Black men. The congressional hearing provided the opportunity to seek lessons learned which are potentially helpful for examining Black males' higher education performance today. The subtopics included in this chapter are resonating realities of Black men, reflections of Black male realities, observations of Black males, self-concept to academic self-concept, disengagement /disidentification, and theoretical framework (which includes growth mindset, internalization, racial identity, and validation theory).

Resonating Realities of Black Men

Discussions about the unfair societal struggles that Black men face suggest the need to educate and clarify the issues that Black male college students face. Also, an objective in this section is to help set the tone for the purpose of this study and the need for more research on this study topic.

Moreover, closely following the historic Rodney King police brutality incident on March 3, 1991, the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee convened a congressional hearing on March 19, 1991 on the problems of Black men in U.S. cities. A Senator from Michigan shared that the objective of the congressional hearing was to assess the size, barriers, and implications of institutional racism that impede the advancement of America's young Black men in society (SBHUAC, 1991). GovInfo (2022) explained the purpose of a congressional hearing:

A hearing is a meeting or session of a Senate, House, joint, or special committee of Congress, usually open to the public, to obtain information and opinions on proposed legislation, conduct an investigation, or evaluate/oversee the activities of a government department or the implementation of a federal law. In addition, hearings may also be purely exploratory in nature, providing testimony and data about topics of current interest. (p. 1)

The hearing's impressive list of speakers (which included the governor of Virginia and the President of the National Council of Negro Women) are commended for taking part in such an important national event. The hearing facilitated much needed testimonial fuel for dialogue about our U.S. culture that deters American Black men from social and economic advancement (SBHUAC, 1991). Following the hearing, the work of this committee was handed off to the newly established 21st Century Commission on African American Males which was established to produce policy initiatives and strategies for workforce development, economics, health care, education, and social problems. The Commission also hosted five additional events covered on C-SPAN. These events covered topics such as substance abuse among Black males, effective

public policy, the role of government, alternatives to the criminal justice system, Blacks in the military, and family structure and personal responsibility.

The Senator from Michigan stressed that historical and current forces are responsible for young Black men's exclusion from mainstream society (SBHUAC, 1991). He indicated that current and traditional forces in our society work against Black men and hinder their inclusion.

The Senator mentioned that the problems of young Black people were associated with the main problems of the nation's cities including crime, discrimination, aids, illegal drugs, and homelessness. The Senator noted that many people feel that heightened crime was responsible for the corrosion of economic opportunity for Black men (SBHUAC, 1991). The Senator continued by sharing statistical evidence that reveal Black male realities that exist in a racism-laden society. Summarized here are a few of the key statistics:

- Homicide: Homicide was the foremost cause of death for all Black men, ages 20–29 years.
- The higher the education level of the Black men, the greater the gap of employment between Black and White men. Black boys' unemployment is at 48% whereas White boys' unemployment is at 25%.
- Education / Opportunity: In 1979, Black men with at least four years of college earned only 79 cents per every dollar earned by White men. African American men disproportionately faced disparities. For example, they also experienced less access to housing, credit, and business development.
- Prison: It costs 2.5 billion dollars to imprison Black men, thus creating an enormous societal waste of human talent since 25% of 23- to 29-year-old Black men end up in

prison, or were on parole or probation. In 1987, the Black male incarceration rate was higher than the Black male college entrance rate. (SBHUAC, 1991)

Additional prison / incarceration data are covered in the PBS (2019) and the Brundage (2020) literature.

Following the Senator from Michigan, a Senator from North Carolina gave an informative presentation. The Senator from North Carolina began by explaining that people avoid addressing the Black male crisis due to its complexity and difficulty (SBHUAC, 1991). Although the Senator's excuse for those who avoid addressing the Black male crisis may be accurate, it does not explain why it was avoided while other complex national issues appeared to receive higher priority. Yet, this hearing was hoped to bring some level of priority to Black male issues because the Senator assessed that the crisis was interwoven into all of America's domestic problems. He also shared that the objective of the event was to gain knowledge about the problem in an effort to respond with effective solutions.

The Senator from North Carolina continued by sharing statistical evidence that revealed Black male realities that exist in our societal culture, as recently as 1987 (SBHUAC, 1991). For example, he discussed:

- Military: The percent of Black male participation as active-duty military (17.5%) was greater than the percent of Black males in the population.
- Unemployment: Black men were three times more likely to be unemployed than White men.
- Life expectancy: Black men had the lowest life expectancy, which caused a high death rate in their most productive years.
- Crime victims: 49 out of every 10,000 Black men were victims of crime.

Near the end of the Senator from North Carolina's comments, he mustered only a few positive statistics that represent the identity of strong Black men. In contrast to prior deficit-minded data, the Senator shared these statistics about Black men: 50% of Black men had wives and family, 75% of Black men had no significant encounters with police or criminal justice system, 2.6 million 16- to 24-year-old Black men were enrolled in schools, and 64% of Black men were productively employed (SBHUAC, 1991).

Additionally, the governor of Virginia explained that this dilemma is not a Black man's problem but an American societal problem (SBHUAC, 1991). Also, the president of the National Council of Negro Women insisted that solutions for the Black man must lie in the hands of the Black family which includes both Black women and men.

Georgetown Professor's Reflections on Black Males During 2013 Congressional Caucus

This section highlighted a Georgetown professor, author, and activist's comments during a presentation at the 2013 Congressional Caucus on Black Men and Boys, following the historic Trayvon Martin trial that year. Probably moved by the discouraging results of the Trayvon Martin trial, the professor must have felt compelled to contribute to the 2013 caucus (Congressional Caucus on Black Men and Boys, 2013). During this caucus, the professor, whose presence set a positive example through his activism, provided a moving presentation about the plight of Black men. A few of his key points included how Black men are victimized by society, stigmatized, and suspected of misconduct at a higher rate than Whites. He noted that, sadly, Black men are even profiled because of the clothes that they wear. He also shared how they are unfairly stereotyped and are too often perceived to be threatening to others, despite the lack of actual evidence of threat. The professor argued that we must defuse White America by educating

them about our youth. His comments helped to illuminate Black male conditions and the overdue need to prioritize this massive dilemma.

Harvard University Professor's Observations of Black Men

In a 2019 interview on Amanpour & Co, a renowned Harvard university professor discussed his work on the fading American dream, which includes bold findings about youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, and his ideas about using Big Data to help find solutions for these youth (PBS, 2019). The Harvard professor shared that he and his colleagues were developing a new technology called “The Opportunity Atlas” which can zoom into city blocks and assess general opportunities that kids have to rise out of poverty (PBS, 2019). The professor assesses the benefits of modern-day social science tools, revealing his belief that the current era of social science is driven by our access to what is called Big Data which is used by the private sector but can be helpful with social issues. He explained that most of their data are from anonymized census, social security, and tax data, which allow them to examine large samples (e.g., 20 million children).

Moreover, the professor insisted that the importance of race and economic mobility on societal outcomes cannot be overstated (PBS, 2019). He mentioned that many perceive class as a more important factor than race for one's economic mobility in the US, but he insisted that they are totally wrong. He explained the alarming assessment that based on U.S. data, for Black and White youth who grew up in the same neighborhood, had the same wealth level, and had two-parent households, Black boys have a much lower rate of upward mobility than White boys. He explained that despite wealthy lifestyles, Black youth have a much higher chance of falling down the income ladder than their White counterparts. He shared that it is discouraging to yield to the reality of the difficulties of closing the Black–White U.S. wage disparity gap while the

downward racial trends abound. Also, the Harvard professor insisted that the inconceivably high rates of incarceration among very low-income Black males are a sad feature of our nation's state of affairs (PBS, 2019). He also stressed the discouraging revelation that colleges are as segregated as neighborhoods are in America.

Through different literature and time periods, the previously discussed literature covering the realities of Black men was examined by different authors (Brundage, 2020; Burghart, n.d.; Cappelli, 2020; PBS, 2019; Congressional Caucus on Black Men and Boys, 2013; Harper & Davis, 2012; SBHUAC, 1991). Some common Black male issues have been constant in society. Other issues like these may deserve greater attention: stigmatization, higher education, prison, income, unemployment, poverty, mobility, and death. The common issues represent the persistence of inadequately addressed Black male realities (issues) which still warrant attention. Below, Table 1 provides a convenient comparison chart listing these common issues and their literature sources.

Table 1*Black Male Issues That Warrant Equitable Consideration*

Issues	Senate Banking Committee (1991)	Harper & Davis (2012)	Congress. Caucus on Black Men and Boys (2013)	Burghart (2013-18)	PBS (2019)	Brundage (2020)	Cappelli (2020)
Higher Education	X	X			X		
Prison / Incarceration	X				X	X	
Black White Income Gap	X				X		
Stigmatization / Stereotype / Racial Inequality / Traditional Forces	X	X	X		X		X
Black Mobility	X				X		
Black Male Poverty	X				X		
Black Male Employment	X					X	
Black Male Death				X		X	X

Note: Table 1 vertically charts a list of various Black male issues that should be addressed nationally. The sources that address these issues are shown at the top of the chart.

Self-Concept to Academic Self-Concept

Reynolds (1988) explained that psychologists and sociologists have been quite productive with the construct of self-concept. In Messick's (1979) work on noncognitive measures of personal characteristics, he mentioned the significance of analyzing variables that may be applied to educational practice. These variables include self-concept (or self-attitude) and attitudes of self as a learner.

Reynolds et al. (1980) shared that academic self-concept construct is designed to measure the academic self-concept in college students. Academic self-concept is a component of the broader generalized self-concept intended for all situations and not just for school situations. The initial Liu and Wang (2005) academic self-concept scale (ASCS) is utilized in this study. Its design includes two 10-item subscales—(a) academic confidence, and (b) academic effort—designed to collect student self-concept information (Matovu, 2012, 2014). The items are both positively and negatively worded to produce different answers from students. A seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Disagree Somewhat, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Agree Somewhat, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree) is used for the scale's scoring (Matovu, 2014). In Matovu (2012), participants were also asked to report their GPA and other academic information in the demographic section of the study's survey.

Reynolds (1988) noted in his study that an ASCS factor analysis produced a seven-factor solution that accounted for 52.6% of the variance. Also, according to Shavelson et al. (1976), the seven fundamental aspects of self-concept are organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, generally stable, development that differentiates increasingly with age, evaluative, and differentiation from other constructs. Shavelson et al. proposed to institute a multifaceted hierarchical structure of self-concept where general self-concept is the highest of the hierarchy, over lower more specific facets. Second order self-concept facets are academic self-concept and nonacademic self-concept entities including social, physical, and emotional self-concept.

It is suggested that academic self-concept should correlate significantly and positively with student academic achievement (GPA), and not necessarily with student mental ability (Reynolds, 1988). Relative to academic self-concept, academic achievement represented by college student grades is seen as a more salient value of how students may assess themselves.

Reynolds (1988) shared that students of different college year cohorts show different levels of academic self-concept. That is, the higher the student cohort year, the higher the students' academic self-concept. This exists partly because earlier year students experience a greater amount of grade and course adjustment issues than upper class students. The association between academic self-concept and academic performance (GPA) was shown to be stronger following the freshman year of college.

Two key intangibles that impact an individual's academic self-concept experience are a setting and an environmental variable (Reynolds et al., 1980). For example, a student on a college campus will often show more concern with academic self-concept than with physical self-concept (of their body's characteristics). Additionally, when students have firm optimistic relationships with academics, they are typically more intrinsically motivated to learn (Cokley & Moore, 2007). To describe a simple academic identification perspective, people who are closely identified with academics feel good after performing well academically, and they feel bad after performing poorly academically. Whereas students who are no longer concerned with academic performance do not associate with academics, lack motivation to succeed, and they devalue academic achievement.

To illuminate a connection between grades and academic self-concept using college grades, it is known that students receive grades as an incentive which rewards them for earning different levels of coursework achievements (Reynolds et al., 1980). Letter grades (A-F) represent different scores ranging from A which is the highest through F which is the lowest. Therefore, students view higher grades more positively than lower grades. The positive view can encourage and strengthen students, which can in turn boost academic self-concept, whereas receiving low grades can discourage students and decrease academic self-concept. Academic

self-concept is generally considered to be a student's perception of their academic ability in comparison to others (Cokley, 2000).

Academic Self-Concept for Black Students

Cokley (2000) noted that he found no existing academic self-concept studies that exclusively focus on African American college students. Optimistic results on African Americans produced by the academic self-concept scale in previous literature indicate that the scale may have the potential to be a relevant tool for African American males, whose psychologically motivated academic performance lacks conclusive evidence in some literature.

Gerardi (1990), whose work questioned whether academic self-concept was a meaningful predictor of academic achievement among low-income and minority college students, found that academic self-concept was the only variable that significantly correlated with GPA (Cokley, 2000). Ultimately academic self-concept was considered to be the best variable for predicting academic success. Thus, Gerardi commented that African American students attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have higher academic self-concept than African American students attending predominantly White colleges and universities (PWCUs). Moreover, Allen (1992) articulated that good faculty relationships were the strongest predictor of academic achievement. Yet, African American students who attend PWCUs voice less favorable relationships with faculty than students who attend HBCUs. Allen also shared that the racial composition on campus is the second most significant predictor of academic achievement. Additionally, despite the traditional general success of SAT (or other standardized tests) over academic self-concept in predicting academic success for students overall, academic self-concept (a noncognitive variable) is a better predictor of academic success for low-income and minority students than standardized tests (Gerardi, 1990). Furthermore, Fleming (1984) indicated that

Black men who attend PWCUs possess lower academic self-concept, academic demotivation, and interpersonal issues. Yet, Black men at HBCUs experience higher academic gains and greater academic self-concept.

Disengagement /Disidentification

Cokley's (2002) work revealed that disengagement (which is similar to disidentification) appears to be a psychological motivation issue among African American men. An example of disengagement is shown in this scenario: College recruiters who are responsible for encouraging new students to attend their institution risk feeling bad about themselves when they do not perform their recruiting very well, yet conversely, they tend to feel good about themselves when they successfully recruit because their overall goal includes becoming a top recruiter at their university. Thus, when they feel bad (experience low self-esteem), they may then evoke mental protection through their self-esteem by simply choosing to become disinterested in being a top recruiter (a similar example could be disinterested in being a top student; Cokley & Moore, 2007).

Cokley and Moore (2007) insisted that there is a higher likelihood of disidentification among African American men when people of the African American diaspora are not included in their educational curriculum. African American men appear to become more encouraged when people of their race are included in their experiences. Thus, it may be useful to understand disengagement and disidentification, to serve Black male students more fully, by effectively replacing these constructs with empowering solutions.

Theoretical Framework

To fit the study's objective of learning more about African American male student motivation, I have chosen a research framework that includes constructs that may impact one's

psychological motivation, may be associated with academic achievement, and may also reap relationships that are predictable (Metofe et al., 2014). As mentioned earlier, the constructs selected are self-esteem, academic self-concept, and racial identity, which were examined along with motivation and academic performance. Moreover, additional constructs including disidentification and disengagement are not significantly investigated in the study.

Thus, as mentioned earlier, participant interviews were employed to generate the data that were then analyzed under this framework. Last, my hope is that findings potentially open the door for educators to examine Black male students through a sociopsychological lens. Moreover, being a qualitative study, the constructivist view of knowledge was the epistemological approach utilized because it supports an emphasis on the use of greater description needed to represent people issues effectively (Creswell, 2003).

Motivation

Bernecker and Job's (2019) literature review showed that Ach (1935) and Lewin (1926) revealed the proposed concept that motivation is the process of goal setting, along with the process of evaluation. Motivation focuses on desirability and feasibility of the potential goals and also how they are influenced by the requirements of the individual striving for them. Motivation research seeks to answer the questions of why people act, with what intensity, and with what direction. Volition is the will-driven process of trying to reach the goal. The focus is on the actual behavior of the goal attempt, including the planning steps necessary to be able to show initial goal-directed acts. Research on volition answers the question of how people act to reach their goals, given the opportunities and the obstacles they are facing.

Bernecker and Job's (2019) literature addressed the material on self-determination theory, which covers the quantity and quality of motivation. Thus, the difference between

intrinsically and extrinsically driven behavior is that intrinsically motivated behavior happens through actions that are enjoyable or inherently interesting while extrinsically motivated behavior happens when people seem to receive some type of reward, or they seek to avoid punishment (Deci & Ryan, 1975). Self-determination theory supports the idea that non-intrinsically motivated activities encouraged by employers, parents, teachers, or others, may bring various levels of perceived autonomy which reflects the degree that the values of the behavior are internalized by the individual (Grolnick et al., 1997). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, intrinsic motivation was the predominant motivational focus, as its principles were considered throughout the study.

Self-Esteem

Moreover, this study's three key constructs were further examined in the upcoming subsections. Yet, in an attempt to make self-esteem easier to understand, attitude is compared. Thus, since self-esteem may be viewed as an attitude, a student may have a general attitude about college, as a whole, and also a more specific attitude about the campus, a department, or its population (Rosenberg et al., 1995). Essentially, attitudes are global and specific, and the two types are not equal or interchangeable. Additionally, attitudes possess cognitive and affective elements. Its cognitive element is its representation of an object (a particular person, thing, or place), and its effectiveness is its direction (positive or negative direction) and intensity.

African American men's enthusiasm to complete college can impact how they perform during their college journey. Self-esteem (the study's focus) affects their feelings, which can, in turn impact their enthusiasm. My more recent occupational experiences with young Black men include working closely with them in different settings including working beside them as a peer at FedEx Ground, supervising them in a higher education institution, and managing them as a

small construction contractor. The knowledge I gained from my experiences with Black men has contributed to the expansion of my lens. Thus, I have found from my observations of Black men that their self-esteem can be extremely strong, yet the intangibles that drive their self-esteem may not be typical. Therefore, learning more about Black men may help educators unravel more about what impacts Black male self-esteem and its influence on their performance. More detail about self-esteem and its characteristics is covered in the later chapters of this dissertation.

Like attitudes, global and specific self-esteem are the two different types of self-esteem. Global self-esteem is more associated with psychological well-being, and specific self-esteem is more related to behavior when performing activities (Rosenberg et al., 1995). Rosenberg et al.'s (1995) work revealed that, of the two types, specific (academic) self-esteem is a stronger predictor of school performance. It was also found that the magnitude of specific academic self-esteem's impact on positive global self-esteem is personally valued and depends on the quality of academic achievement. Rosenberg et al. suggested that global self-esteem is not totally detached from behavior but that it has a weaker relationship than specific self-esteem does. Rosenberg et al. found that the greater specificity of the attitude, the greater its ability to predict. Rosenberg et al. suggested that this concept about attitude predictability indicates that specific self-esteem (which is an attitude) should predict specific behavior better than global self-esteem.

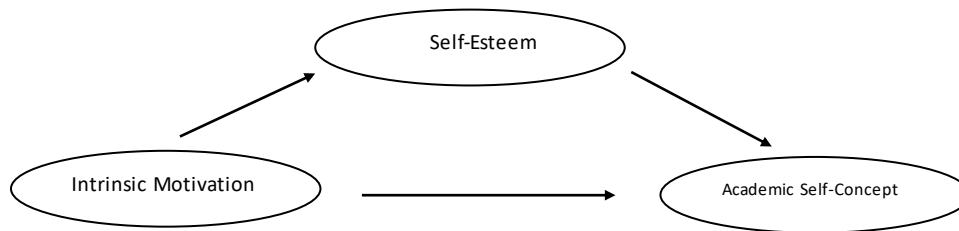
Rosenberg et al. (1995) shared that theorists agree with the concept that humans possess a common desire to protect and preserve how they feel about their self-worth. Humans also feel that the task of protecting their feelings of self-worth can be frustrating and can create different levels of psychological discomfort. Rosenberg et al. described that the act of maintenance of self-esteem includes self-protective measures and various coping processes. Also, global self-esteem is shown to be significantly associated with anxiety. Rosenberg et al. shared that evidence

indicates that changes in specific academic self-esteem can generate improved school performance; however, there is little to no evidence that global self-esteem will help improve academic performance.

Also, Cokley (2002) suggested that intrinsic motivation impacts self-esteem and academic self-concept and that self-esteem influences academic self-concept.

Figure 2

Basic Model of Processes Influencing Academic Self-Concept



Note. From “What do we know about the motivation of African American students? Challenging the anti-intellectual myth,” by K. Cokley (2003), *Harvard Educational Review*, 73(4), p. 537.

To predict academic self-concept among African American students, the process hypothesized in the model in Figure 2 provides a simplified conceptual version showing intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and academic self-concept (Cokley 2003). The model suggests that intrinsic motivation impacts self-esteem and academic self-concept and that self-esteem contributes to academic self-concept (Cokley, 2002, 2003).

The topic of Styles’ (2017) study was African American men, with a focus on academic self-efficacy, and the knowledge that promotes the academic achievement of college students. Styles examined the different factors that have the most impact on the academic self-efficacy beliefs of different community college students and how Black men feel about the beliefs. These factors are potentially associated with the negative impact of marginalization, racial discrimination, and the negative perception of Black men. Styles performed a two-phase

explanatory mixed method design to investigate 109 participants. The study began with quantitative method data collection, followed by qualitative interviews of 17 Black male participants. Findings revealed that Black students possessed the highest levels of academic self-efficacy of all ethnic and racial groups. Educational aspirations were shown to be the best predictors of a student's academic self-efficacy. Styles' findings from his qualitative data analysis revealed dominant themes that impacted Black male academic self-efficacy levels and their education. Two of these themes were institutional and family support.

Whiting (2009) examined gifted Black male students through his scholar identity model in order to uncover the achievement barriers that these men face. This study found that culturally driven counseling experiences at schools can be an effective way to deal with self-perception or identity issues (self-esteem, racial identity, or self-concept). Whiting also shared optimistic reasons why Black men should aspire to imagine being strong academically and intellectually instead of settling for athletic related identities/perceptions which may feed the negative stereotypical acceptance of Black men's physical gifts while rejecting their intellectual gifts. Whiting then suggested that educators should better recognize how a scholarly identity has the potential to enhance Black male motivation and achievement. Also, Black men with scholarly identity are said to possess more self-efficacy. Whiting also indicated that Black men with self-efficacy are more resilient and persistent when encountering obstacles, and may also possess more self-control, self-confidence, and self-responsibility. In my experiences, I have observed Black male professionals who have no problems performing highly in White higher education environments, whether in leadership or other roles. Yet, Black men may lack opportunities because of receiving unfavorable appraisals from managers whose discomfort and lack of confidence in Black men may be driven by their lack of crucial knowledge about Black men.

Reporting on the significance of self-esteem in our lives, the California State Department of Education published a report of the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility in 1990. One of the key findings of the task force was that “self-esteem is the likeliest candidate for a ‘social vaccine,’ something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates us against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse . . . and educational failure” (California State Department of Education, 1990, p. 4). Another finding indicated that being fond of one’s creativity and experiencing one’s spirituality can contribute to a healthy self-esteem, and that those who possess healthy self-esteem typically do not participate in self-destructive/defeating behaviors.

Awad (2007), whose work sought to uncover the ability of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept to predict academic indicators including grade point averages (GPA), and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, indicated that his study was needed because of his inability to find literature that examined the relationships between these two academic performance indicators and the variables of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept in one study. Awad’s study involved 313 African American participants from two different samples. The findings revealed that academic self-concept was a strong predictor of GPA, but it did not predict GRE scores. Moreover, racial identity did not predict GPA or GRE scores. He noted that student age was the best predictor of GRE performance. Awad also shared that global self-esteem was less effective than academic self-concept in the prediction of GPA. He noted that, as a construct, academic self-concept more specifically addresses items associated with academic abilities and skills, making it a stronger predictor of college grades.

Growth Mindset

Mindsets (implicit theories) are one's general beliefs about the nature of their attributes, such as personality or intelligence (Bernecker & Job, 2019; Dweck, 2012). Fixed mindset (entity theory) is our belief that people's attributes, such as personality or intelligence, cannot change, and thus, are fixed. Growth mindset (incremental theory) is our belief that people's attributes, such as personality or intelligence, are malleable, and thus, can substantially be changed. Thus, possessing strong mindset is implied in many of the student's responses, which seems to reveal how they have relied on growth mindset in their fight to overcome the challenges of pursuing a college degree as Black men.

Being willing to leave your comfort zone to change your ways (Dweck, 2006). As students who may be in environments of pessimism, while being educated, growth mindset enhances their comfortable with themselves, possessing the strength to shield oneself from unhelpful thoughts that others have about them – and having no need to seek and rely on the approval of others (Dweck, 2006). It can help students to operate with patience, that may reduce anxiousness. The positive growth mindset like attitude may help students focus more on putting in the effort that they may need for success. Students, with a solid growth mindset, can be ok accepting that they are not perfect, and thus, disallow imperfections to stop them from pursuing their interest. Though students make mistakes, they are not overcome by them. Also, students with growth mindset can be more willing to consider positive and negative feedback.

People with a growth mindset possess these things: a belief in positive effort (hard work that can boost your abilities), goals for learning (to boost one's abilities, by taking on challenging chores), attributes that are resilient (the feeling that setbacks do not impact their abilities, but that they just need to change their procedure). People with a growth mindset do not give in to

challenging projects, and they hope for more opportunities to perform (Dweck & Yeager, 2022). Growth-mindset oriented individuals exert themselves in these areas, embracing challenges, staying resilient through difficulties. They can handle constructive criticism and learn from it. They can be determined to learn despite failure or success (Dweck, 2006).

American psychologist, Carol Dweck (2006), promoted the concept of mindset in her book on the psychology of success. She studied students' attitudes about failure, and their beliefs about learning related to their mindset. She then divided mindset into two categories: growth mindset and fixed mindset. Growth mindset is the feeling that one can boost their skills and intelligence with hard work and persistence (. Those with a growth mindset face their challenges, are resilient through difficulties, can handle constructive criticism and are ok with seeking inspiration through the success of others. They are also inspired to learn despite failures or successes.

Cross's Nigrescence: Internalization

The four key constructs (self-esteem, racial identity, academic self-concept, and GPA) have also been examined in other studies. Yet, Awad (2007) examined the relationship of these constructs using a racial identity instrument that is psychometrically stronger. He used the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS), which was more recently developed to reflect the Cross Nigrescence model (Vandiver et al., 2002). Along with a more contemporary gauge of racial identity, its rigorous scale development and validation process helped to produce better psychometric properties than those seen in previous studies with the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS; Ponterotto & Wise, 1987). The CRIS is comprised of these levels: pre-encounter assimilation (PA), pre-encounter miseducation (PM), pre-encounter self-hatred (PSH),

immersion–emersion anti-white (IEAW), internalization black nationalist (IBN), and internalization multiculturalist inclusive (IMCI) (Vandiver et al., 2002). Sufficient psychometric properties have been consistently demonstrated by the CRIS, mainly consistent internal reliability. Awad’s work also provided valuable direction for further research that examines relationships between African American racial identity, self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement. Findings of earlier studies disclosed that aspects of racial identity significantly predict academic performance (GPA; Awad, 2007; Chavous et al., 2003; Lockett & Harrell, 2003; Sellers et al., 1998b). Moreover, of CRIS’ six racial identity levels, immersion-emersion is of greatest interest to this study because of Awad’s work where immersion attitudes were found to have the greatest impact on GPA and academic self-concept followed in second place. Awad shared that those who endorsed more immersion attitudes had lower GPAs than those who held fewer immersion attitudes. This is likely because immersion attitudes are intensely pro-Black and pro-Black involvement and intensely anti-White. This finding is important because relevant instruments whose measures have the potential to contribute to the prediction of GPA for Black men are coveted because of limited literature on this topic that exclusively focuses on Black men. Additionally, previously, when Cross’s Nigrescence model was used to conceptualize racial identity, it was also found that the endorsement of immersion attitudes was associated with lower academic performance, and internalization attitudes were related to higher academic performance.

Furthermore, Lockett and Harrell (2003) sampled college students using RIAS and revealed a significant positive association between only one RIAS subscale (internalization) and GPA. In addition to other findings, Sellers et al. (1998a) stated that the minority ideology, which is the belief in associations between Blacks and other oppressed groups, was associated with

grade point averages. Awad (2007) noted that overemphasizing Blackness (nationalism) or underemphasizing race (assimilation) was associated with poorer academic outcomes.

Awad (2007) shared this information about the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS):

This scale was developed to operationalize Cross's (1991) revised Nigrescence model. The 40-item scale consists of six subscales designed to measure the stages of racial identity proposed by Cross. These subscales are *pre-encounter assimilation* (e.g., "I primarily think of myself as an American and seldom as a member of a racial group"), *pre-encounter miseducation* (e.g., "Too many Blacks 'glamorize' the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime"), *pre-encounter self-hatred* (e.g., "Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black"), *immersion-emersion* (e.g., "I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people"), *internalization Afrocentricity* (e.g., "I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective"), and *internalization multiculturalist* (e.g., "As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups"). Internal consistency reliability for all subscales ranged from .74 to .83 in previous studies (Cokley, 2002). The CRIS has demonstrated convergent validity with the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity in previous studies (Vandiver et al., 2002). Internal consistency estimates for the CRIS subscales ranged from .71 to .90 in the current study. (p. 196)

Awad suggested that racial identity may relate to GPA indirectly, but it may also influence more relevant variables like academic self-concept.

Racial Pride

Included in Markus's (2008) work is endorsement of consideration to the thought that people are social entities developed by their relationships with other people in their culture. And thus, people are influenced by their racial and ethnic relationships. And because many different

racess and ethnicities exist, we are blessed with many different meanings, practices, and ways of thinking.

Racial and ethnic pride can be viewed in a positive manner, as they are a source of motivation, identity, unity, and pride. Formed differences in race can be instrumental in creating motivation, meaning, and pride. The practiced culture of those of different races or ethnicities, have the potential to significantly impact their actions, feelings, or thoughts. Yet, as human beings we can we possess the capacity to reflect, incorporate, or eventually synthesize our thoughts of racial practices choices that me influence our final intensions. This information can reflect how powerful the concept of racial pride can be in the hearts of the students who possess the cultural uniqueness that racial pride represents within their culture despite whether it is perceived as good or bad amongst other races.

Validation Theory

Rendon (1994) showed how student development and learning practices may validate and improve the achievement of culturally diverse students. Rendon shared that there were students from a large university who discussed the significance of interpersonal validation and that siblings, faculty, friends, parents played crucial roles. Rendon and Muñoz's (2011) work showed that many low-income, first-generation students who lack involvement skills can benefit from validation. Supporting individuals can encourage these students through affirming them, and also through actively supporting them socially and academically inside and outside of classroom settings.

Albert Bandura's (1986) work in social cognitive theory (SCT) is based on analyzing human motivation, thought, and action. From Bandura's work, he shared that, as one receives verbal support, they will more likely employ greater effort to complete a task. Styles (2017)

noted that interviewees shared how they were encouraged by receiving verbal support from staff and instructors which affirmed that people at the institution wanted to be a part of their success and motivation achievements. As mentioned earlier, some of the student responses indicated that the parents were happy that their children were attending college. Yet, college attendance alone may not satisfy many parents. The parents of first-generation college students may not have the same expectations as parents who actually attended college themselves. Furthermore, both validation experiences and scholarly identity growth can potentially happen concurrently.

Self-Determination

Cherry's (2022) work reveals that self-determination refers to a person's being self-determined, which means that you feel in greater control, as opposed to being non-self-determined, which can leave you feeling that your life is controlled by others:

It [self-determination] states that people are motivated to grow and change by three innate [and universal] psychological needs. The concept of intrinsic motivation [or engaging in activities for the inherent reward of the behavior itself], plays an important role in this theory." (para. 1)

Earlier, Bernecker and Job's (2019) literature covered self-determination theory's relationship with the quality and quantity of motivation.

Allegiance to Others

Through Manaher's (2024) work, allegiance is defined as:

A term deeply rooted in the realms of loyalty and commitment, [that] holds a significant place in the fabric of human interactions. At its core, allegiance refers to the unwavering devotion and fidelity one pledges towards a person, group, cause, or even a nation. This

resolute dedication is often marked by a sense of duty, honor, and adherence to a set of principles or values” (para. 4).

The Influence of Stereotyping

Harper (2015), whose study examined Black male undergraduates’ response to the potential internalization of racial stereotypes at predominantly White higher education institutions, shared that other studies have consistently shown stereotypes to be a common issue on many campuses, and that they can have a negative effect on students both academically and psychologically. Black male undergraduates are typically among the most stereotyped groups in higher education and the U.S. Thus, how Blacks deal with stereotypes can impact how they perform and persist. Harper’s work included interviews with successful Black men at 30 predominantly White colleges and universities. The findings suggested that these undergraduates were successful in resisting the stereotypes despite the number that they encountered. Their success was also aided by their roles in campus leadership, engagement in student organizations, along with the use of a three-step strategic redirection process. Harper (2015) shared a description on three-step process:

Achievers described a three-step strategic pivoting process to respond to an array of stereotypes, both inside and outside the classroom: 1. A White peer asks a question like, “You got weed?”, 2. The achiever responds by calmly asking, “What made you assume I sell, smoke, or know where to find weed?”, 3. The achiever waits patiently for the White peer to reflect and answer the question. During this reflective period, the stereotype (or micro aggressor) usually comes to understand on her or his own that the question posed or assumption made was racially problematic. (pp. 665–666).

Moreover, communication skills that participants gain through out-of-class engagement are helpful in the participants' resistance to harmful threats of racial stereotypes experienced in the classroom. Harper also noted that these participants shared that the three steps frequently protected them from leaving encounters upset and confused about assumptions that faculty and White peers made about them. He also mentioned that some achievers exchanged response strategies in ethnic student meetings and at Black culture centers. Harper also noted that minoritized and same-race peers (mainly upper-class students in student organization leadership) shared with each other how to resist internalizing racial microaggression and properly respond to racial stereotypes. I have observed that Black male students who lack the support and outlets available to Harper's achievers may fail in their attempts to overcome the impact of negative stereotypes which can, in turn, harm their performance. Also, Black male student outcomes may be unfairly impacted when their overall performance is assessed the same as peers who do not experience the harmful stereotyping that troubles Black men.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the effects of academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity on how Black male students are driven to succeed in higher education. Thus, the purpose involved performing a qualitative inquiry on Black male psychological motivation, through academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity. This path seems to be needed because it appears that few existing studies exclusively focus on Black males only.

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the methodical approach and research design of the study. After I analyzed the data, I determined whether the data supported the research hypotheses (Cokley, 2003). I commenced the data source and data collection process by interviewing 16 Black male college students. Also, because of the COVID-19 coronavirus, in person research was not available so Zoom meetings were used as the vehicle to perform the participant interviews. This style of interview likely reduced the risk of spreading COVID-19. The interviews were administered during the spring semester of 2022 at Midwest University.

This section includes the study's methodical approach, epistemology, qualitative methodology, research questions, research design, recruiting, participants, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, analysis process, interview process, analysis method and procedure, and trustworthiness.

Epistemology

The epistemological approach used in this study was the constructivist view of knowledge, which supports an emphasis on the use of greater description needed to represent people issues effectively (Creswell, 2003). This study mainly relied on qualitative evidence, which is better suited for addressing social, and historical problems and a constructivist approach. The goal in constructivism is not necessarily to reach a common meaning but to be open to multiple meanings and to facilitate different points of view. This approach was selected because it appeared to fit the need presented in the study's problem, which included the need to address the real discrimination that Black male students encounter and that creates a burden that they bear while they pursue a college degree. Thus, the study gives Black male students the opportunity to voice their own thoughts about educational issues.

Qualitative Methodology

The social constructivist knowledge view was selected, which supports the use of the qualitative approach, to drive this study's methodology, through seeking to uncover more complex meaning from socially related problems (Creswell, 2003). This meaning is captured through participant voices that construct their own details. Qualitative research principles are mentioned and applied in the remainder of this chapter.

Research Questions

1. What are the self-esteem related experiences that impact the scholastic performance of Black male students?
2. What are the racial identity related experiences that impact the scholastic performance of Black male students?

3. What are the academic self-concept related experiences that impact the scholastic performance of Black male students?

Research Design

The design approach provided a participant-driven analysis of the research questions that emerged from detailed student-voiced experiences that capture the specificity of their version of the scholarly motivation that may exist within the characteristics of the constructs of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept.

Basic interpretive qualitative design was the method used to guide this study's effort to examine and gain greater understanding about the academic (scholastic) motivation of Midwest University's Black male students (Merriam, 1998). Basic interpretive qualitative research is one of the most common forms of qualitative research found in education. Interpretive qualitative research is descriptive and inductive, while focusing on unknown meanings. My interest in basic interpretive methodology is partly rooted in how it allows people the opportunity to interpret their experiences, the way they construct their words, and their meanings of their experiences. Taking this approach provided this study's Black male participants the privilege to voice their own story.

Merriam's (1998) work examined basic interpretive research, and it emphasized the concern that the focus of all qualitative research is the construction of meaning. Moreover, in pursuing the constructivist view, life details are illuminated during basic interpretive research, such as when the meanings of Black male student experiences in this study are examined.

Recruiting

Most of my early recruiting was done online through my Qualtrics survey. The process of informing the students about the study transpired during the recruiting process, mainly through

the Qualtrics survey's consent signing process. I emailed the participants access information through the study's online Qualtrics survey. The survey also housed the consent process, which is where the students received the option to agree to participate. The consent letter's general purpose was to provide pertinent information about the study, while also soliciting the student's agreement to participate. Also, through Qualtrics, the students received access to the demographic survey following signing-off in agreement to participate in the study.

I officially began the recruiting process for the study after receiving IRB approval for exemption status on November 8, 2021. Eligible students were identified through Midwest University's institutional research department and through presentations at a panhellenic meeting, an African American Cultural Center Brotherhood of Successful Students (BOSS) meeting, a meeting with individual students in the student union, and throughout the campus, as well as through conversations with representatives of the mentoring department, campus life, Greek life, Black Greek, and Education leadership. Fliers were mainly posted in the student union and in residence halls.

After receiving a slow response to the recruiting effort, during the later stages of the recruiting, I reapproached the IRB with a modification request for permission to offer students a \$50 gift card instead of a \$25 gift card. On March 18, 2022, the IRB responded by approving my \$50 gift card request, which allowed me to continue recruiting by offering a larger incentive. On April 5, 2022, I received an email from the Executive Director of Midwest University's Residential Life which stated that some Black male students agreed to meet with me that night at the African American Cultural Center to discuss participating in the study. I met with that group and ended up landing 14 of my eventual 16 participant sample. Students meeting the requirements provided in the inclusion criteria were selected to participate.

Participants

The institution representing the study's participants is located in the Midwest. The study's focus on Black men makes this an appropriate institution for the study, because of its comparably large quantity of Black men. As mentioned, the gender of the participants of the study are men, and the racial composition of the participants are Black. No particular college majors were targeted for the participants of the study as a variety of majors were represented. Cohorts represented in the study were freshmen through seniors, and a graduate student because students from all cohorts were welcome to participate. Also, participants selected were current students at this institution, with preferably a minimum of 12 credit hours. Moreover, I selected students on a first-come, first-serve basis, and I mainly relied on the criteria-sampling process when selecting participants for this study (Patton, 1980). Moreover, I de-identified the participants by using pseudonyms. Table 2 includes a list of the students who participated in the student:

Table 2*Study Participants*

Participants				
Student	Age	Year	Major	GPA
Justice	20	Junior	Communications	2.9
Jason TPS	20	Sophomore	Communication	
James	23	Grad	Communications	
Frost	20	Junior	Pub. Health Admin.	2.9
Dee TPS	21	Sophomore	Engineering	
Nate	19	Soph	Business Mgmt.	3.4
Helter	21	Junior	Interior Arch. Design	2.6
Lemo	24	Junior/2	Maj: Psychology, Min: Sport for Recreation	
Kice	24	Senior	Fine Arts	2.2
Mux TPS	18	Freshman	Business	
Man	22	Senior	Nursing	3.48
Konosuba	20	Senior	Psychology	2.59
Jay	21	Junior	Mech. Eng. Tech.	
Pelt STPS	21	Junior	Public Health	
Mils	20	Junior	Marketing	3.1
Kemon		Junior	Marketing	3.41

Note: Table 2 presents easily obtainable demographic information about the student participants

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Participant Demographics
Generated through Qualtrics survey

	Q2. Please provide the country that you were born in? United States of America	Q3. What best represents your ethnic identification? a. African b. African-American c. Black d. West Indian/Caribbean Black e. Hispanic/Latino f. Mixed race/ethnicity g. Other	Q4. What is your family's socioeconomic status? a. Poor b. Working Class c. Middle Class d. Upper Middle Class e. Rich	Q6. Please circle what describes the racial composition of your childhood community? a. Mostly Black b. Mixed c. Mostly White d. Other; please specify	Q7. Please circle what describes the racial composition of the high school that you were educated at the most? a. Mostly Black b. Mixed c. Mostly White d. Other; please specify	Q8. Please circle the group you are most comfortable socializing? a. Blacks b. Whites c. Hispanics/Latinos d. Asians/Pacific Islanders e. Mixed Group f. Other; please specify:	Q9. Circle the number racial/ethnic organizations do you belong to? 1 2 3 4 5+ 1 Location Data (39.6804, -86.1306) Source: GeolP Estimatio
Student Qual 4	USA	Black	Working Class	Black	Black	Blacks	1
Student Qual 5	USA	African American	Working Class	Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	4
Student Qual 6	USA	Black	Middle Class	Mostly Black	White	Blacks	2
Student Qual 7	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	2
Student Qual 8	USA	African American	Working Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Blacks	3
Student Qual 9	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Black & Mixed	1
Student Qual 10	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Mixed	3
Student Qual 11	USA	Black	Working Class	Other	Mixed	Blacks	2
Student Qual 12	USA	Mixed & Black	Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mostly Black	Blacks	2
Student Qual 13	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Blacks	6
Student Qual 14	USA	African American	Working Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Blacks	1
Student Qual 15	USA	Black African American	Upper Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	3
Student Qual 16	USA	Black African American	Upper Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	3
Student Qual 17	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly Black	Blacks	2
Student Qual 18	USA	Black	Middle Class	Black	Mixed	Blacks	2
Student Qual 19	USA	Black African American	Upper Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	3
Student Qual 20	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly Black	Blacks	2

20
Qual
21

Qual 22	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly White & Black	Mostly Black	0
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Note: Table 3 contains Qualtrics survey generated demographic information about the participants.

Data Collection Instrument

During the time period between April 4 and 11, 2022, the majority of the eventual Black male participants who consented to participate were scheduled for Zoom interviews and completed the interviews. The interview process included three key sections: self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept, which were designed based on these three instruments: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Cross Racial Identity Attitude Scale, and Academic Self-Concept Scale: College Attitude Survey. I truly wanted to utilize these three interview topics to capture meaningful data, despite the risk of multiple interview questions and longer interview sessions. The process ended up having 10 self-esteem questions, 23 self-identity questions, and 25 academic self-concept questions.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the interview sessions, some of the students completed an eight-question demographic survey during the online Qualtrics survey consent process. The demographic questions included race, socioeconomic status, GPA, childhood community, high school, and ethnicity.

Moreover, in preparation for interview session success and to compensate for the potential of lengthy interviews, I self-observed during the first few interviews to determine how

the students would react to the process. The number of questions surprisingly did not appear to distract the students, as they appeared to be driven by their desire to participate and have their voices heard. During the interview sessions, I began by describing the questions and process before we began the actual interview question and response process. I also paraphrased some of the questions for simplification.

In general, the data collection followed the routine process required for collecting data through interview sessions performed in a qualitative study. In this section, the process used to collect the data is summarized. First and foremost, I completed and submitted the information needed to request IRB permission to perform the study. Then the collection procedure ensued, which included seeking Midwest University Institutional Research (IR) assistance in recruiting Black male ISU students. Crucial steps included the candidate's completion of the consent approval process and their completion of the demographic section in Qualtrics. The participant interviews were conducted followed by the chore of transcribing the interview data that was recorded by Zoom video conferencing.

Throughout, I upheld my commitment to place no pressure on the students to participate. I also did not impinge on their free will to discontinue participation at any time. Moreover, data were stored on my password-protected personal computer.

Interview Process

Qualitative studies call for three major sources of data—interviews, documents, and observations (Merriam, 2002). Interviews were the main source of data relied on for this study. The qualitative detail secured from the study's interviews were the largest source of data captured from the student participants.

The focus of the interview sessions was primarily driven by the strategy of assessing the students in these three key categories: self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept. The hope was that the interview questions used in these three categories would effectively probe the students and also enhance my overall ability to categorize and examine their responses.

My faculty sponsor and I were the only two researchers with access to the data. Yet, it is known that illegal hacking exists and could cause participant embarrassment and stress. Thus, in addition to storing data on my personal computer, Midwest University's technical support provided an additional layer of security and confidentiality through their network.

Therefore, 16 student interviews were successfully completed, producing the data that were processed and analyzed. As noted earlier, the interviews sessions were conducted remotely through Zoom videoconferencing technology. The majority of the interviews were scheduled without challenges, and there were only a few students with whom I had a difficult time scheduling an interview. I typically began the interviews by discussing the overall study, reviewing the consent process, and confirming that the students consented to participate. I also covered the participant's right to discontinue participation at any time. I then provided the students with an overview of the study topic, interview questions, and interview process. I usually started with the self-esteem category questions, followed by racial identity, and then the academic self-concept questions. Moreover, when interviewing, I listened intently, in an effort to effectively receive and discern the actual meanings of the student responses.

Some of the students gave short responses to the questions, and some gave long responses. One of the students gave short responses apparently because he had a scheduled conflict that left him less time for the interview. A few other students were less engaged with some of the questions and gave shorter responses, for unknown reasons. Yet, other students were

well engaged, energetic and provided longer responses. I tried to comfort the students through my attitude, tone, and words prior to and during the interview. Thus, most of the students appeared to be relaxed. During the interviews, all of the participants were treated with equitable respect. Moreover, the students seemed comfortable in their willingness to engage in the interviews. Also, to prevent the participant from being upset about difficult interview questions, I reminded participants that they did not have to answer questions if they did not want to and that they could also stop the interview sessions. Ample data were captured, and noteworthy findings were generated from the qualitative data analysis, through the voices of the Black male students.

During the interviews, I was able to observe some facial expressions and voice tone changes, along with a limited amount of body language. I mainly focused on semi-structured, open-ended interview questions, and I periodically shortened some of the questions for the flow of the interview (Merriam, 2002).

Analysis Method and Procedure

My capability to understand the students enhanced my ability to understand their responses which later strengthened my capacity to analyze the data accurately. Furthermore, my previous experience and knowledge of existing literature and theory enhanced my ability to visualize the data that emerged as themes. I was careful to give the students the utmost respect and to avoid the bias of treating their culture without the respect that one might give to more majority cultures in our society (Creswell, 2003).

The Zoom videoconferencing software that was used to record the interviews made it convenient for me to transcribe the student responses. I utilized the improved Windows 11 voice typing dictation tool, along with PowerPoint, to transcribe the student responses. Transcribing

increased my potential to analyze the data accurately and to see concepts and themes that warranted attention (Merriam, 2002).

The interview transcripts were very helpful in navigating this analysis process. Yet, the student's responses frequently deviated from the direction of the research questions. For example, the students voiced experiences that were authentic and instinctive and did not seem to be predetermined for the study. Moreover, when I needed to schedule additional interview time with a student, or had an information request, I contacted the students by email and asked them to provide it, and they responded well. For example, I contacted them and requested that they provide me with a pseudonym of their choice that would be used instead of the actual names in the dissertation. I then de-identified the data by replacing the participant names with the pseudonyms. I was happy with how the students and I worked together throughout the study. Their positive attitude and quickness in responding to my requests encouraged me as I progressed in my work on the study.

The analysis bore findings from the three key interview topics of the study (self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept) through select questions that were derived from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, the Cross Racial Identity Attitude scale, and the Academic Self-Concept (College Attitude Survey) scale. These key surveys were mainly selected because of their use in studies similar to this study and their potential to contribute to relevant findings about how the participants of this study are motivated. The findings also produced initial emergent thoughts (characteristics) that commonly surfaced during the interviews, which produced the initial emergent themes.

Trustworthiness

To achieve trustworthiness, I spoke with participants about the need for the study to help them understand that its findings are worth considering (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, to reveal the study's plan, the steps of the process of conducting the study were laid out in its proposal. Furthermore, I produced video, audio, and transcript data of the interviews. I also engaged with the students through short email queries to acquire additional information from the students when necessary.

I collected ample interview data, which provided thick and rich description when writing about the details of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My hope is that the detail of the responses is understood, making it easier for the reader to visualize the setting. Furthermore, I supported Patton's (2001) recommendation as it focused on the influence of more diverse research and scholarly dialogue and identified researcher bias, neutrality, and credibility. All of these concepts required my attention throughout the study. To counteract researcher bias, I avoided being judgmental about the student's personality, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Also, I have revealed biases that I have, relating to this study, later in this report (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2001).

I was alert to the significance of neutrality while compiling the different components of the study, which may be needed to enhance the reader's opportunity to create his or her own conclusions about this study (Yin, 2009). Being a Black man makes this work more important to me as the researcher. Despite my demographic background, which is similar to the backgrounds of targeted participants, I felt that it was needful for me to avoid researcher bias as much as possible. Accomplishing this called for a careful balance of downplaying my background while concurrently making relevant contributions when necessary while recording, analyzing, and

interpreting their words. Being somewhat knowledgeable about the impact of credibility and avoiding bias, I tried to stay aware of both during the study. I realized that understanding biases can enhance my ability to control them (Patton, 2001). My hope is that the end product of this study benefits mainly from participant contribution, and also from my experiences as a Black male student, my professional and nonprofessional experiences with Black male students, and my determination to reap relevant solutions that can empower Black men.

CHAPTER 4

STUDENT SNAPSHOTS

The purpose of this study was to explore how academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity affects how Black male students assert themselves in their pursuit of higher education success, which I undertook by utilizing qualitative inquiry to examine Black male psychological motivation through the key constructs of academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity. Moreover, this research seems needed due to limited literature that currently seems available for studies about African American student self-esteem and self-concept and that primarily focuses on Black men.

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the study's 16 participating African American male students at Midwest University. The student interviews provided the most significant contribution of data to the study. The interviews were conducted remotely through Zoom video conferencing technology. In addition to the interview sessions, I had previously met most of the students during the recruiting process. Observation during our interactions strengthened my ability to capture human behavior characteristics and to learn things that may typically not be available during quantitative inquiry.

Short briefs of who the students are, called *snapshots*, are presented, which may help reveal their actual personalities and thoughts. The snapshots provide minimal observations and select interview responses, which can help reveal key personality traits. Minimal demographic

information is also shared, when available, on some of the students. Moreover, in many of the interview sessions, the student vernacular was less formal, which may have revealed that they felt free to verbalize comfortably their responses without the worry of being formal, which was a powerful plus, because it probably enhanced the authenticity of their responses. Yet, their responses powerfully reflected their feelings inside, which revealed their meaningful experiences outside.

Konosuba

Overall, Konosuba was energetic in sharing thoughtful comments during the interview. He was very aware of what is going on in regard to his world and was quite willing to share his observations. Konosuba commented that he came from a single-parent household and that because of his life circumstances, he is a statistical anomaly, and he is not supposed to be in college. Yet, he noted that he is not satisfied with where he is today. In spite of his illustrious journey, he indicated that he was proud of his accomplishments in spite of his unique journey. Konosuba also shared that his hobbies included gaming, shopping, going out with friends, and being involved on campus. Also, to his credit, he shared that he has read interesting books about Black people. He commented, “Right now I’m reading, as I already did back in 8th grade, but I’m reading it again – it’s called *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates.”

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Konosuba revealed some personal feelings about his parents and how they motivated him:

They’re just happy I’m here, to be honest. I’m my mommy’s first born. She worked her butt off to see me get here. I mean I’m just following in her footsteps trying to pay her all of the work that she put in to get me here. Like I said, I already know my pops. I do want

to talk to him. My mom, she's married to my stepdad. He had four other kids before he married my mom. Ain't none of his kids doing anything, so, he looks at me like I'm one of his kids. And I look at him like my pops (cause) he raised me, too, for real. So, he's just proud of seeing it, like, he's just happy. Like when his kids are actually doing something like they are supposed to be doing, he's happy. They (my parents) wanna see us walk across the stage.

Educational Reflection

Konosuba attended high school in Indiana. He discussed the level of student population diversity at his school:

I went to high schools where all Black people come. It was like one White person, like it seems like I saw one White person in my school life. I had seen three from my freshman year (throughout) high school.

He indicated having some racial openness despite minimal experiences with Whites when he was younger. Yet, being in the minority in college, he seems to reap positive experiences with Whites: "But I know some real cool White people."

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Konosuba shared some revealing thoughts about his experiences as a Black man that may surprise others:

Oh no. I mean, yeah, just like seeing (stereotypical) stuff in the media, like, damn. But it's like at the same time, like I love being like this (being Black). No, it's like just being Black means that your life is always in danger, so, you can never be alarmed. Like when you get pulled over by the police, and why a lot of people get murdered. It's scary, being Black.

Konosuba shared deep feelings about cultural experiences:

Being Black American is hard. You got culture. I mean, really, just think like being Black in America is just different from a standpoint of being White. For example, we like dancing and all that, you know, (considering different) cultures and stuff. Like yesterday, my dad, we were all listening to the same music and like dancing. And just standing around looking and talking. Then I experienced something culturally different in a different setting. I was walking around in a plant, on this day, with Confederate flags. Like is that something they're OK with? And at Klan rallies and are they out there embodying their self-hatred?

Career/Community-Service Interest

Konosuba shared some interesting thoughts about the power of passion that may resonate with both Black and White students:

College (success includes) one or two things (that require your true dedication and internal honesty) to keep you from staying in the wrong major. For example, I know a couple of people in premed who won't give up because it's too hard because they are dedicated to premed no matter what this institution throws at them. 'Cause like, it's their passion in what they want to do. Like, I mean, it all depends on if you're really dedicated to what's going on in your heart. So, just get out of it and do something that you really passionate about, where there's nothing that's gonna stop you, right? And I believe that.

He also commented about the value of a college degree:

Yeah, all the time. When I see my home boys, homies making money every day, and I'm just sitting here. But I mean, you gotta think of it in the long run. It's like they're making that money now, but like all that money they're making now, by time we be 30 or 40, I'm

gonna pass them, I'm gonna pass them two-fold. Like I always got to look at the bigger picture.

He shared that he favors working in a psychology clinic after college. He would also like to be involved in church and help children that look like him in the community.

Nate

Nate has a solid positive outlook on life, on his abilities as a student, and on his culture and identity as a Black man. His responses during the interview included reflections about his concern for his race. Nate shared that he attended high school in a midwestern city. Overall, his interview answers showed strong judgement and revealed confidence in his ability to complete college successfully.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Nate provided this response to the question about, whether his parents were happy with his college grades: "Yes, yes, she told me that the other day." He shared this about the question:

Do I hate it (the White community)? . . . No, (yet) Black family is when the most loving communication (happens). Yeah, like, I wanna say my family reunions and stuff are like that. Do you like being together? Is our community what we do? Just stay close to each other.

Educational Reflection

These were Nate's thoughts about being able to get things done as well as other people: "Most of the time yes. Something. Like other people in the room don't (come together) to do the work, I speak up and say something about it."

Nate shared this about having a multicultural lifestyle:

(Back) home I have a few multicultural friends. I would say (mainly) Mexican. . . . Yes, I think it's good now (Black identity and a multicultural perspective). And also, we should be open to multicultural (friendships) with weird people. We're not the only minority group. Like in history, there's been a lot, though, they were kept secret from newer generations.

Career/Community-Service Interest

Nate shared this about what he would like to do after college: "I hope to work for a company for a couple years to get situated . . . (also) give back to my community by setting up programs for youth and future generations."

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Here are some of Nate's thoughts about being an American versus being Black: "I don't necessarily feel like I'm in America. I'm not selling myself to America. The standard they set for the whole country is very biased and is White based." Here he shared his feelings about whether life is good as an African American, "in some parts, yes, and in other parts, no. Like, for instance, I would say no because I am a business management major in the world we live in today." Nate shares about an Afrocentric perspective:

So I mean we're kind of influenced by our descendants (elders)—the African descent. But this is kinda deeper. Just saying, I'm Black, but you're really into where you came from? And the culture of the people where you came from? . . . I feel like that is a good thing that they (we) remember their history (*in a country that does not always reveal our history*) and don't allow groups to make us forget it. And I like both. I remember the history and like knowing where they come from. School systems and society disregard

our history and teach a light, PG version of like what really happened during past years, leaving out certain topics and key points that happened in history for us.

Nate shared this experience that he felt was unfair:

Some professors would lean more towards the Caucasian students. Also, I dropped a class last week because I was failing because the professor was all older person whose teaching methods were outdated, and not what our generation may be used to.

Mux

Mux attended high school in a city in the Midwest. He has a very strong positive outlook on his life, and in his abilities, like the other Black male students' outlook. I notice that many of the students had a calm, confident attitude when we talked, but that most of their responses reflect that they are very confident about their educational skills (their potential for college success), they have strong Black pride, and are multicultural. These characteristics reflect strong self-esteem and strong direction and an ability to succeed despite their campus environment. They also seem to have strong common sense and strong judgement.

Mux seemed intent on providing honest answers during the interview. He also possessed a positive outlook on his life and of his abilities as a student. His responses were sound and reflected his concern for his culture and being Black. His responses showed confidence and good judgement. I felt that he was sure of himself in his ability to complete college successfully. He has a multicultural attitude and strong Black pride. Also, despite his busy schedule, and although he may have encountered obstacles as a student, he shared that "I have good study habits." Throughout, there were times that Mux provided short but clear answers to the interview questions.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Frequently throughout the interviews, I was in awe about the transparency of the participants. In Mux's response to "whether his parents were happy with his grades?", he indicated that they may not be, "May not." Also, in dealing with the question that asked if Black people glamorize drugs, he shared, "I don't know about that (glamorizing drugs). I don't know how to answer that, I really don't. I've never been in that type of environment."

Educational Reflection

Unlike other participants, Mux shared that he does not focus very much on the racial makeup of the rooms/spaces that he enters, "Uh, I do, but sometimes I really don't care much, I don't be worrying about it."

Career/Community-Service Interest

Mux mentioned his major/potential career related interest, which was a business management major with a minor in entrepreneurship. He also explained that he might want to be self-employed and have a clothing business.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Mux seemed very transparent about his feelings about being Black: He responded that he feels good about his life as an African American, "yeah, I do. I do."

Here are some of his comments about being Black:

You have variability in that, but I don't see it (preferring being American or being Black) as a real big thing, I went through a lot of things in my life, and I don't really have to worry about all that. Also, sometimes I really don't care much (about the number of Black people in the room). I don't be worrying about it.

Here is a transparent self-reflection that Mux offered about self-respect. “I’m ‘up’ this summer, choices I make. My trust is based off my emotions. But you know, sometimes it is like that.” In response to a stereotype about Black people focusing on having a good time versus working hard: “Yes and no. I (see) that just up the road.”

James

James attended a high school in a midwestern city. During the interview, James seemed critically honest about the state of his study habits. Yet, his progress reflects that he does have an academic method. He also showed transparency, maturity, and wise critical thinking during the interview. He showed an ability to assess himself and reassure himself. James’s honesty about his grades was a plus. Also, the thought and care in how he articulated his responses was strong. He has strong personal standards about his GPA. Also, I sensed no significant discouragement and no doubt in his expectation to graduate. All of this may reflect that he is growing into a higher level of integrity.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

James shared some experiences about being a victim of his environment:

Well, actually two instances. I remember my freshman year, I got in the elevator and the next floor a group went down on elevator, and on the way to my floor, they started asking me if I sold drugs. Basically, the reason they asked me that, I feel, was because I had dreadlocks.

James also spoke of his disappointment about an unfair traffic incident in the vicinity of the campus:

I'm in a college town, so I would feel that it would be no different than in other states. Yet, though he (the officer) was speeding up to pass me, he pretty much slowed down, got behind me and pulled me over.

Educational Reflection

James responded to this question whether he thinks that in most classes that the other students are better prepared than you with the answer:

My freshman year, I came here and one of the most intimidated things for me as a student was knowing that some people came from better economic conditions, meaning that their schools had better prepare them for college than my school had, so they came in knowing about how to use Excel.

This is the response he made about complacency:

I'd like to think I am (satisfied with myself). I know that there are some areas I could definitely improve on, but as far as what I've achieved in my four years here and what I came from, I'm very satisfied with what I've done. . . I have had that feeling, I mean, it's been like a few times where I feel like I should be doing more. But at same time, I had to reassure myself that I'm doing just fine.

James made this comment about his intelligence:

I really try not to think too hard about it (if people feel that I'm intelligent), because, at the end of the day, it's my life, and depending on who it is, who have their conversation against me, they really don't have any domain over what I can achieve.

James shared this about whether he was satisfied with the class assignments he turned in:

It depends on how much time I have to do the assignment. I noticed assignments are like on a weekly basis, or sometimes I get myself for missing certain points on an assignment,

I think that I'm pretty comfortable with my assignments. Like I said, the more time that I will have to work on assignments, the better I think that I do. If it's on like a weekly basis or a two-day basis, then I typically do a little bit worse on those assignments.

Career/Community-Service Interest

He shared that he was interested in graphic design and music. He also mentioned a desire for working in a career that is closer to his home. He mentioned wanting to be an advocate for community wealth following college.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

James gave an interesting, well-articulated response to the question about his choice of being an American or being Black, "I frequently see myself as a Black American."

In dealing with the question about whether Black people glamorize drugs, he shared:

I really don't like (it). The most I've done is drinking. Go to bars and stuff. But I personally have never went out of my way to try to get any substances. I feel like a lot of Black people are just like me.

Also, for James' response to the question about choosing between being an American or being Black, he shared that:

I like Black America, but I think it is Black Americans' own history that doesn't align with the principles of American history, in the way that a lot of things have been planned for White people and higher income people.

In sharing his response about the stereotype of whether or not Black people are more interested in having a good time than on hard work, he first replied,

I feel, that's why people don't (necessarily) like to have a good time, but to get away from the struggle. They like to be able to relax and still through having a good time. Also,

do you know how people could be mediocre and end up in higher positions, versus Black people who have to work hard to end up in those positions?

Jay

Jay attended high school in the Midwest. He conveyed a strong outlook on his life, on his abilities as a student, and on his identity as a Black man. His high school is in a midwestern town. His responses during the interview were sound and reflected his concern for his race. Overall, though opinionated, his interview answers showed strong judgment. He also revealed confidence in his ability to complete college successfully. He exhibited noticeable Black pride, and a burden for the Black race. Here is a comment he made about this burden, “What people mean with the burden of being Black, now that I’m older, it’s affecting me more, cause, now I have looked at us, as a grown man.”

Parent/Family/Community Influence

These are Jay’s comments about whether his parents are happy with his college grades: Probably not, but they just want to see me get across that stage. But me, personally, I wouldn’t say that I will be happy with my grades because I want to see me do better, because I don’t want to be complacent.

In response to the question about having much to be proud of, he shared:

Sometimes I feel like I should be at a different level than where I’m at now. But then, I can’t blame anybody but myself. But maybe my actions, ‘cause, even though I work hard, and I feel that I work hard all times, I feel like I don’t work as hard. So, I can’t really. I’m not gonna place the blame on my mother, father, friends, it’s gonna be about me, what can I do to make myself better?

Jay commented about whether he felt useless:

In this country, you're really not useless, buddy. I feel like I bring value, but I've always been blessed with people that just pop up and then they help me see that in myself.

'Cause me, once I start something I want to finish, I don't wanna quit. Hopefully with the grace of God, I'll get out of here soon with a degree.

Here are Jay's thoughts about if he is down on himself because of being Black:

No, 'cause, I did for a time when I first got to college and (then) I started to learn. Of course, the stuff that they teach you at school about slavery, and stuff like that, I get, by looking at my Max (video service). But my mom, and my possible (girlfriend), always tell me about (how) they're trying to educate you outside of the school, about my history. I never felt like (the question), 'why would you wanna be Black?' But when I got to college, I started to see, once again, more of the fellows. Also, what people mean by the burden of being Black, 'cause now that I'm older, as now I'm 21. But, as a kid I didn't see it, I was more optimistic. I was allowed to miss it. But, I'm still optimistic that the world can change, and people's perspectives can change, too.

Jay shared about his faith: "I'm a Christian and you might not be a Christian or whatever. That's how I grew up, and when I was growing up in the church, and my granny and my great granny."

Educational Reflection

Jay was spirited and provided robust responses throughout the interview. In one of his responses, he articulated that college success requires that you must "put in the work," meaning that if you apply the effort that is required to be successful then you will be. Unlike negative perceptions of Black men, Jay's response settles this issue, by showing a belief in putting forth the effort needed. Thus, "putting in the work" reflects that you should first be knowledgeable

about what the project requires, and then possess the discipline to make sure that you complete the whole project. This is what Jay had to say about the effort needed to earn good grades:

I feel like trying is not good enough, you have to actually work hard enough, putting in the work, and putting in the time, and the work. It's just not only the work, you have to put in time, to do more than the minimum to succeed, especially in higher education.

Here is Jay's response on whether or not being a student is a rewarding experience: "Yes because you can always gain knowledge depending on what you're learning as the student because of the value of knowledge."

Career/Community-Service Interest

Jay has an interest in video game/technology and music (singing or listening). For his career following college he shares that, "Once I graduate, I would want to work at an autobody shop, technology business, or dealership of some sort to get lots of hands-on experience in my field of study." He commented,

Right after I graduate, my father and I are going to start his trucking business together ideally in Chicago, but if not, we still want it to be a way to put jobs and revenue back into the Black community in whatever city it will be established, in advocating for community wealth.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Jay commented about whether he thought of himself more as an American or a Black person:

No, because this country wasn't built to protect me, it was built to enslave me, was built to keep me from being free. It's been a long time, we gotta figure out a way to get out of this. But you know, there's still rules, like the 13th amendment and other things like that.

Like, literally, if you go to jail, you're a slave for the rest your life, White, Black, or other. So, this country was built to protect us all, really. I see myself more as a Black person than I do an American. But then, if I ever want any of this to stop, we will have to start with the Black and White.

These are Jay's thoughts on if Black people will embrace Afrocentric values and principles:

Every community except for the Black community will stick by each other and get it done. White people, even if they don't like each other, will stick together. All these, all European, White, whoever you wanna say, people that are Caucasian, they will stick together regardless.

Kemon

Kemon's interview answers indicate that he possesses the skills to graduate from college successfully. Many of his answers were short and to the point. He possesses the knowledge needed to persist, and the skills and the grit required to succeed in college. He is very proud of his race and believes that it is important to embrace other cultures. Kemon feels that he is not limited by the standard of others but sets high standards for himself. Kemon shared that that he is a person of worth, as he has a sense of what he wants to accomplish.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Here are Kemon's thoughts about whether his parents are happy with his grades: "Yes, I believe they are. (I have a) 3.41 GPA, I believe that they're happy."

Educational Reflection

Kemon mentioned this when discussing the standards of his instructors: "Because the standards for myself are increasingly higher than theirs (instructors) so, substantially higher than theirs, that, their standards are at a minimum for what I want for myself."

Here are Kemon's comments about educational rewards: "Yes, being a student is very rewarding. I believe, just having the ability to learn is very rewarding, especially learning something that you're interested in."

These are Kemon's expectations when taking an exam:

I expect to do great, if I have studied and if I know that I have put in the time. I expect to do great. I am confident within myself. I trust my abilities . . . I really have to have confidence in myself any time I'm takin' a test or anytime I'm doing something. I have to have confidence within myself. If I don't have confidence then I know that I'm not going to do the best of my abilities. So yes, I have to have confidence in myself. I'm confident with almost everything that I do.

Also, he transparently suggested that his positive attitude is something that he needs to work on, and he takes it seriously.

Career/Community-Service Interest

Here Kemon discussed the rewards of being a student: "And then knowing how to unitize that knowledge to further yourself and conquer the goals that you set out for yourself and attain the life that you wished for yourself."

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Kemon made this reflection about whether he prefers the feeling of being an American or being Black. He does not categorize himself as an American, because America is built off of racism. He just wants to categorize himself as Black. He shared, "And, that our history has been long and distorted."

Kemon felt that: "Life for an African American is hard, fair, but in terms of discrimination, it is unfair."

He made this comment about whether he becomes down on himself because of being Black:

I'm proud to be Black, I'm blessed to be Black, I love being Black, we were the first here, we're God's people, I really believe that, I love being Black. I am proud to be who I am. I'm proud to be a Black man. It's something that's worth celebrating.

Kemon made this comment about having a multicultural lifestyle connecting with people of different cultures:

I believe I do; I have friends that are maybe Hispanic or other different ethnicities. . . I believe it is very important to have your own personal identity within yourself, and to also be able to acknowledge the identities of other cultures as well. . . .If you understand yourself thoroughly, I believe that it will make it easy for you to comprehend the cultures and histories of other groups.

Here are his thoughts about if he despises or hates all White people: "I do not hate or despise anyone. I don't like how they categorized us, obviously, and historically I don't like what's been done to us, but no, that don't give me a reason to hate them, no."

Kemon shared about whether he will focus on the racial and cultural records of candidates in an election:

I would like someone who will be the overseer of the country to at least acknowledge racial issues, but personally I don't believe that this country will even allow someone who desires that. I don't believe that they will allow that person to have that power.

Mils

Mils is a very sound student who learned a lot from his grandpa, of whom he is very proud. Mils is a first-generation college student due to graduate soon. Despite their brevity, his

interview answers are solid. Mils has strong self-confidence and was willing to be transparent. His reverence for his grandpa was inspirational. He shared: “I have a bunch of good qualities, though, I stood in for my grandpa. So, he’s like a pretty big figure in the African American community back home. Like, he taught me how to be confident in myself—Gramps.”

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Here, Mils revealed his feelings about his achievements: Also, “I’m proud just being able to go to college ‘cause none of my siblings graduated college. So, yeah, I’m over achieved already.”

Mils shared this about whether or not his parents were pleased with his grades: “Yeah, they’re happy because, like, neither of my parents graduated from college.”

When discussing celebrating one’s Black identity and other cultural identities, he shared: “My church always holds life events and stuff like that. Important days on Black history. They teach us to embrace our history.”

Educational Reflection

Here he commented about a lifestyle that includes reading literature about racial and ethnic issues, “Yeah, I have an African American history class where our books focus on that. We have to read books like this all the time. So, I like reading books and watching documentaries and stuff like that, learning, I guess.”

Mils also mentioned this about being satisfied with class assignments: “There’s been a few outliers, (when) I forgot an assignment when rushed, but I (usually) spend a good amount of time and am usually confident (about) what I turn in.”

Career/Community-Service Interest

Mils mentioned this when discussing potential rewards for being a student:

It is rewarding and not rewarding, at the same time, 'cause I know you create a lot of debt for being a student and getting your education. For your knowledge, at the end, I guess you get a career. Which can help to set up your family, I guess. So, the benefits outweigh the negatives, I'd say, I guess.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

He made this comment when sharing how he felt about whether he preferred being an American or being Black: "Black Americans are American adults who deserve the same privileges and rights as other Americans." Also, Mils shared this about whether he dislikes Whites and what they represent: "There are two different White communities—one is racist and one is not."

Mils shared this about the importance of having both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective:

I feel like I'm more knowledgeable now 'cause I kind of get perspective from both sides, I guess. So, I thought it's like preparing me. I really feel like I could, be someone that makes a difference and be the median, bringing people together, I guess.

He shared this when discussing if Black people will only be free when embracing Afrocentric values and principles: "I feel like you have to embrace your African American (identity) within yourself before you can be free, 'cause, if you don't trust yourself, you can't be free."

Pelt

Pelt attended high school in the Midwest. During the interview, he articulated his thoughts well, and he seemed transparent about different areas of his performance as a student. Yet, from our discussion, I got the impression that there is no doubt about his expectation to

graduate successfully. Also, from my observations I feel that his ability to graduate successfully depends not only on his academic skills alone, but also through his self-honesty, which can enhance his ability to assess challenges accurately, and choose helpful solutions, and thus, enhance his ability to persist in college. Also, Pelt shared that, due to the recent loss of a loved one that he has not been providing his best effort as a student.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

When discussing whether his parents were happy with his grades, he shared:

My parents are involved, but I've kind of kept them uninvolved for my own well-being, because I know that if I had my parents constantly asking me, how are things going, you did this, you did that, they would legitimately drive me crazy. So, I let them know when things are kinda on the edge. But other than that, I kinda keep them out.

This is what Pelt shared about his feelings on whether his academic efforts were rewarded:

Yes and no. I consider myself to be in a weird spot right now. Me and school have not been on the same wavelength for about a year now. Due to (personal) problems and more recently, the passing of my grandmother, which is technically (personal). I feel as if the effort that I put into school is not the effort that I know that I could put into school. But giving the circumstances of everything is kind of why I've, unfortunately, given myself a pass or an excuse as to what I'm doing, I would just say, as terrible as I am.

Educational Reflection

Pelt made this comment about the challenges of college: "No. I don't think that college itself is too difficult. I sometimes believe that. All the extras that come along with college, uh, tend to be."

Pelt made this response to the question, whether or not he felt that, regardless of his effort, he would do poorly in school: “No, I wouldn’t say that. I tend to have a more optimistic view on things than that.”

Here, Pelt shared his feeling about if being a student is rewarding:

I feel (this about), if being a student is rewarding. It’s just extremely hard sometimes to remember or not, (or) truly have an understanding of what the reward is because for some people they believe on going to college, graduating, and you will get a job. It’s not always necessarily that easy, depending on what you do. Uhm. Case in point, one of my friends, he’s going to graduate. He’s getting ready to graduate next month, and he’s an art major. For him, it’s not so easy to go out and just apply for a job. Such as me, I’m a public health major. So, I already know, once I graduate, I’ll have a job pretty much lined up for me. So, you know, people come to college with whatever dreams or aspirations that they have for themselves.

Career/Community-Service Interest

Pelt shared that, that he would like a job as a diabetes educator or registered nurse. He also shared that he serves the community by aiding in creating a safe community center.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Pelt made this comment about Black people’s view of racism: “Hasn’t necessarily looked at racism from the Black perspective, they’ve only looked at it from the White perspective and not seeing the truth.”

In his response about his feelings about White people, he shared: “I wouldn’t say I hate White people. One of my best friends is White. But it’s White culture and things like that I can’t say that I have a taste for.”

Man

Man's responses revealed transparency, honesty, and his comfort and confidence in who he is as a person, which may also reveal integrity. I did not detect any strong negative immersion attitudes in Man's interview. As mentioned, he and all of the other students indicated in their responses that they did not hate all White people. Additionally, from observations during the interviews, including observations of the students' attitude, responses, and body language, the students appeared genuine in their responses. He showed solid pride in being Black, and a noble commitment to the Black race. Man also reflected being in favor of being open to multiculturalism.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Man commented on whether he has a number of good qualities: "Truthful, somewhat disciplined, cool, and viable."

He shared thoughts about his understanding and feelings of an Afrocentric perspective: "Sometimes, I listen to their (African) music play. I don't necessarily really know where I'm from, so I don't wear like their stuff like that, but I like their music."

Educational Reflection

Man shared this when discussing if he has periods of being down on himself because of being Black:

I suppose. For me it's, I'm the only Black male in my nursing cohort. So, if I don't perform as good as I would like to, it's like, they look at me, like some people might perceive that I won't make it or I won't do so good.

Here are Man's thoughts on whether he thinks it is difficult to keep pace with class work: "Sometimes because I don't, well, I prioritize my homework for the most part, but sometimes I

will push it off until the next. I procrastinate, so, when I do that, it makes it a little bit harder. But, NO.”

Career/Community-Service Interest

Man discussed if, when voting, his focus is on a candidate’s record on racial and cultural issues: “No, I’m not very (involved) with politics and stuff like that. But I need to be.”

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Man commented on whether he struggles with negative feelings about being Black:

I don’t really, I mean, I’m in America, but at the same time, I don’t consider myself an American. So, most people, when they see me, don’t think, oh, he’s an American. They usually see me as a Black person so, that’s really what I kinda go by, ‘cause that’s what I hear.

Man discussed whether he has intense negative feelings about Whites:

Only after I watch like a slave movie. I don’t like to watch movies like that, but only after that, or maybe a police event to a certain degree, I’ll be disappointed. I don’t wanna say, I get angry, I get disappointed that that stuff is still happening.

Kice

Kice’s responses included his pride for his race, and his openness to other cultures. He courageously engaged in race, inequality, and Blackness. Although the questions could be debatable, his responses were calm. He defended his race through a lens of expertise, seeing things from a perception armed with personal experience. Here he shared his thoughts about culture and race:

So, for me it’s that there’s pros and cons to it. As far as like the pros, I would say you know culture wise, just kind of having that strong work ethic they give. Just having

strong will, but at the same time, I say, cons for that are; sometimes, you know, we are racially profiled, or, you know, we get the short end of the stick, depending on just who you are sometimes.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Here are his thoughts on if Black people glamorize illegal drugs:

It (drugs in the Black community) are glorified—I feel like it is glorified sometimes, and sometimes it's not good. You know. It's in our music, It's, sometimes in the culture itself, depending on who you know (hang around) and stuff like that. I think that we should have a talk, saying, you know this isn't good, for real.

Kice discussed how he feels about being an African American: “Uhm for me, there's pros and cons to it. I would say you know culture wise, just kind of having that strong work ethic they gave.”

Kice commented on how important God is in his life: “I'm not as religious as I should be, but I do believe, and I feel like I get a few blessings now and then.”

Educational Reflection

Kice commented on if being a student is rewarding: “I would say it's a wonderful experience to be a student. You know, I feel like, that every day is a learning experience and being a student is kind of a plus.”

Career/Community-Service Interest

Kice commented about focusing on voting for candidates who have an optimistic record on racial and cultural issues: “I think when I vote yes, I think that I feel like it's for someone who benefits us.”

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Kice shared his feelings about whether he has a positive attitude of himself: “On and off, but I usually find that good outcome with myself with things.”

In his thoughts about how he feels about being an American versus being Black, he shared: “No, not really. I just really see myself as a Black American for real.” He also shared:

I feel like we do have our pros and cons. I like to see, you know, more Black people more empowered as far as in America. Because a lot of White people that have the power of judges, or any governmental power, they make decisions (over) us.

Kice shared this about if he has a multicultural lifestyle, connecting him with people of different cultures: “Sometimes we end up all celebrating the same, you know, same kind of culture, maybe in a different way. But like, you know, I don’t see why we can’t all, appreciate other’s cultures and stuff like that.”

Kice shared whether he decorates his room with items that represent strong racial-cultural themes: “I actually do keep maybe a poster or something like that with Malcolm X or Doctor King, you know, someone who really fought for our rights, for real, and were really important.”

Lemo

Lemo is strong, confident, and self-assured. His comments show no doubt in his ability to graduate, and succeed, despite his surroundings. He appears to have reliable common sense and strong judgment. Lemo was very transparent and seems to possess a boldness in not being shy about sharing the feelings of his heart as his comments were strong and revealing.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Lemo discusses whether his parents are happy with his grades:

Yes, my mom is happy with whatever I desire to do. I will be the first one of her kids to graduate from college, and also to (just) go to college, the first one in my family, I think.

Yes, she is very proud of me.

He discussed, overall, whether he was proud of his grades:

Yeah, I'm proud of myself for the fact of even coming to school. I mean I took two years off when I graduated (from high school) in 2017, came back in 2019, and I'm almost done. Yeah, I'm proud of myself.

Educational Reflection

Lemo commented on the question of if he assesses the racial makeup of rooms and spaces that you enter:

No, I just go and you know, I mean we go to a predominantly White college, so (I'm) kinda used to going to class where it's mainly White people, so I don't even do that, I just go to class.

He shared whether being a student is a rewarding experience:

Yeah, I mean, being a student is cool. I was not expecting to go to college, but, like, now that I am here, I'm cool with it, I'm growing out of my shell, learning new things, meeting new people. So, yeah, it is rewarding experience.

Lemo commented on whether his academic efforts are rewarded: "No, it's not rewarding unless you put the determination in and finish—graduation is your reward." Lemo talked about if others feel that he is intelligent:

Yes. A lot of my friends think that I'm intelligent. But, going to school and then actually making it to the end, is not as hard as they think. It's really about, just coming and doing the work. It's just time consuming, that, it really is.

Lemo shared whether his instructors' standards were too high:

Uh, I mean no, we are all in college, it's not like we are in high school, so it's not like the standards are too high, it's something that we signed up for. So, you are supposed to set standards high, as a person, you know, cause the professors had to do the same thing. So, I don't think that they set their standards too high—it's a personal thing.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Lemo discussed being an American versus being Black: "I mean regardless of the fact, being an American or a Black American, you're still an American at the end of the day, so it's not like I feel different, I'm just a Black American—that's my race."

Lemo commented about whether he celebrates his Black identity and the cultural identities of others: "I mean I got friends of races, so I kinda celebrate everything, but I do embrace the things that African American do too, I celebrate it."

He discussed whether Black people seem more interested in having a good time than on hard work: "I mean everybody deserves a good time, you know, but also you need to put the work in early, so that you can always have a good time."

Helton

Overall Helton's answers were positive and mature. He stated, "I can do better," indicating a mature sense of the need for self-improvement. He, along with other participants, possesses mental toughness and the grit to overcome the barriers to graduation. His outlook was sound and positive.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Helton shared about how his parents feel about his academic performance: “It saves them (my parents) money. With good grades come scholarship money. And scholarship money helps me and my family. And so yes, they (my parents) are proud.”

Educational Reflection

In this response, Helton discussed being a capable student: “I believe as long as I put my mind into it, anything is possible.”

Helton shared his thoughts about if being a student is rewarding:

It’s a time where you meet new people. You’re an adult, make adult decisions, whether good or bad. And part of that, there are lessons, and blessings. You know what not to do or you know what’s new, and what’s dumb.

Helton explained whether or not he has the needed abilities in certain courses of his major:

I feel like, especially for my major – its interior architecture design – and in one program we always use this refit. And it’s an architectural program on the computer. Now, people inside my classroom have been working with that program for years on top of years before I came. So, it’s a disadvantage for me, (being) new to the program.

When speaking about if college ever gets too difficult for Helton, he shared, “I push through (the difficulties of college) no matter.”

Career/Community-Service Interest

This was Helton’s response to whether he has a number of good qualities: “Of course, I will say my creativity is high, honesty, and commitment. Oh. I’m a very wise person, I would say artistic, and sometimes humorous. So yes, I do have great qualities. I mean good qualities.”

Here, he shared about whether being a student is a rewarding experience: “(You) get to network, you’re learning to be part of that profession. I would say that’s a little worker experience right there.”

Here are Helton’s thoughts about understanding things from an Afrocentric perspective:

So African Americans are descendants from Africans, and so, we highly value the culture of Africans. And so, we might embrace their culture in different ways. Some people might wear African clothes, some might do other things that embrace that perspective.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Helton said this about the role that God plays in his life: “I’m born and raised in the church, grew up, and (have spent) all my life in the church. It’s very important to me.”

Here, Helton commented about whether others felt that he was intelligent. “I will say that because I’m an outside of the box thinker, my creativity and thinking has helped a lot of people out before, spot on thinking to help their needs. So, I would say yes.”

In this response, Helton discussed having a multicultural lifestyle and being connected with different cultures: “I would say yes, because, being in school, I’m gonna always have different cultures all around me. It’s been like that all my life, I’m used to it, I’ve been connecting really well.”

Dee

Dee is proud to be Black, and his interview responses were optimistic and they reflected strength. He believes in himself and is confident about his educational aspirations and abilities. Although he shows commitment to Black people, he is open to companionship with people of other cultures. Dee’s comments are transparent and reflected his realness as a person. His

transparency and his capability to converse with people of different races, cultures, and intellect, are a plus in what he offers in his social engagement and campus life.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Dee reflected here about whether or not Black people will only be free when they embrace Afrocentric principles and values:

No, like, Black people can be free when, I believe we really get control of our lives really. I mean, (controlling our lives) regarding the police and mass incarceration. Once we get all that handled, we start, and even bigger, stop being targeted. I think that's when people—Black, will be the most free.

He shared his feelings about life quality as an African American, “When I’m back home, it’s cool, (but) it ain’t the best I’ve ever had.”

Educational Reflection

Here, Dee talked about his confidence when taking a test, “It just really depends on the class. If it’s, like, a hard class, that I know is hard, you know, so, I’ll be struggling.”

These were Dee’s comments about keeping pace with class work, “It’s just when they throw a lot of work at you, (considering) how long each assignment takes.”

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Here, Dee responded about connecting with people of different cultures: “I feel that (when) you connect with people of different cultures and races and stuff like that. You can be very open to other (or different) things.”

Dee commented here about if Black people seem more interested in having a good time than in hard work:

I feel like that's true, but that can be said about a lot of people depending on what they like to do. If somebody is doing what they like, as long as, at the end of the day, you get what is needed to get done, and can find time to do what you enjoy, I feel like there's no problem with that.

Frost

Frost's interview responses revealed his transparency and openness, which could potentially explain the authenticity and relevance of his answers. Frost was very vocal about his African heritage. Yet, he likes Black culture here in America. He shared his thoughts about the challenges of being Black, and how it seemed to hurt his job opportunity. He is very observant, and he freely voiced issues of his heart. He also tried to be fair to others, and he seemed to engage with people of other cultures.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Here, Frost shared whether he sees himself as an American more than being an African American: "I do consider myself as an American but to a certain extent. I was raised in a Nigerian home. So, I still consider myself as an African, too."

Frost commented here about being an American versus being Black:

"I don't really think that there are (any advantages of being an African American)."

Frost commented about embracing both his Black identity along with the cultural identities of others: "I do fully embrace being Black. I participate in other cultural activities, but being Black is a good thing regardless of what trials and tribulations we have."

Educational Reflection

Here he shared thoughts about his academic performance versus his fellow classmates' performance: "For the most part I think that we (and my classmates) have the same type of struggles."

Frost discussed whether being a student is rewarding: "Being a student is definitely a rewarding experience, you get to experience a lot of stuff as an African American student, a lot in terms of the working environment."

Career/Community-Service Interest

Frost also shared whether he experiences being down on himself because of being Black: "Sometimes when it comes to job opportunities and internship opportunities. They (employers) promote diversity and inclusion, but it may not actually be the case." Here, he shared his thoughts about giving consideration to candidates' records on racial and cultural issues during an election: "I make sure, I usually look at the background of each candidate and see what they have on racial background, diversity, and inclusion."

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

He commented here about whether Black people glamorize illegal drugs use:

I would say that I believe that it does get into the wrong hands. I believe that African Americans are not the only race that has problems with this product (drugs), though there is a problem with it with African Americans, but that it is a problem that can be fixed.

Here, Frost discussed if it is significant to embrace both a Black identity while being open to other cultures: "I feel like a diverse background is very (important), just learning about different cultures and learning how everybody thinks, and how everyone goes about their lives, is very important."

Jason

Jason is well rounded and comfortable with who he is as a person. His interview responses reflected that he is transparent, and he also seemed to show honesty and accuracy in his responses, even if his responses deviated from those of the majority. His answers were very thoughtful and complete. He is proud of being a Black, and he accepts the different cultures of others. His responses reflected that his reasoning is mature with sound. I considered Jason a sober-minded person, as he was composed, sensible, and confident.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Jason commented here about whether Black people glamorize illegal drugs use, “I feel like we tend to glamorize a lot of things that are negative about our community. But I think that comes from being turned off by negative things.”

Here, Jason shared thoughts about understanding things from an Afrocentric perspective:

I can see things from an Afrocentric perspective, yes, but do I show it? I would say like I don't wear African clothing, honestly. I appreciate that it's fair and I appreciate the culture. Probably if I went to Africa it would feel like home, because I have roots there and everything. My stepbrothers, they're African, so I get it. But for me, I just feel, like, I don't have to. I don't know how to explain. I don't need to show it if that makes sense. Sure, I just think for me, it's a little different because for me, being as light as I am. I kind of connect with all the sides of myself.

These were Jason's comments about whether life is good as an African American: “But I think as an African American, there's a lot of benefits, and there's pride, if you should have pride in it, you know.”

Educational Reflection

Here are Jason's thoughts about if others feel that he is intelligent: "Yes or no, I'll say yes or no on that one, only 'cause, I have a thing where sometimes I don't show it. But I know I'm intelligent and I express that in other ways."

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

In this response, Jason shared thoughts about being an American versus being Black:

Being an American—when you hear that, I think you hear what you picture is not a Black person. You know, I'm saying, what you picture is the average White man. And I feel like, you know, being an American, you get a different purpose than being a Black American. Because even the fact that you have to say, being a Black American is instead of just an American, you know, it puts you in a different category. You know, as if you're not fully American or it's as you're not like an American in general. But, yet, this is where I was born. So, the fact that people have to say, being a Black American or American is like basically saying White American, you know.

This is what Jason shared about the importance of having both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective:

When you have a multicultural perspective and Black identity, I feel like it makes you more rounded. Having multicultural, being able to see things from all views, that feels like it is so key to understanding why people do what they do. Also, (it helps you) know how to solve stuff.

Jason said this about the role that God plays in his life: "Yes (God plays a significant role in my life), very so." Here, Jason gave his thoughts about White people:

I don't really have anything to say about that. I don't hate White people. . . . I don't hate, I just don't like some of the things that they (the White community) stand for. Also, I don't like to group everybody. All the people in one group because there are some White people who definitely don't think the same as others.

Here, Jason commented about time spent on thinking about racial and cultural issues: "I just don't like to focus on it because it makes me feel bad and I would say it makes me angry. So, I don't like to focus on negative things. I'd rather focus on what's helpful."

Justice

Justice's comments revealed his burden of care for the Black community. He has confidence in his abilities as a student. Although his in-person demeanor seemed calm, his interview responses revealed his more energetic personality. Although he housed an internal energy, he appears to treat others with kindness. He is active on campus, making his leadership skills available to others. He enjoys being a student and is proud to be Black.

Parent/Family/Community Influence

Justice shared his thoughts about whether Black people's engagement in the Afrocentric perspective will help in resolving America's race problems:

I have grown to learn that all skin-folks are not kinsfolk. Although they may be people of color, we're not the same. We may have some of the same struggles, same issues but when it comes to navigating through this country and this world together, it always tends to be the Black community walking alone instead of together with other minority groups or cultural groups. So, I don't like when they classify us together.

Educational Reflection

Justice also responded to the question about if one tries hard enough, whether they will earn good grades:

I don't like that, when they say try hard enough, I really don't like that, because I think that there are students, don't get me wrong—there are some students here that don't try at all. But the majority of students do actually try. It's just the fact of the matter that the amount of things that they put on us seem kind of unrealistic that they expect us to do. And we do try, and then it becomes way too much and, like every human, we have to, like, take a step back. Also, sometimes we fail. So, people do try hard. I definitely try hard enough but if I'm not successful I'm not going to beat myself up about it.

Here, Justice offered his thoughts about the dynamics and impacts of studying:

I don't like that term because not everyone studies the same, it's just that simple, so I don't think the need to study will change anything. It's the preparation given by instructors, so that we can study in our own way, (which) will be more beneficial to each individual student.

Career/Community-Service Interest

Here, Justice offered his thoughts on whether being a student was rewarding:

I think that being a student is a rewarding experience because of not only the education side, but also the social side where I have grown. I have a lot of friends here on campus. Also, I understand my identity more here on campus. Being Black, I did go to a multicultural school, but here, being Black has prepared and helped me to understand a deeper side our history. And like everything we've been through, it's also preparing me to

navigate the real world. Where it is going to be where I'm going to have to shift through a lot of cultures, and code switch, and know how to talk in certain situations.

Experiences and Thoughts of Black Men

Here are Justice's comments about being satisfied with oneself: "I do believe that I'm satisfied with myself, I believe that I am satisfied up to the point to where I know that I'm pretty satisfied, but I do want to keep going further." Justice also shared these comments about his good qualities: "(My) communication skills, confidence, I'm outspoken, leadership skills, and also characteristics and skills that other people may have mentioned or noticed about me." Justice shared this about how he felt about the value of possessing both a Black identity and being open to people of other cultures:

I've experienced some racism in my life. I've experienced racism from White people, and I've experienced racism from Chinese, Africans, and Hispanics. I've experienced racism from all walks of life. So, when they say that we're all in this together, there's really no proof of that, because as Black people we experience racism from everyone. So, I don't really like that. I get it, I understand it, but personally I think that we're still walking alone.

The snapshots revealed how beautifully the students voiced their deep feelings which provides a glimpse of the students' emotions and individuality. What the students shared may express valuable thoughts that may not normally be heard from Black male students. This may reflect the impact of the interview setting, and the students' courage and willingness to be transparent. Although the full value of the students' responses is not yet fully known, the responses have the potential to contribute optimistic information helpful to future Black male students. Emergent themes are presented in the upcoming chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Coding to Themes

My typical coding process was mainly based on identifying common phrases (a small combination of words) and then using them to identify the more common thoughts (concepts) that prevailed that were found in the student's interview responses (Tesch, 1990). The concepts became more important as they appeared in more of the students' responses. The most important concept categories were typically labeled using a word or phrase that provided an intended best fit for the meaning or identity that represented the categorized concepts. Then the categorized concepts were observed and compared to determine if similarities existed between them, and if the concept categories could be combined. The main concept categories (themes) that emerged were based on the intended result of identifying the topics according to their meanings, identities, and through current research about them.

Emergent Themes

The purpose of the study was to examine how Black male students are inspired in their pursuit of post secondary education, by learning more about Black male self-esteem, academic self concept, and racial identity. This qualitative-based study relied on questions derived from the following three instruments: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, the Cross Racial Identity Attitude Scale, and the Academic Self-Concept Scale: College Attitude Survey. Discussed in this chapter is the formation of emergent themes, which are derived from the participants' thoughts

and revealed from the data compiled from their interview responses. As alluded to earlier, this study has the potential to increase the knowledge of Black male educational motivation through the actual voices of Black males themselves.

Thus, emerged thoughts are revealed, and are broken into themes and subthemes which are supported by actual participant quotes.

Midwest University Black male students were recruited, and then they consented to participate in this study. Thus, all of the them completed an interview via Zoom video conferencing mainly during April and May of 2022. Sixteen interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted an average of about 50 minutes each. From these sessions, interview transcripts were created and were analyzed in search of meaningful themes.

The interview sessions were powerful, as the students were empowered, comfortable, and free to use informal vernacular, perfect for the setting, and their responses apparently authentically reflected their concerns. Their responses have revealed that the students had much to say, and that this information might still be inside them had they not received an opportunity to participate in this study. Thus, receiving a chance to voice and speak out their version of their education experiences may better educate others, and thereby increase the knowledge base of Black male intrinsic motivation. Because of the need for relevant information about Black men, from Black men, what they have to say has the potential to be revealing to the others, especially educators, and should be heard. An overall hope is that the results of the study are fulfilling to the participants, enlightening to others, inspiring to future researchers, and stimulating to educators and legislators considering reform for initiatives related to the study topic.

Findings

Findings that emerged from the interview data about Black male college students at a Midwest University contribute to a more positive and precise narrative about Black men. To generate the themes, the interview transcripts and audio and video recordings were reviewed. From careful review (analysis) of the interview transcripts, relevant thoughts emerged and were categorized under the three key interview topics: self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept. Relevant concepts emerged from what was implied through the students' thoughts, expressed during the interviews.

The three key topics were mainly selected because of their use in similar studies and their potential to contribute to relevant findings about how the participants of this study are motivated.

Key Topics and Self-Esteem

The key topics are self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept. Within these three key topics six different emergent themes emerged across multiple participants: self-concept, scholarly recognition, student confidence, cultural delight, Black pride, racial pride without hatred.

Self-Esteem Key Topic

Theme of Self-Concept

Within the key topic of self-esteem, two themes of self-concept and self-confidence were prevalent. The emergent theme of self-concept appears to have the most significant impact on the students' motivation to complete their four-year degrees. Self-concept is our feelings and thoughts about who we are physically, personally, and socially. It also includes what we know about our behavior, qualities, and capabilities (Vinney, 2018). This theme emerged from the students' thoughts provided during the interviews, which were then transcribed and categorized

under the key topic of self-esteem. The self-esteem interview questions potentially represent student self-concept. Aspects of the characteristics of this theme were found within the student responses to the related questions. Most of the students provided optimistic responses to the questions covered under this the key topic. Characteristics of the emergent theme of self-concept are reflected in what the students expressed in their responses that follow. The theme, self-concept, emerged from the meanings of the characteristics that were birthed from the student voices, and articulated in their quotes.

Question: Explain whether you have a number of good qualities. Man commented, “Yes. You want to name some other: hardworking, truthful, somewhat disciplined, cool, viable, good, good, very good, very good. Oh.” Mux said, “Yes sir.” Dee exclaimed, “Yeah, absolutely.”

Question: Elaborate on if you feel that you don’t have much to be proud of. Jay shared, “Sometimes I feel, like, I should be at a different point than where I’m at now. But then, now, I can’t blame anybody but myself. Maybe my actions cause, even though I work hard, and I feel that I work hard all (the) time. If I do feel like I don’t work as hard, then it’s like, I can’t really place the blame on my mother, father, friends or, you know, it’s gonna be about me. What can I do to make myself better?” Lemo shared, “No I don’t feel like that, I always think positive.”

Question: Share whether there are times that you feel useless. Jay commented, “In this country, you’re really not useless, buddy. I feel like I bring value, but I’ve always been blessed with people that just pop up and then they help me see that in myself. ’Cause me, once I start something, I want to finish. I don’t wanna quit, hopefully with the grace of God, I’ll get out of here soon with a degree.”

Konosuba insisted, “Oh. No, I don’t. I know I can’t. I even had a down day and I always thought. Even while I’m down, I can forward with somebody else and so now (I) never feel useless.”

Helton shared,

I’m just saying I would say no, because I’m useful in a lot of ways, and I got that mindset of, I’m doing the best I can. Excuse me, do the best I can. Then I feel like I’m the most useful.

Question: Comment on whether you feel that you are a person of worth. Frost insisted, “Yes, I know who I am as a person.” Jay commented about being a student of worth: “Yes, ‘cause, I feel like I have (been available) for anybody at (times).” Konosuba shared, “Yeah. I would say I’m (a) person (of) worth.”

Question: Explain whether you wish that (Are there times) you could have more respect for yourself. Lemo insisted, “No I don’t feel like that, I always think positive.”

Question: Articulate whether you think that you have a positive attitude toward yourself. Jay shared,

Yes, because a lot of people tell you I’m very optimistic. I’m very optimistic, maybe, but then me. Being optimistic to a fault, I believe any situation, almost any situation I could get out of, almost any situation I could do better, (or) others could do better. Of course, there’s bad in the world. It’s days like that, but I wanna always see a glass half full instead of half empty.

Konosuba shared, “Depends on the day, some days I’ll be down on myself real hard. Yeah, some days I beat all soldiers, I’ll be good.”

Question, “Articulate whether you feel that you are able to get things done as well as other people”: Konosuba said: “I mean, I guess it depends on my mindset. I feel like if I want to

do something, I feel like I can deal with the best of the best.” Nate’s thoughts about being able to get things done as well as other people: “Most of the time yes. Something, like if other people in the room don’t (come together) to do the work, I speak up and say something about it.”

Question: Share whether you feel that if you try hard enough that you will earn good grades. Justice responded,

I don’t like that, when they say try hard enough, I really don’t like that, because, I think that there are students, don’t get me wrong, there are some students here that don’t try at all. But the majority of students do actually try. It’s just the fact of the matter that the amount of things that they put on us seems kind of unrealistic, that they expect us to do. And we do try, and then it becomes way too much, and, like every human, we have to, like, take a step back. Also, sometimes we fail. So, people do try hard, I definitely try hard enough, but if I’m not successful I’m not going to beat myself up about it.

Question: Articulate whether you believe that overall, you are a capable student.

Lemo shared, “Yes, I am a capable student, I made all the way into my final year of undergrad, I am graduating in May. So, yeah, I am a capable student.”

Question: Comment on whether you think that you perform well in your courses given the amount of time you commit to studying. Helton commented, “Yes, and that comes from time management. To do a lesson, or studies, it takes a reasonable time frame to get a good grade at the end, so we’ll see.”

Question: Discuss whether you feel that you are on top of your work by finals week.

Kice replied, “I try to get a good steady pace in my classes where if I do mess up, I won’t fall.”

Lemo said,

I wouldn't say it's impossible but it's pretty hard to stay on top of every single course that you are taking, on top of each one, 'cause, one course probably takes more time than the other one and you probably don't have much time to really sit down and do (them). So, it's not impossible but can be very hard to really stay on top of each one of them.

Theme of Student Confidence

Hollenbeck (2004) explained that self-confidence (which resembles talk about student confidence) is our opinion of our ability to accomplish something successfully. He found that through a self-confidence related interview process, that MBA students, typically acquired their self-confidence through challenging experiences, and that they were not born with it.

Hollenbeck's (2004) work also considers the motivational impact of executives, and found that greater motivation is associated with high self-confidence. Also, noting that the those who possess higher self-confidence, will exert greater effort at completing a task, and will not give-up quickly in the face of problems.

Rafiei et al. (2018) reported that positive attitudes and self-confidence are closely associated. Arslan (2015) suggested that when you are experiencing a challenge, be aware that falling short only shows that you are human and not perfect. Walter (2019) shared that optimistic self-talk (about yourself) can bring self-compassion and help you to overcome self-doubt, and better your willingness to take on new challenges. To some extent, self-confidence is feeling like you have control over your life (University of South Florida Counseling Center, 2024).

Overall, the emergent theme of student confidence is associated with a significant number of interview questions. Thus, attaining greater knowledge about Black male student confidence can potentially contribute to understanding how these students are motivated in their quest to complete their four-year degrees. Under the key topic of self-esteem, the theme of

student confidence was found to be relevant for the study based on what the students expressed in their responses as aspects of characteristics of this theme were found in the students' interview comments. The things that the students voiced are found in their following quotes:

Question: Articulate whether you are satisfied with the class assignments that you turn in. James shared this about his class assignments, "It depends on how much time I have to do the assignment. I noticed assignments are like on a weekly basis, or sometimes I get myself for missing certain points on an assignment, if I have up to, two weeks or three. I think that I'm pretty comfortable with my assignments. Like I said, the more time that I will have to work on assignments, the better, I think that I do. If it's on like a weekly basis or a two-day basis, then I typically do a little bit worse on those assignments."

Question: Discuss whether you feel that you are on top of your work by finals week. Dee shared, "Yeah, but right now I'm mostly good with all my work."

The confidence that the student reflected in their comments about their characteristics of student-confidence were also revealed under the key topic of self-esteem. This discovery may also reflect that the student's confidence enhances their motivation to graduate from college. Additionally, various student confidence characteristics were associated with interview responses under the other two key topics.

Racial Identity Key Topic

Theme of Cultural Delight and Black Pride

The students also revealed being comfortable with individuals of other races at home and at college. Most of the students consistently expressed being proud of their race, and many of them also showed loyalty to their race by verbally standing up for their race through their

responses to questions dealing with their race. Thus, the student quotes that follow contain the characteristics of the emergent theme of cultural delight and Black pride.

Question: Elaborate on if you feel that life is good to you as an African American.

Kemon expressed, “Life for an African American is hard, fair, but in terms of discrimination, it is unfair.” Frost insisted, “Yes, it has its pros and cons” (parents are Nigerian). Jay shared,

I’m more of a fair skinned . . . African American. Then it (may) look like it’s some type of privilege from Caucasian people. I’ve never really had a crazy racial slur encounter. Now I (have) . . . educated myself.

Nate commented, “In some parts, yes, and in other parts, no. Like for instance, I would say no because I am a business management major, in like, the world we live in today.” Kice shared,

Uhm for me, it’s there’s pros and cons to it. As far as like the pros, I would say you know culture wise, just kind of having that strong work ethic they gave. Just having (a) strong will, but at the same time, I say the cons for that is, sometimes, you know, we are racially profiled. We’re just, we get the short end of the stick, depending on just who you are sometimes.

Question: Share whether you see yourself as an American and rarely as a member of a racial group. Kemon shared this,

No. I do not categorize myself as an American, because America is built off of racism. I just categorize myself as Black. And that our history has been long and destroyed. And the history has been written, has been manipulated, and is false.”

Frost insisted, “No, I do consider myself as an American but to a certain extent. I was raised in a Nigerian home, So, I still conder myself as an African, too.” Kice insisted, “Oh. No, not really. I just really see myself as a Black American for real.” Dee insisted, “No, I said. African American,

to my toes. I don't, really mess with the American flag like that. I'll never stand for it. I'll never say the pledge beliefs." Lemo insisted, "No, I'm an African American."

Question: Articulate on if you feel that you have a multicultural lifestyle in which you are connected with people of many different cultures. Kice shared this about a multicultural lifestyle: "Sometimes, we end up all celebrating the same, you know, same kind of culture, maybe in a different way. But like, you know, I don't see why we can't all, appreciate other's culture and stuff like that." Kemon made these comments about having a multicultural lifestyle,

I believe I do have friends that are maybe Hispanic or other different ethnicities." "I believe it is very important to have your own personal identity within yourself, and to also be able to acknowledge the identities of other cultures as well. . . . If you understand yourself thoroughly, I believe that it will make it easy for you to comprehend the cultures and histories of other groups."

Question: Share if you experience periods when you are down on yourself because of being Black. Jay shared about Black pride and a burden for the Black race:

What people mean with the burden of being Black, now that I'm older, it's affecting me more, cause now I look at it, as a grown man, because now I'm 21. So, as a kid I didn't see it cause, I was just (a) kid. So, I'm thinking, I'm more optimistic, as I was allowed to miss it, when I was little. Also, now, I'm still optimistic that the world can change, (and that) people's perspectives can change too.

Frost spoke about being up or down, because of being Black: "Sometimes, when it comes to job opportunities and internship opportunities, they (employers) promote diversity and inclusion, but it may not actually be the case." Kemon said, "I'm proud to be Black, I'm blessed to be Black, I

love being Black, we were the first here, we're God's people, I really believe that, I love being Black.”

Question: Elaborate on if you feel that life is good to you as an African American.

Jason said, “But, I think, as an African American, there's a lot of benefits, and there's pride—if you should have pride.” Mux shared about life as a Black man: “Yeah, I do feel (that life is good).”

Question: Explain whether or not you despise and hate all White people. Mux

asserted this about all White people: “I do not hate or despise anyone. I don't like how they categorized us. Obviously, historically I don't like what's been done to us, but no, that don't give me a reason to hate them, no.” Mux and all of the other students indicated in their responses that they did not hate all White people. Nor did they reflect strong negative emotion attitudes. Yet, Mux and most of them revealed their pride for Black people and his devotion to the Black race. Most were also in favor of multiculturalism.

Question: Share whether there are times that you feel useless. Jay commented,

In this country, you're really not useless, buddy. I feel like I bring value, but I've always been blessed with people that just pop up and then they help me see that in myself.

'Cause me, once I start something I want to finish. I don't wanna quit, hopefully, with the grace of God, I'll get out of here soon with a degree.

Question: Share about the significance of the role that God plays in your life. Helton

spoke this about his faith: “I'm born and raised in the church. Grew up, and (have spent) all my life in the church. It's very important to me.” Kice commented about God is in his life: “I'm not as religious as I should be, but I do believe, and I feel like I get a few blessings now and then.”

Question. Share whether you feel that it is important to have a Black identity and a multicultural perspective that is inclusive of cultures. Mils shared about both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective:

I feel like I'm more knowledgeable now 'cause I kind of get perspective from both sides, I guess. So, I thought it's like preparing me. I really feel like I could be someone that makes a difference and be the median, bringing people together, I guess.

Jason shared his view on multiculturalism,

When you have a multicultural perspective and Black identity, I feel like it makes you more rested (rounded), having multicultural, being able to see things from all views. That feels like it is so key to understanding why people do what they do. Also, (it helps you) know how to solve stuff.

Nate shared this about Black and multicultural life-style:

(Back) home I have a few multicultural friends. I would say (mainly) Mexican. Yes, I think it's good now (having Black identity and a multicultural perspective). And also, we should be open to multicultural (friendships) with weird people. We're not the only minority group. Like in history, there's been a lot, though they were kept secret from newer generations.

Question: Comment on whether (Do) you embrace and celebrate your Black identity along with the cultural identities of others. Lemo commented about whether he celebrates his Black identity and the cultural identities of others: "I mean, I got friends of other races, so I kinda celebrate everything, but I do embrace the things that African Americans do." Here, Frost shared about celebrating other cultures: "Yes, I do fully embrace being Black. I (also) participate in other cultural activities. Being Black is a good thing regardless of what trials and

tribulations we have.” Here are Mils’ thoughts about celebrating culture: “Yeah, like my church always holds life events, and stuff like that. . . . Important days (and topics) on Black history. . . . Yeah, they teach us to embrace our history.”

The strong reaction of the students whose responses showed characteristics of “cultural delight and Black pride” may reflect that “cultural delight and Black pride” are associated with how the students are motivated to accomplish the work needed to graduate.

Characteristics of the theme of cultural delight and Black pride were found in the student’s responses under the racial identity key topic. The existence of these characteristics help to show how the theme of cultural delight and Black pride emerged. Like the others, this finding is evidence that this emergent theme is potentially associated with what the students rely on to motivate them effectively to graduate from college.

Theme of Racial Pride Without Hatred

Racial pride without hatred was voiced throughout the responses to the questions on the key topic of racial identity. Many of the racial identity questions seemed to provide the opportunity for the students to voice feelings that they may have harbored inside themselves. Their responses showed no anti-White attitudes, but they revealed their need to voice their strong pride for their race. Thus, under the key topic of racial identity, a noticeable number of the students’ responses were associated with the emergent theme of racial pride without hatred. Some of the students’ responses to various racial identity questions are provided below to help in revealing the emergence of this theme, through the characteristics that are found about it, in the students’ remarks.

Question: Articulate whether your negative feelings about White are intense. Man discussed his feelings about Whites:

Only after I watch like a slave movie. I don't like to watch movies like that, but only after that, or maybe a police event. To a certain degree, I'll be disappointed. I don't wanna say, I get angry, I get disappointed, that stuff is still happening.

Question: Articulate whether you hate the White community and all that it represents. Jay stated,

I don't hate people, the representation of how they try to make it, their history, seems so patriotic. Will you talk about Black history? We saw Black history, saved like we would, we were the people destroying and pillaging and doing all that. When it was done to us, now we just protest. We were not harming nobody, but we were sprayed with water hoses, beaten up, chased with dogs, and our homes were broken into, and all types of crazy things were done to us. We were slaved for years.

Jason reflected,

I don't hate them. I just don't like what some Whites do. But I just say, I don't hate, I just don't like some of the things that they stand for. But I don't like to group everybody, all the people into one place because I know some White people who definitely don't think the same as others White people.

Question: Share what you feel about being an American than a member of a racial group. Mux reflected,

You have variability in that, but I don't see it (preferring being American or being Black) as a real big thing. I went through a lot of things in my life, and I don't really have to worry about all that.

Jay said, "I see myself more as a Black person than as an American." Also, "The American Dream was never set for me, and I realized that so I had to make my own American dream."

Kice's thoughts about how he feels about being an American versus being Black: "No, not really. I just really see myself as a Black American for real." He also shared,

I feel like we do have our pros and cons. I like to see, you know, more Black people more empowered, as far as in America. Because a lot of White people that have power of judges, or any governmental power, they make decisions (over) us.

Lemo discussed, "I mean regardless of the fact, being an American or a Black American, you're still an American at the end of the day, so it's not like I feel different, I'm just a Black American—that's my race."

Question: Explain whether or not you despise and hate all White people. Helton said this about White people: "Oh no, great White figures this world has ever seen. That hate attitude, I don't even like saying that word."

Question: Elaborate on if you feel that life is good to you as an African American.

Nate shared, "In some parts, yes, and in other parts, no. Like for instance. I would say no because I am a business management major, in the world we live in today." Dee shared his feelings, "When I'm back home (yes). Here, not really. It's cool, (but) it ain't the best I've ever had." Konosuba shared,

Oh no. I mean, yeah, just like seeing (stereotypical) stuff in the media, like, damn. But it's like at the same time, like I love being like this (being Black). No, it's like just being Black means that your life is always in danger, so, you can never be alarmed. Like when you get pulled over by the police, and why a lot of people get murdered. It's scary, being Black.

Academic Self-Concept Key Topic

Theme of Scholarly Recognition

Under the key topic of academic self-concept, a theme on scholarly recognition emerged.

Question: Articulate whether you are satisfied with the class assignments that you turn in. Mils mentioned, “There’s been a few outliers but, if I forget an assignment when rushed, but if I spend a good amount of time, (then I) am usually confident in what I turn in.”

Question: Share whether you believe that you are better than the average college student. Kice had these thoughts about being better than an average college student: “I don’t know? Sometimes college is not for everybody, and that’s fine. I just, know, college is something for those who want to (be) perfect, or just get better at.” Mils asserted, “Yeah, cause (when) making the dean's list you’re getting rewarded for something, and they wouldn’t reward you for if you were average.”

Theme of Self-Determination

Also housed under the key topic of academic self-concept, self-determination, appears more associated with the four interview questions associated with academic performance, perceived intelligence, student quality, and GPA fulfillment. Some of the students’ quotes follow.

Question: Elaborate on whether you think that others feel that you are intelligent. James replied,

I really try not to think too hard about it (if people feel that I’m intelligent) because at the end of the day, it’s my life, and depending on who it is that have their conversation against me, they really don’t have any domain over what I can achieve.

Question: Comment on whether you believe that your instructors think that you are a good student. Konosuba shared,

Just depends on what instructors you ask. Like some of our instructors, I don't talk to at all, you know. We got some of the instructors that hit or miss. We had a couple of conversations, and then they finally appeared in my sight. They probably thought I wanted to talk to students, and that's how I got my position as RA. Let me just add, it depends.

Theme of Allegiance to Others

Manaher's (2024), work, defines allegiance in this manner:

Allegiance, a term deeply rooted in the realms of loyalty and commitment, holds a significant place in the fabric of human interactions. At its core, allegiance refers to the unwavering devotion and fidelity one pledges towards a person, group, cause, or even a nation. This resolute dedication is often marked by a sense of duty, honor, and adherence to a set of principles or values" (para. 4).

Question: Share whether you feel that your parents are happy with your college grades. Here, Helton seems motivated to get good grades, to make his parents proud, "It saves them (my parents) money—with good grades come scholarship money. And scholarship money helps me and my family. And so, yes, they (my parents) are proud."

Question. Explain whether you have a number of good qualities. Mills responded, I have a bunch of good qualities, though, and stood in for (representing) my grandpa. So, he's like a pretty big figure in the African American community back home. Like, he taught me how to be confident in myself—Gramps.

Question: Share whether you feel that your parents are happy with your college grades. Lemo replied,

Yes, my mom is happy with whatever I desire to do. I will be the first one of her kids to graduate from college, and also to (just) go to college, the first one in my family, I think.

Yes, she is very proud of me.

Konosuba revealed some personal feelings about his parents and how they motivated him,

They're just happy I'm here, to be honest. I'm my mommy's first born. She worked her butt off to see me get here. I mean I'm just following in her footsteps trying to pay her all of the work that she put in to get me here. Like I said, I already know my pops. I do want to talk to him. My mom, she's married to my stepdad. He had four other kids before he married my mom. Ain't none of his kids doing anything, so, he looks at me like I'm one of his kids. And I look at him like my pops (cause) he raised me, too, for real. So, he's just proud of seeing it, like, he's just happy. Like when his kids are actually doing something like they are supposed to be doing, he's happy. They (my parents) wanna see us walk across the stage.

Summary

The key topic of self-esteem showed two emergent themes: self-concept and student confidence. The key topic of racial identity showed three emergent themes: cultural delight and Black pride, and racial pride without hatred. The key topic of academic self-concept showed three emergent themes: scholarly recognition, self-determination, and allegiance to others. These students described their voiced version of how they are motivated, which debunks potentially less accurate perceptions that may be held by others in society about Black male student motivation.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Data

The purpose of this chapter is to examine associations between the key topics of academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity with the themes that participants brought to life through their interviews to assess their impact on how Black male students are motivated throughout their journey to complete college. The goal of this study is to reveal ideas that have the potential to contribute to solutions pertaining to African American male student educational success.

Meta-Concepts

Four meta-concepts from the review of literature seem important to showcase how the themes and key topics fit into the fundamental research questions. The first meta-concept that made a strong appearance in the interview responses was growth mindset. Growth mindset versus fixed mindset are powerful motivating forces in lives, according to Dweck (2006). The very act of these participants choosing to go to college at a predominately White university suggests growth mindset. Their willingness to participate in this study suggests growth mindset. Their responses suggest growth mindset. Although the key topics of this study (self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept) did not evoke growth mindset per se, the responses of the students across all three key topics and several themes strongly capitalized on growth mindset.

Meta-Concept of Growth Mindset

In interview after interview, I felt inspired by the can-do attitude (tell your own version of the growth mindset) of the participants. The thematic findings across the different key topics illustrate the pervasiveness of growth mindset.

Theme of Self-Concept

Based on the student's comments, the emergent theme of self-concept appears to have a noticeable impact on the students' educational motivation. Self-concept is defined as our feelings and thoughts about who we are physically, personally, and socially. It also includes our knowledge about our qualities, behavior, and capabilities (Vinney, 2018). Characteristics of the emergent theme of self-concept are reflected in what the students expressed in their responses that follow. The theme, self-concept, emerged from the meanings of the characteristics that were birthed from the student voices, and articulated in their quotes, and thus they are closely related to the characteristics of growth mindset.

Question: Explain whether you have a number of good qualities. Justice shared, "Yes, communication skill, confidence, I'm outspoken, leadership skills, and characteristic skills that other people may have mentioned or noticed about myself." Mux said, "Yes sir." Dee exclaimed, "Yeah, absolutely." Helton shared, "Yes. Uh, I will say my creativity is a high wind up. Honesty, commitment. Oh. I'm (a) very wise person, I would (also) say, artistic, sometimes humorous. So yes, I do have great qualities. I mean good qualities, yes."

Question: Articulate whether you feel that you are able to get things done as well as other people. Jay commented,

Yes, if you teach me it, it's like math would be, if you teach me and then give me an example to do, or if you give me an example and show me how to do it, I'm gonna get it

done. Whether I know how to do it or not. All you gotta do is give me the equation. Tell me how to do it and then let me do it on my own, and I'm gonna get it right. Because now I have the blueprint. As long as I have the blueprint or I know what I want to do with the blueprint that I'm given. Then I can keep going forward and do other things.

Nate shared, "Most of the time. Like other people in the room don't wanna do (the) work, and (so) I have to say something about it." Konosuba shared, "I mean, I guess it depends on my mindset. I feel like if I want to do something, I feel like I can deal with the best of the best."

Helton commented, "Apps. I feel like I can get things done up. It is a matter of me. Uh. But it is set in stone (to) pace myself. So, like, for example, breaking up in portions where it asks,"

Theme of Student Confidence

Hollenbeck (2004) defined self-confidence to represent our feelings about our ability to accomplish something successfully. Also, Hollenbeck noted that those who possess higher self-confidence will exert greater effort at completing a task and will not give-up quickly in the face of problems. Hollenbeck's version of self-confidence seems similar to the theme of student confidence that emerged in the findings of this study. Rafiei et al. (2018) reported that positive attitudes and self-confidence are closely associated. Walter (2019) shared that optimistic self-talk (about yourself) can bring self-compassion and help you to overcome self-doubt (University of South Florida Counseling Center, 2024). The characteristics in these thoughts are similar to the characteristics of growth mindset.

Question: Explain whether you think that regardless of how hard you try I do poorly in school. Pelt made this response on whether or not he felt, regardless of his effort, he would do poorly in school: "No, I wouldn't say that. I tend to have a more optimistic view on things than that."

Question: Articulate whether you think that you have a positive attitude toward yourself. Kice shared, “On and off, but I usually find that good outcome with myself with things.”

Question: Articulate whether you believe that overall, you are a capable student. Helton said, “I believe as long as I put my mind into it, anything is possible.”

Theme of Cultural Delight and Black Pride

The students also revealed being comfortable (maybe even a sense of delight) with individuals of other races at home or at college. Most of the students consistently expressed being proud of their race, and many of them also showed loyalty to their race by verbally standing up for their race through their responses to questions dealing with their race.

Konosuba commented,

Oh. No! You just gotta work extra hard to get anything in this world. But I mean, it ain't nothing. We are built to work, (but) like there's no reason that I gotta put in like 10 times the effort as a White man (since) I'm like that White man. Cause (it's) the skin tone. So right, I work hard and I mean we've been working hard.

Jason made these comments: “Yeah. I mean, many good and bad spots. But I think as an African American, there's a lot of benefits, and its pride. It's, you should take pride in it, you know.”

Helton insisted, “For me personally, yeah, I'm proud to be (an African American). So yes.”

Theme of Racial Pride Without Hatred

Racial pride without hatred was voiced throughout the responses to the questions on the key topic of racial identity. Many of the racial identity questions seemed to provide the opportunity for the students to voice feelings that they may have harbored inside themselves.

Their responses showed no anti-White attitudes, but they revealed their need to voice their strong

pride for their race. Thus, under the key topic of racial identity, a noticeable number of the students' responses were associated with the emergent theme of racial pride without hatred. Some of the students' responses to various racial identity questions are provided below to help in revealing the emergence of this theme, through the characteristics that are found about it, in the students' remarks.

Question: Articulate whether your negative feelings about White are intense.

Konosuba commented,

If I feel like that, it just evokes emotion. I mean, like, when I was younger, when somebody spoke to you like a slave, like, dang, I could react negatively. Now I try not to lock myself in that mindset. 'Cause it's like, if you lock yourself in their mindset, like I said earlier, that's how we got to the place where we are today.

Here, Pelt gave these comments, "I wouldn't say that I have tense feelings. You know, I've been raised to love and accept everyone for who they are. But, as I stated before, I do have, sort of, I guess, the best way you could put it, is a slight fear of them, because of, shall we say, the power that they hold."

Theme of Scholarly Recognition

The theme of scholarly recognition is premised on being recognized for being a scholarly student. Whiting (2009) shared that Black men who possess a scholarly identity are said to possess more self-efficacy. Whiting also said that Black men with self-efficacy are more persistent and resilient through obstacles, and they may possess more self-confidence, self-control, and self-responsibility. The connection to growth mindset is in "putting in the work" necessary for earning good grades.

Question: Share whether you feel that if you try hard enough that you will earn good grades. Jay remarked,

“I feel like trying is not good enough, you have to actually work hard enough, putting in the work, and putting in the time, and the work. It’s just not only the work, you have to put in time, to do more than the minimum to succeed, especially in higher education.”

Theme of Self-Determination

Cherry’s (2022) work revealed that self-determination means that you feel in greater control, as opposed to being non-self-determined, which can leave you feeling that your life is controlled by others. It (self-determination) states that people are motivated to grow and change by three innate (and universal) psychological needs. The concept of intrinsic motivation, (or engaging in activities for the inherent reward of the behavior itself) plays an important role in this theory (para. 1).

Question: Discuss whether, overall, you are proud of your grades. Konosuba said, right now, no, but, like, I can’t even really sweat it. Like, I’m taking two physics classes or, like I said, physics ain’t my strong suit. I got a class about social justice and I’m pretty sure I got an A in there. Every time I put an exam in, I get 20 out of 20, he’s, like, you do excellent work. Also, I got a C in analytical geometry.

Lemo discussed, “Yeah, I’m proud of myself for the fact of even coming to school. I mean, I took two years off when I graduated 2017, and came back in 2019. And I’m almost done. Yeah, I’m proud of myself.”

Question: Comment on whether you feel that most of your academic efforts are rewarded. Lemo said, “No, it’s not rewarding unless you put the determination in and finish. Graduation is your reward.”

Question: Elaborate whether there are times that you think that college is too difficult for you. Helton shared, “I push through (the difficulties of college) no matter (what).”

Question: Share whether you feel that if you try hard enough that you will earn good grades. Helton said,

Yes, at the end of the day, like downward, people just quit right then and there. But the word try, sounds like effort to me. And we put in every kind of effort to study. Good effort to flash cards, or whatever to do research, like you were saying at the meeting, about doing the proper research.

Meta-Concept of Personality Traits

Manaher (2024) said,

Allegiance, a term deeply rooted in the realms of loyalty and commitment, holds a significant place in the fabric of human interactions. At its core, allegiance refers to the unwavering devotion and fidelity one pledges towards a person, group, cause, or even a nation. This resolute dedication is often marked by a sense of duty, honor, and adherence to a set of principles or values. (para. 4)

The student responses mainly talked about their loyalty and commitment through the parent-based interview questions. The confidence, desire, and the potential determination to become a first-generation college graduate seems to be related to the characteristics of growth mindset.

Question: Explain whether you have a number of good qualities.

Mils responded,

I have a bunch of good qualities, though, and stood in for (representing) my grandpa. So, he’s like a pretty big figure in the African American community back home. Like, he taught me how to be confident in myself—Gramps.

Question: Share whether you feel that your parents are happy with your college grades. Lemo replied,

Yes, my mom is happy with whatever I desire to do. I will be the first one of her kids to graduate from college, and also to (just) go to college, the first one in my family, I think.

Yes, she is very proud of me.

The second meta-concept besides growth mindset was the meta-concept of personality traits. Through analyzing the data under the emergent theme of self-concept, I began to see evidence of self-concept and the construct of growth mindset. I was surprised when growth mindset began to emerge and when it became clearer through its literature. Like a puzzle, it seemed to fit what the student responses were indicating. It became clear to me that the students fully grasped the qualities of a sound student, as the majority of them consistently responded with answers that indicated this knowledge. They also consistently indicated that they were mentally strong students, which I also provided comments about in my brief observations in Chapter 4 within their snapshots. In addition to mindset, the students also provided responses to questions that were associated with personality traits.

Although I was not as surprised by the presence of personality traits, I was encouraged by what the literature revealed about it. Furthermore, through the key topics of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept, the direction of many interview questions included the practice of self-assessment. For example, Jay shared this about dropping out of school,

I always feel like I have something. I always feel like I can learn, as long as I have the ability and capability . . . I feel like I can do anything, so, I never feel like I'm just useless and unable to pass a class.

Lemo shared this about possessing self-respect: “No I don’t feel like that, I always think positive.”

Rafiei et al. (2018) hypothesized that positive attitudes and self-confidence are closely associated. All of the students who answered this question implied that they feel good about their personal traits of persistence and conscientiousness. This may also reveal Black male confidence in their personality traits despite what others think about them.

Question: Comment on whether you feel that most of your academic efforts are rewarded. Lemo was clear, “No, it’s not rewarding unless you put the determination in and finish. Graduation is your reward.”

Question, “Articulate whether you believe that overall, you are a capable student. Helton referred to the need to be persistent, “I believe as long as I put my mind into it, anything is possible.”

Being recognized for being a scholarly student is similar to the concept of scholarly identity. Whiting (2009) shared that Black men who possess a scholarly identity are said to possess more self-efficacy. For example, Kemon’s inspiring response to the question of whether he often feels confident when he is taking a test was,

Yes, I really have to have confidence in myself any time I’m taking a test or anytime I’m doing something. I have to have confidence within myself. If I don’t have confidence, then I know that I’m not going to do the best of my abilities. So, yes, I have to have confidence in myself. I’m confident with almost everything that I do.

Meta-Concept of Validation

Self-determination is closely related to growth mindset whose characteristics include determination. Rendon and Muñoz’s (2011) work showed that many low-income, first-

generation students who lack involvement skills can benefit from validation, which may have the potential to boost their determination. Validation is the third meta-concept.

Question: Discuss whether, overall, you are proud of your grades. Konosuba and Lemo both chose to be self-aware and pointed to facts about themselves that validated their reasoning—see the italics. Konosuba said,

Right now, no, but, like, I can't even really sweat it. Like, I'm taking two physics classes or, like I said, physics ain't my strong suit. I got a class about social justice and I'm pretty sure I got an A in there. Every time I put an exam in, I get 20 out of 20, *he's, like, you do excellent work*. Also, I got a C in analytical geometry.

Lemo said, "Yeah, I'm proud of myself for the fact of even coming to school. I mean, I took two years off when *I graduated 2017 and came back in 2019*. And I'm almost done, yeah, I'm proud of myself."

Question: Comment on whether you feel that most of your academic efforts are rewarded. Lemo said, "No, it's not rewarding unless you put the determination in and finish. Graduation is your reward."

Question: Elaborate whether there are times that you think that college is too difficult for you. Helton said, "I push through (the difficulties of college) no matter (what)."

Supporting individuals can encourage these students through affirming them, and also through actively supporting them socially and academically inside and outside of classroom settings. The emergent theme of **Allegiance to Others** allegiance to others has similar characteristics as those for the constructs of agreeableness and extraversion (Rendon & Muñoz, 2011).

Konosuba revealed some personal feelings about his parents and how they motivated him,

I'm my mommy's first born. She worked her butt off to see me get here. I mean I'm just following in her footsteps trying to pay her all of the work that she put in to get me here. Like I said, I already know my pops. I do want to talk to him. My mom, she's married to my stepdad. He had four other kids before he married my mom. Ain't none of his kids doing anything, so, he looks at me like I'm one of his kids. And I look at him like my pops (cause) he raised me, too, for real. So, he's just proud of seeing it, like, he's just happy. Like when his kids are actually doing something like they are supposed to be doing, he's happy. They (my parents) wanna see us walk across the stage.

Meta-Concept of Internalization

The emergent theme of culture delight and Black pride has similar characteristics to those of internalization as characterized in Cross's (1995) theory of Nigrescence. Some of the students' thoughts seemed to show a general sense of commitment to issues relating to Black people. Their responses also revealed student faithfulness to their race, and their pride in being Black.

Kemon shared his feelings, "I'm proud to be Black. I'm blessed to be Black. I love being Black. We were the first here, we're Gods people. I really believe that. I love being Black."

Some of the student's responses are thought-provoking. Jay commented across several questions,

I see myself more as a Black person than an American. . . the American Dream was never set for me, and I realized that, so I had to make my own American dream. . . . I know, I'm just Black. Yeah, I got some of that, though I'm Black. When you claim your other

identity is taken away, your Blackness is something which shouldn't be the case.

[However], I don't hate people.

Moreover, though the research questions sought relationships between the study's key topics, the direction of the study became more focused on the emergent themes, which left minimal use for a need for the relationships of the key topics. Yet, following are the more noteworthy observations related to the key topic relationships. The characteristics of the emergent theme self-concept, are similar to the characteristics of growth mindset, and are found in the student responses under all of the key topics.

Implications

Black men experience the burden of real discrimination-related realities during and potentially following post-secondary education (Harper & Davis, 2012; PBS, 2019). PBS (2019) shared that race is the most significant factor that affects a man's ability to progress in the United States. Therefore, along their journey, Black men are unhappily confronted by higher unemployment, incarceration, and death rates than White men (Brundage, 2020; Violence Policy Center, 2020). The discouraging perceptions of society can also leave Black men victims of stereotypes which often depict them as educational failures (Harper & Davis, 2012). These false views can leave Black men seen as unequitable images, that society may take advantage of and use to justify denying them the opportunities that other races may receive. Yet, Black men believe in the power of education in spite of their experiences relating to racial inequality within higher education. Although Black male students have not lost hope, the need to learn more about them and their educational achievement still exists. Since higher education institutions seek to continue to enroll Black men, they should aspire to unravel this issue more fully. An initial path for educating Black men effectively may include identifying disparities at their institutions,

along with addressing and eliminating the disparities to ease the Black male burden and to clear their path for greater success. This study's three key topics of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept, were key because they are relevant sources that may impact the educational motivation of Black male students. Thus, they were used to guide the study. The examination of the key topics generated the emergent themes which suggested predictable paths for the motivation and educational achievement among the 16 Black male student participants. Forthcoming are a few thoughts concerning how the identified meta-concepts may be effectively utilized to enhance Black male student educational motivation.

Meta-Concepts

Growth mindset was the meta-concept that appeared to have had the most substantial influence on the students' scholarly motivation. The students' responses to the questions that possessed the mindset related traits eventually helped to reveal the emergence of self-esteem. Although I discovered a large number of quotes relevant to growth mindset under the key topic of self-esteem, the characteristics of growth mindset were also found within the student interview responses of the other two key topics of racial identity and academic self-concept.

Therefore, an institutional student awareness campaign that educates the campus population about growth mindset and showcases Black men who possessed growth mindset may have the potential to motivate Black male students. Additionally, growth mindset could be added to the training material of student affairs departments, making it required training for higher education student affairs professionals. This could make these professionals knowledgeable enough to recognize and better serve Black male students who possess growth mindset. They could also implement creative nurturing strategies for Black males who possess some of its characteristics but need to learn more about it in order to more effectively utilize growth mindset.

This study's findings on growth mindset reflects that it has promising potential in an on-campus setting which may indicate a need to learn more about it through further research.

Dweck and Yeager's (2022) work covered benefits of growth mindset intervention. They recommended explaining the intervention, speaking favorably about it, and showing its effectiveness. Growth mindset intervention can be effectively used to boost one's growth mindset. The purpose of such intervention is to shift students from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset attitude. For example, although students possessing growth mindset may experience student anxiety and disappointment, their self-esteem and belief in learning from their mistakes allow them to put forth the positive effort required for engagement in satisfactory learning.

Importantly, intervention is enhanced when the participants are allowed to contribute to its development. It is also wise to allow students to shape future programs by providing input throughout the intervention. Intervention should be designed to meet the needs of the people who are targeted. Lastly, growth mindset intervention is most effective with students who experience continual academic challenges in a classroom setting which is supportive to growth mindset characteristics (Dweck & Yeager, 2022).

The meta-concept of personality traits may also have potential as a contribution to Black male students' educational motivation. Thus, advertising and educating staff and faculty on the Big Five personality traits (BFPTs) may help contribute to a greater self-awareness of what educational motivation requires. The more popular and relevant BFPTs are extraversion and conscientiousness. One who scores high for extraversion is said to have assertiveness, optimistic emotions, increased activity, and sociability (Dawson & Shih, 2015). For conscientiousness, sub traits include carefulness and meticulousness and moral meaning. Effective institution support

and use of personality trait data could enhance higher education student affairs (HESA) professionals' ability to motivate Black male college students.

Whiting (2009) indicated that Black men who possess a scholarly identity may possess more self-efficacy. Scholarly identity is said to have the potential to help increase one's confidence in their scholarly abilities and potentially increase their motivation to complete college. For scholarly identity, institutions could implement strategies similar to those earlier mentioned within the ways to provide growth mindset initiatives. Furthermore, students who experience validation have the potential to also be nourished in scholarly identity through receiving encouragement about their scholarly abilities and achievements. So, institutional support initiatives for validation theory may also indirectly support scholarly identity growth.

People who advocate for students possess the potential to encourage them through affirming them, and they can also validate them by actively supporting them socially and academically, whether inside or outside the classroom (Rendon & Muñoz, 2011). Institutions could provide initiatives that offer a greater amount of validation to motivate Black male students who may need it to counter the disparities they experience at the institution. This type of support could be designed to meet the specific needs of the students at their campus. Institutions who are really excited about this idea could provide incentives to faculty and staff who engage in providing support that goes beyond just verbal encouragement. Moreover, institutions can be creative and team up with parents by training them how to better validate their students at home. Strong validation is shown to motivate greater student efforts.

The students provided inspired interview responses that revealed a commitment to issues relating to Black people, and being proud of their race, which are associated with the meta-

concept of internalization. This potentially reveals how internalization is related to how the students are motivated to complete college.

To better educate higher education student affairs professionals about racial identity, Cross's (1995) Nigrescence theory could be designated as required reading material for student affairs professionals, depending on whether or not they had already studied it within their college coursework. Implementing Nigrescence training may also be an effective way to provide review and roleplay sessions for HESA professionals, to increase their knowledge in racial identity, and help make them more capable in providing effective services to Black male students.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Potential Impacts

This chapter explores relationships among the key concepts of academic self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity and their impact on what motivates Black male students during their pursuit of a college degree. My purpose included the use of a qualitative approach to learn more about the three constructs and their influence on Black male student success. Performing the study included Zoom interview sessions with 16 Black male students from Midwest University and transcripts, followed by interpretations of their responses to identify the emergent themes.

Higher Education Implications

These findings about the promise and potential of Black male students are important for student affairs professionals and faculty in higher education. Also, the findings possess the potential to produce fresh tools that HESA professionals can use to more effectively meet the needs of Black male students. Thus, the following sections include suggestions for institutional support initiatives.

Growth Mindset

Some suggestions include: (1) Implementing a student awareness campaign, intended to educate campus population about growth mindset and showcasing Black males about who successfully utilize growth mindset; (2) Adding growth mindset literature to the training material

of student affairs departments; and (3) Implementing creative nurturing strategies for Black males who struggle and who have not effectively utilized growth mindset. Also, effective institution support and use of personality trait data could enhance HESA professionals' ability to motivate Black male college students.

Scholarly Identity

Institutional support suggestions for scholarly identity would be similar to the ones for growth mindset previously covered.

Validation Theory

Institutional support suggestions related to validation theory include: (1) Institutions could offer initiatives able to provide a greater amount of validation to motivate Black male students, who need more, to meet their student's needs, (2) Institutions who are excited could offer incentives to faculty and staff who could provide validation beyond just verbal support, (3) Creative institutions can offer training to parents who want to validate their students more, at home.

Racial Identity (Internalization)

Institutional support suggestions related to racial identity include: (1) Designating Cross's Nigrescence as required reading material for student affairs professionals, to better educate these professionals about racial identity, (2) Implement Nigrescence training as an effective way to provide review and also roleplay sessions for HESA professionals; and (3) Increase student affairs professionals' knowledge about racial identity and help make them more capable in providing effective services to Black male students.

Future Research Implications

Though Black male students have continued to achieve, equitable approaches needed to close the achievement gap between Black and White male students, are still sought. And although the life of this dilemma has aged, barriers that impact it have also. Thus, a logical path for equity would be to seek relevant solutions that may have the potential to close the gap. So, the hope is that higher education institutions who enroll Black male students should become more committed to their achievement. Thus, I challenge institutions of higher education to adopt a more significant role in providing more equitable services to Black male students through the provision of greater leadership in actively uncovering Black male student needs along with addressing them. The study's findings indicate that growth mindset may possess promising potential in impacting what motivates Black male students to achieve despite barriers they face. Yet, there is much more to learn which leaves a need for further research on this topic.

Limitations

Limitations were encountered within the study. The study used a basic interpretive qualitative design to conduct an analysis of the Black male student participants' motivation. Also, though the remote Zoom meetings provided a safer venue against COVID-19, there were a few limitations. The Zoom meetings limited my ability to more closely observe the students, settings, and their body language. The potential limitations from the individual Zoom interviews may have also impacted the threat of researcher bias. Yet, being Black and sharing common lived experiences with the participants may have provided me with insider status, making the participants more comfortable during the interviews. Participants' willingness to please me (a same race researcher) may have impacted the authenticity of their response. Also, an additional limitation was that I did not take advantage of collecting demographic information on

participants at the beginning. So, I had to backtrack and recontact students in an attempt to get the information much later.

Also, students' possible discomfort with questions may have affected their responses. A few of the questions were not worded as clearly as others. Thus, future researchers may need to employ stronger recruiting strategies initially to avoid having to spend more time recruiting, designing, and utilizing more robust strategies later.

Conclusion

Dr. Chetty indicated that it is difficult to close the Black/White disparity gap in the midst of downward racial trends in the U.S. (PBS, 2019). Listed earlier in the Senate Banking Committee hearing literature are examples of this disparity which reveal the different ways that discrimination can impact the lives of Black men. Yet, though this topic has been addressed time and time again, Black males still face high levels of discrimination which personally motivates me to act on my responsibility to advocate for Black men. Therefore, this study fulfills a portion of my self-imposed responsibility to address this issue, by focusing on African American male academic motivation and achievement, which includes inequities they face, of which is only one small piece of the inequity dilemma that they experience in their world.

Thus, through the study's social-psychological lens, my query of the relationships among self-esteem, academic racial identity, and self-concept uncovered valuable data about African American male student educational motivation. From the findings, a more optimistic narrative about Black male students emerged, which includes their unwillingness to give up on society, despite unfavorable attitudes others may have about them.

Through the interviews, the key topics and their emergent themes, including **self-esteem** (growth mindset and personality traits), **racial identity** (internalization), and **academic self-**

concept (scholarly identity and personality trait theory), evidence was obtained supporting the emergent themes. This path also included producing the emergent themes that potentially have the greatest impact on Black male students at ISU.

Thus, it was found that, through institutional support, growth mindset may have the greatest potential to motivate Black male students. Personality trait theory appears to also have great potential through institutional support initiatives. Cross's Nigrescence internalization construct may also have the potential to contribute to ISU's Black male student scholarly achievement if deliberate awareness or training strategies are initiated for Black males and HESA professionals. Similar strategies for the BFPT personality traits of extroversion and conscientiousness may also prove to have promising potential. The attitude of attacking this issue in the way that fire fighters battle out-of-control fires may help to ignite stakeholders. Thus, let us become more serious about implementing tangible action needed to bring equity based solutions to combat the forces that are adversarial to Black male students in higher education.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview Instructions

Included in the process prior is the plan to assess the value of the listed questions and use a select group of questions intended to fit the allotted time for the interview sessions. A total of 6 to 8 interview questions will be the focus of our sessions.

The interview process will start with introductions and general conversation about the interview process. For example: "To help me accurately capture and remember what we discuss I am going to start recording the Zoom session. You are free to stop the interview at any time, so just tell me if you want to stop recording. Questions or comments are welcome at any time. Tell me when you are ready to start."

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. Please provide the country that you were born in?
2. What best represents your ethnic identification? a. African, b. African-American, c. Black, d. West Indian/Caribbean Black, e. Hispanic/Latino Black, f. Mixed race/ethnicity, g. Other
3. What is your family's socioeconomic status? a. Poor, b. Working Class, c. Middle Class, d. Upper Middle Class, e. Rich
4. Please enter your current cumulative grade point average (GPA)?
5. Please circle what describes the racial composition of your childhood community? a. Mostly Black, b. Mixed, c. Mostly White, d. Other; please specify: _____
6. Please circle what describes the racial composition of the high school that you were educated at the most? a. Mostly Black, b. Mixed, c. Mostly White, d. Other; please specify: _____
7. Please circle the group you are most comfortable socializing with? a. Blacks, b. Whites, c. Hispanics/Latinos, d. Asians/Pacific Islanders, e. Mixed Group, f. Other; please specify: _____
8. Circle the number racial/ethnic organizations do you belong to? 1 2 3 4 5 5+

SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONS

1. Comment on whether you are satisfied with yourself.
2. Share whether there are times that you feel that you are good for nothing.
3. Explain whether you have a number of good qualities.
4. Articulate whether you feel that you are able to get things done as well as other people.
5. Elaborate on if you feel that you don't have much to be proud of.
6. Share whether there are times that you feel useless.
7. Comment on whether you feel that you are a person of worth.

8. Explain whether you wish that you could have more respect for yourself.
9. Share whether you think, overall, you are a failure.
10. Articulate whether you think that you have a positive attitude toward yourself.

RACIAL IDENTITY QUESTIONS

1. Elaborate on if you feel that life is good to you as an African American.
2. Share whether you see yourself as an American and rarely as a member of a racial group.
3. Explain on if you think that Blacks glamorize illegal drug use, and don't recognize legal opportunities.
4. Share if you experience periods when you are down on yourself because of being Black.
5. Articulate on if you feel that you have a multicultural lifestyle in which you are connected with people of many different cultures.
6. Explain whether or not you despise and hate all White people.
7. Share whether you think on and understand things from an Afrocentric perspective.
8. Comment on if you assess the racial makeup of rooms and spaces that you enter.
9. Share whether you feel that about being an American than a members of a racial Group
10. Comment on if you ever struggle with negative feelings about being Black.
11. Share about the significance of the role that GOD plays in your life.
12. Explain whether you feel that Black people seem more interested on having a good time, than on hard work.
13. Elaborate on whether you feel if, Black people who embrace the Afrocentric perspective, are the ones who have the key to resolving America's race problems.
14. Articulate whether you hate the White community and all that it represents.
15. Share whether you feel that it is important to have a Black identity and a multicultural perspective that is inclusive of cultures.
16. Comment on whether you often seek to read literature about racial and ethnic issues.
17. Explain whether you feel that Black people will only be free when they embrace Afrocentric values and principles.
18. Comment on whether you embrace and celebrate your Black identity along with the cultural identities of others.
19. Think about when you decorate your room. Then share whether you use materials that represent strong racial-cultural themes.
20. Comment on whether when voting in an election, you strongly focus on a candidates record on racial and cultural issues.
21. Explain whether you spend a lot of time weekly, thinking about racial and cultural issues.
22. Articulate whether your negative feelings about White are intense.
23. Share whether you feel that it is valuable to have both a Black identity and multicultural perspective because it connects you with people of other cultures.

ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONS

1. Elaborate whether you feel the being a student is a rewarding experience.
2. Share whether you feel that if you try hard enough that you will earn good grades.

3. Comment on whether you feel that most of your academic efforts are rewarded.
4. Explain whether you think that regardless of how hard you try I do poorly in school.
5. Share whether you often expect to perform poorly on exams.
6. Articulate whether you believe that overall, you are a capable student.
7. Comment on whether you think that you perform well in your courses given the amount of time you commit to studying.
8. Share whether you feel that your parents are happy with your college grades.
9. Elaborate on whether you think that others feel that you are intelligent.
10. Discuss whether you believe that most courses are easy for you.
11. Explain whether there are times that you think about dropping out of school.
12. Share whether you feel that most of your classmates perform better than you academically.
13. Comment on whether you believe that your instructors think that you are a good student.
14. Elaborate whether there are times that you think that college is too difficult for you.
15. Discuss whether, overall, you are proud of your grades.
16. Share whether you often feel confident when you are taking a test.
17. Explain whether you think that you are capable of assisting other students with their class work.
18. Discuss whether you believe that instructor's standards are too high for you.
19. Comment on whether you feel that it is difficult for you to keep pace with your class work.
20. Articulate whether you are satisfied with the class assignments that you turn in.
21. Discuss whether you feel that you are on top of your work by finals week.
22. Share whether you believe that you are better than the average college student.
23. Elaborate on whether you think that in most classes your classmates are better prepared than you.
24. Explain whether you think that you do not have the needed abilities in certain courses in your major.
25. Discuss whether you feel that you have poor study habits.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Academic Motivation of African American Male Students at Indiana State University

Survey

Through this Qualtrics survey, you are being invited to participate in a research study. This study aims to *better understand the relationships of self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept in higher education. Thus, this study's purpose is to examine the African American male psychological motivation through self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept.* The way you can help me study these relationships is by answering the questions in a confidential Zoom interview, which, *can take up to 1 hour.*

Some reasons you might want to participate in this research are *to help make a difference in the lives of other students who are similar to you. Also, by sharing information about how you experience these constructs, you may help inform higher education professionals how to better serve Black men who esteem greater student academic achievement.* Some reasons you might not want to participate in this research are, *the time commitment required, and also the sharing of your personal feelings.*

The choice to participate or not is yours; participation is entirely voluntary. Also, the selection criteria for the Black male participants of this study include: Current ISU students, second semester freshman students through junior year student participants. Moreover, no particular college major is required. I do plan to select students on a first come first serve basis.

You also can choose to answer or not answer any question you choose - and you can also exit the interview if you wish to stop participating. This is a confidential Zoom interview which means that your participation will not be known by others.

As mentioned, the interview will focus on *these things; – self-esteem, racial identity, and academic self-concept.* You have been asked to participate in this research because, *this study's focus is African American male students of Indiana state University – so, your input is needed to enhance the accuracy of this study's findings. Thus, the Zoom interview will be available to be scheduled following the consent process.*

Although efforts by me and ISU will be made to protect your answers, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed over the Internet. Yet, I plan to delete your information following the study after it has been finalized and defended.

Potential risks of the study include *the potential loss of confidentiality that could be created by illegal hackers – which could create personal embarrassment and disappointment, at different levels, depending on the data breached.*

Your direct benefit from participating in this study may be minimal, *but the research results may benefit higher education by educating them how to better serve and prepare future*

Black male students who seek greater student academic achievement. By educating higher education about this topic, this study may also better prepare their student affairs professionals who can then better serve you.

You will receive a \$25 gift card for agreeing to be a subject in the study. Yet, do remember that you are not required to do the study. If you are interested in being a subject, you will have the opportunity to sign-off or not, on the consent form. To sign off on the consent form you have a choice of two responses following the consent information:

Yes, I consent to being a subject for this study.

No, I do not consent to being a subject for this study.

If you select yes, you will gain access to the demographic survey of eight questions for you to complete and submit. Also, following the completion of this Qualtrics survey, if you have selected yes, you will be contacted via email to coordinate the Zoom interview.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Nathan Harris, (317)332-0964, nharris22@sycamores.indstate.edu.

Also

Dr. Kandace Hinton, (812) 237-2897, Kandace.Hinton@indstate.edu

Note: If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-3088 or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Researcher:

Nathan Harris - nharris22@sycamores.Indstate.edu

Higher Education Leadership

Doctoral Candidate Researcher

Indiana State University

200 North Seventh Street

Terre Haute, Indiana 47809

October 20, 2021

**APPENDIX C: ACADEMIC MOTIVATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE
STUDENTS AT INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Instruments Relied on in the Creation of the Interview Question

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE (RSE)

RSE

Please record the appropriate answer for each item, depending on whether you Strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it.

- 1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Disagree
4 = Strongly disagree

- ____ 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
____ 2. At times I think I am no good at all.
____ 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
____ 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
____ 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
____ 6. I certainly feel useless at times.
____ 7. I feel that I'm a person of worth.
____ 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
____ 9. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.
____ 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Revised date (4 October 2006)

**APPENDIX D: ACADEMIC MOTIVATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE
STUDENTS AT INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

INSTRUMENT SOURCE FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Cross Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002)

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Neither Agree nor Disagree	5 Somewhat Agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly Agree
---------------------------	---------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------	------------	------------------------

- _____ 1. As an African American, life in America is good for me.
- _____ 2. I think of myself primarily as an American, and seldom as a member of a racial group.
- _____ 3. Too many Blacks "glamorize" the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime.
- _____ 4. I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am black.
- _____ 5. As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.)
- _____ 6. I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.
- _____ 7. I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.
- _____ 8. When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.
- _____ 9. I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.
- _____ 10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black.
- _____ 11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life.
- _____ 12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.
- _____ 13. I believe that only those Black people who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America.

- _____ 14. I hate the White community and all that it represents.
- _____ 15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in who that person might be.
- _____ 16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.)
- _____ 17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good
- _____ 18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be "American," and not African American.
- _____ 19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues.
- _____ 20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of them.
- _____ 21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time.
- _____ 22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles.
- _____ 23. White people should be destroyed.
- _____ 24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian-Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.)
- _____ 25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
- _____ 26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am an American, and second I am a member of a racial group.
- _____ 27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me.
- _____ 40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.).

APPENDIX E: ACADEMIC MOTIVATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENTS AT INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Instruments Relied on in The Creation of the Interview Question ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

ASCS/Reynolds

COLLEGE ATTITUDE SURVEY

Name/ID# _____

Listed below are a number of statements concerning school-related attitudes. Rate each item as it pertains to you personally. Base your ratings on how you feel most of the time. INDICATE YOUR RESPONSE BY CIRCILING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBERS. Be sure to answer all items. Please response to each item independently; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Being a student is a very rewarding experience.	1	2	3	4
2. If I try hard enough, I will be able to get good grades.	1	2	3	4
3. Most of the time my efforts in school are rewarded.	1	2	3	4
4. No matter how hard I try I do not do well in school.	1	2	3	4
5. I often expect to do poorly on exams.	1	2	3	4
6. All in all, I feel I am a capable student.	1	2	3	4
7. I do well in my courses given the amount of time I dedicate to studying.	1	2	3	4
8. My parents are not satisfied with my grades in college.	1	2	3	4
9. Others view me as intelligent.	1	2	3	4
10. Most courses are very easy for me.	1	2	3	4
11. I sometimes feel like dropping out of school.	1	2	3	4
12. Most of my classmates do better in school than I do.	1	2	3	4
13. Most of my instructors think that I am a good student.	1	2	3	4
14. At times I feel college is too difficult for me.	1	2	3	4
15. All in all, I am proud of my grades in college.	1	2	3	4
16. Most of the time while taking a test I feel confident.	1	2	3	4
17. I feel capable of helping others with their class work.	1	2	3	4
18. I feel teachers' standards are too high for me.	1	2	3	4
19. It is hard for me to keep up with my class work.	1	2	3	4
20. I am satisfied with the class assignments that I turn in.	1	2	3	4
21. At times I feel like a failure.	1	2	3	4
22. I feel I do not study enough before a test.	1	2	3	4
23. Most exams are easy for me.	1	2	3	4
24. I have doubts that I will do well in my major.	1	2	3	4
25. For me, studying hard pays off.	1	2	3	4
26. I have a hard time getting through school.	1	2	3	4
27. I am good at scheduling my study time.	1	2	3	4
28. I have a fairly clear sense of my academic goals.	1	2	3	4
29. I'd like to be a much better student than I am now.	1	2	3	4
30. I often get discouraged about school.	1	2	3	4
31. I enjoy doing my homework.	1	2	3	4
32. I consider myself a very good student.	1	2	3	4
33. I usually get the grades I deserve in my courses.	1	2	3	4
34. I do not study as much as I should.	1	2	3	4
35. I usually feel on top of my work by finals week.	1	2	3	4
36. Others consider me a good student.	1	2	3	4
37. I feel that I am better than the average college student.	1	2	3	4
38. In most of the courses, I feel that my classmates are better prepared than I am.	1	2	3	4
39. I feel that I do not have the necessary abilities for certain courses in my major.	1	2	3	4
40. I have poor study habits.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

PARTICIPANT'S DEMOGRAPHICS

	Q2. Please provide the country that you were born in? United States of America	Q3. What best represents your ethnic identification? a. African American b. African-American c. Black d. West Indian/Caribbean Black e. Hispanic/Latino Black f. Mixed race/ethnicity g. Other	Q4. What is your family's socioeconomic status? a. Poor b. Working Class c. Middle Class d. Upper Middle Class e. Rich	Q6. Please circle what describes the racial composition of your childhood community? a. Mostly Black b. Mixed c. Mostly White d. Other; please specify	Q7. Please circle what describes the racial composition of the high school that you were educated at the most? a. Mostly Black b. Mixed c. Mostly White d. Other; please specify	Q8. Please circle the group the you are most comfortable socializing? a. Blacks b. Whites c. Hispanics/Latinos d. Asians/Pacific Islanders e. Mixed Group f. Other; please specify:	Q9. Circle the number racial/ethnic organizations do you belong to? 1 2 3 4 5 5+ 1 Location Data Location: (39.6804, -86.1306) Source: GeolP Estimatio
Student Qual 4	USA	Black	Working Class	Black	Black	Blacks	1
Qual 5	USA	African American	Working Class	Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	4
Qual 6	USA	Black	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly White	Blacks	2
Qual 7	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	2
Qual 8	USA	African American	Working Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Blacks	3
Qual 9	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Black & Mixed	1
Qual 10	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Mixed	3
Qual 11	USA	Black	Working Class	Other Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	2
Qual 12	USA	Mixed & Black	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly Black	Blacks	2
Qual 13	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Blacks	6
Qual 14	USA	African American	Working Class	Mostly Black	Mostly Black	Blacks	1
Qual 15	USA	Black African American	Upper Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	3
Qual 16	USA	Black African American	Upper Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	3
Qual 17	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly Black	Blacks	2
Qual 18	USA	Black	Middle Class	Black	Mixed	Blacks	2
Qual 19	USA	Black African American	Upper Middle Class	Mostly Black & Mixed	Mixed	Blacks	3
Qual 20	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly Black	Blacks	2
Qual 21							
Qual 22	USA	African American	Middle Class	Mixed	Mostly White & Black	Mostly Black	0

interpretation of the data is forthcoming in Chapter 6.

Table 10

Key Topic Self-Esteem Student Response Statistics I

Note: Presented in Table 10 are overall statistics of the student responses, to the key topic, self-esteem questions.

Table 11

Student Response Statistics II

Note: Shown in Table 11 are overall statistics of the student responses, to the key topic, racial identity.

Table 12

Student Response Statistics III

Note: Table 12 shows overall statistics of the student responses, to the key topic, academic self-concept questions.

APPENDIX G

SELF-ESTEEM RESPONSE BREAKDOWN

Question	Student Response Statistics I		
	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral
1. Comment on whether you are satisfied with yourself.	11	1	2
2. Share whether there are times that you feel that you are good for nothing.	4	7	3
3. Explain whether you have a number of good qualities.	15	0	0
4. Articulate whether you feel that you are able to get things done as well as other people.	4	0	0
5. Elaborate on if you feel that you don't have much to be proud of.	8	7	0
6. Share whether there are times that you feel useless.	4	10	0
7. Comment on whether you feel that you are a person of worth.	15	1	0
8. Explain whether you wish that (Are their times) you could have more respect for yourself.	6	9	0
9. Share whether you think, overall, you are a failure.	1	13	0
10. Articulate whether you think that you have a positive attitude toward yourself.	13	0	3

APPENDIX H: RACIAL IDENTITY RESPONSE BREAKDOWN

Questions	Student Response Statistics II		
	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral
1. Elaborate on if (talk about whether) you feel that life is good to you as an African American.	10	4	2
2. Share whether you see yourself as an American (or more so an American) and rarely as a member of a racial group.	14	1	0
3. Explain on if (Do you) think that Blacks glamorize illegal drug use, and don't recognize legal opportunities.	2	8	5
4. Share (an)if you experience periods when you are down on yourself because of being Black.	13	3	0
5. Articulate on if you feel that you (Do you) have a multicultural lifestyle in which you are connected with people of many different cultures.	12	3	1
6. Explain whether or not you despise and hate all White people.	16	0	0
7. Share whether you think on and understand things from an Afrocentric perspective.	11	1	4
8. Comment on if you assess the racial makeup of rooms and spaces that you enter.	12	3	0
9. Share what you feel about being an American than a member of a racial Group.	3	9	3
10. Comment on if you ever struggle with negative feelings about being Black.	2	11	1
11. Share about the significance of the role that GOD plays in your life.	12	2	1
12. Explain whatever you feel about Black people that seem more interested in having a good time, than on hard work.	3	9	4
13. Elaborate on whether you feel if, Black people who embrace the Afrocentric perspective, are the ones who have the key to resolving America's race problems.	10	4	0
14. Articulate whether you hate the White community and all that it represents.	12	1	2
15. Share whether you feel that it is important to have a Black identity and a multicultural perspective that is inclusive of cultures.	14	2	0
16. Comment on whether (Do)you often seek to read literature about racial and ethnic issues. - is that a part of your lifestyle	8	7	1
17. Explain whether you feel that Black people will only be free when they embrace			

Afrocentric values and principles.	8	6	1
18. Comment on whether (Do) you embrace and celebrate your Black identity along with the cultural identities of others.	14	1	0
19. Think about when you decorate your room. Then share whether you use materials that represent strong racial-cultural themes.	8	5	2
20. Comment on whether when voting in an election, you strongly focus on a candidates record on racial and cultural issues.	11	3	1
21. Explain whether you spend a lot of time weekly, thinking about racial and cultural issues.	7	8	0
22. Articulate whether your negative feelings about White are intense.	10	1	4
23. Share whether (Do) you feel that it is valuable to have both a Black identity and multicultural perspective because it connects you with people of other cultures.	14	2	0

APPENDIX I: ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT RESPONSE BREAKDOWN

Questions	Student Response Statistics III		
	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral
1. Elaborate whether you feel that being a student is a rewarding experience.	15	1	0
2. Share whether you feel that if you try hard enough that you will earn good grades.	12	4	0
3. Comment on whether you feel that most of your academic efforts are rewarded.	10	3	3
4. Explain whether you think that regardless of how hard you try I do poorly in school.	13	1	1
5. Share whether you often expect to perform poorly on exams.	4	10	2
6. Articulate whether you believe that overall, you are a capable student.	16	0	0
7. Comment on whether you think that you perform well in your courses given the amount of time you commit to studying.	15	0	1
8. Share whether you feel that your parents are happy with your college grades.	13	2	1
9. Elaborate on whether you think that others feel that you are intelligent.	13	1	2
10. Discuss whether you believe that most courses are easy for you.	6	3	7
11. Explain whether there are times that you think about dropping out of school.	6	9	0
12. Share whether you feel than most of your classmates perform better than you academically.	6	7	3
13. Comment on whether you believe that your instructors think that you are a good student.	12	0	4
14. Elaborate whether there are times that you think that college is too difficult for you.	12	1	3
15. Discuss whether, overall, you are proud of your grades.	11	4	1
16. Share whether you often feel confident when you are taking a test.	10	2	4
17. Explain whether you think that you are capable of assisting other students with their class work.	7	1	8
18. Discuss whether you believe that instructor's standards are too high for you.	1	9	6
19. Comment on whether you feel that it	11	1	3

is difficult for you to keep pace with your class work.

20. Articulate whether you are satisfied with the class assignments that you turn in.	10	0	5
21. Discuss whether you feel that you are on top of your work by finals week.	12	1	1
22. Share whether you believe that you are better than the average college student.	10	4	1
23. Elaborate on whether you think that in most classes your classmates are better prepared than you.	7	5	3
24. Explain whether you think that you do not have the needed abilities in certain courses in your major.	8	6	1
25. Discuss whether you feel that you have poor study habits.	9	2	4